

# 2014 Annual Report

## St Francis Hospice Dublin

(Under the Care of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul)



St Francis Hospice Dublin, Raheny and Blanchardstown

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## Welcome to St. Francis Hospice Dublin

St. Francis Hospice Dublin provides a specialist palliative care service for the people of North Dublin City and County and its immediate environs. All our care is provided free of charge to patients and their families.

### Our Services Provide...

#### Patient Care

Patients have different needs, and these needs can change at various points during their illness. St. Francis Hospice Dublin provides four distinct services to patients:

- Care in their own home through our **Community Palliative Care Team**
- **Hospice Day Care**, providing a visit to the hospice on a weekly basis for nursing care, therapies and social/creative activities
- **In-Patient Unit** care, offering admission for management of complex symptoms and psychosocial problems, as well as care in the terminal phase of a patient's illness
- **Outpatient Service** for nursing/medical care, occupational or physiotherapy, complementary therapies, lymphoedema treatment

#### Care of Families and Friends

The hospice philosophy also addresses the needs of the patients' family and friends. At St. Francis Hospice Dublin, we act out this philosophy in a number of ways:

- Family and friends are encouraged to share in the care of their loved one
- Bereavement support is offered through our multidisciplinary team, including pre-bereavement and post-bereavement counselling and bereavement work with children
- We provide education and support for family members caring for people at home
- We offer counselling to family and friends to help them adjust to changing situations

#### How We Provide Care: The Team

The multidisciplinary team includes nurses, doctors, care assistants, household staff, complementary therapists, lymphoedema specialists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, chaplains, pharmacists, volunteers, administrative staff, and education professionals. Each makes a valuable contribution to the holistic care of patients and their families.

St. Francis Hospice is a registered charity. Each year we need to raise €4 million to fund our day to day services and repay outstanding bank loans associated with the capital cost of building St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown.

## Chairman's Statement



**St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown**

Throughout 2014 St. Francis Hospice Dublin continued to provide Community Palliative Care and Day Care services from its facilities at Raheny and Blanchardstown. The long awaited opening of the in-patient unit at Blanchardstown occurred on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014 with the phased opening of the twenty-four single bed facility. This welcome addition to the existing nineteen-bed unit at

Raheny will greatly enhance the delivery of in-patient care in our catchment area. Despite the difficult financial situation at national level I welcome the co-operation of the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive in securing the funding to enable the opening of the new in-patient unit.

A sincere thank you to the 170 staff and 280 volunteers of the Hospice and to my fellow Directors for the great efforts they have made during 2014 in ensuring the provision of a first class hospice service for our patients and their families.

The Hospice is extremely grateful to all who have participated in raising funds for our two hospices in 2014. I would ask you to continue to support us with the same level of generosity in 2015. In addition to the funding from the Health Service Executive we will need to raise €4 million in 2015 to cover both the operational costs and the repayments on the bank loan of €7.5 million. I thank in a special way our benefactors without whom we would be unable to provide a quality hospice service.

I look forward with hope and confidence for the future development of the services we provide in Dublin.

**Mr. Justice Peter Kelly**  
**Chairman, Board of Directors**

## Mission Statement

- St. Francis Hospice provides a specialist palliative care service to people in North Dublin. This includes support for their families and friends and other healthcare professionals involved in their care.
- The service is based on a Christian philosophy of human dignity, which treats each person with respect and compassion, irrespective of their cultural or religious background.
- The hospice plays a leadership role in shaping palliative care nationally, working in partnership to advance policy, education, research and service innovation.

## Our Values

The underpinning values of St. Francis Hospice are commitments to...

- Creating a welcoming, relaxed and personal atmosphere of care.
- Providing quality care at a physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and social level which respects the needs and wishes of each person.
- Supporting families and friends emotionally, psychologically and spiritually from referral through bereavement in an attentive and non-intrusive way.
- Working collaboratively as a team which cares for its members, values each one's contribution and engages in on-going education and reflection.
- Linking with other professionals, support agencies and the local community to improve the quality of service to people who are terminally ill.
- Educating others and influencing the practice and standards of palliative care of people who are terminally ill.

## Members/Trustees and Directors

### Members/Trustees

Mr. Justice Peter Kelly (Chairman)  
Dr. John Cooney  
Sr. Bernadette MacMahon, DC  
Mr. Thomas Joseph McMahon  
Sr. Annette McKenna, DC  
Dr. Mary Redmond  
Dr. Patrick Ussher

### Directors

The directors, who served at any time during the financial year except as noted, were as follows:

Mr. Justice Peter Kelly (Chairman)  
Dr. John Cooney  
Sr. Bernadette MacMahon, DC  
Mr. Thomas Joseph McMahon  
Ms. Mary Hayes  
Sr. Annette McKenna, DC  
Prof. Peter Daly  
Fr. Patrick Flynn (Resigned 15 January 2014)  
Dr. Carol Ann Casey  
Ms. Ita Gibney  
Sr. Bridget Callaghan, DC  
Mr. Patrick Kenny  
Mr. William Quane (Resigned 17 September 2014)  
Mr. Joe Pitcher  
Mr. James Flynn  
Fr. Michael Burgess

### Secretary:

Mr. James Flynn (Appointed 17 September 2014)

## **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

St. Francis Hospice Dublin is a company under the Companies Acts 1963-2013 with a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Hospice is governed by a Board of voluntary, non-executive Directors, none of whom receives payment of any kind for their services. The Board of Directors met six times in 2014. In addition, the Annual General Meeting of Trustees/Members was held in June 2014.

St. Francis Hospice Dublin has a detailed policy document on Corporate Governance which outlines a Code of Conduct for the Board of Directors and is in line with HSE directives. The organisational chart for the company is included on the next page.

## **REPORT ON OBJECTIVES FOR 2014**

The primary objective for 2014 was the opening of the twenty-four bed in-patient unit at St. Francis Hospice Blanchardstown. This involved detailed negotiations with the Health Service Executive in relation to staffing levels and related funding. Agreement was reached in mid-year on a phased opening of the beds commencing in late September 2014. On the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014 the first patients were admitted and a total of eighteen beds were opened by December. Difficulty in recruiting palliative care nurses had slowed the process of opening all twenty-four beds by the end of the year. It is expected that an adequate number of suitable staff will be recruited in early 2015 and that all beds will be available by February 2015.

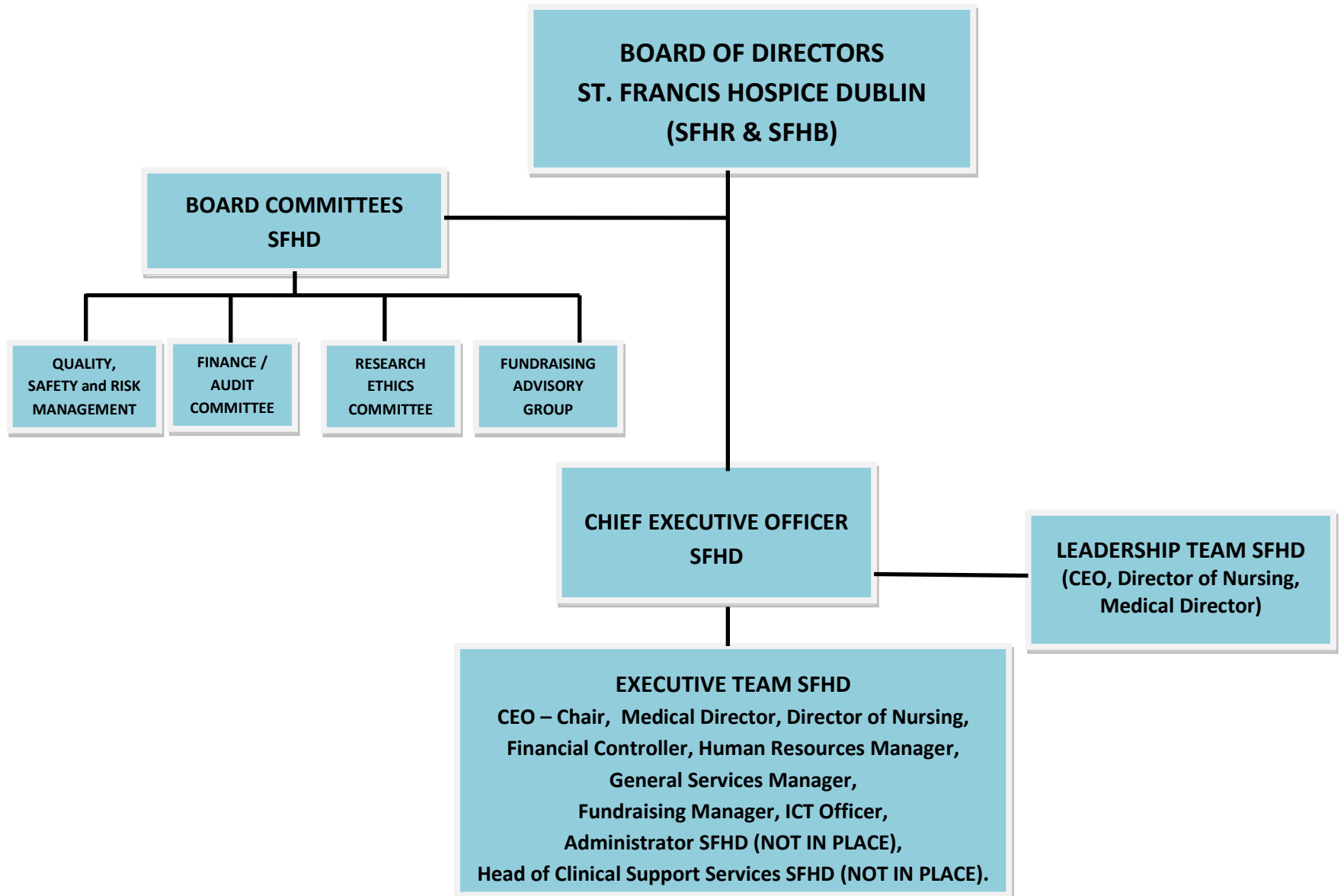
## **REPORT ON COMPLAINTS FOR 2014**

St. Francis Hospice Dublin's Complaints Policy ensures that all complaints are dealt with in accordance with Part 9 of the Health Act 2004 and Statutory Instrument No. 652/2006 – Health Act 2004 (Complaints) Regulations 2006. Our Complaints Policy aims to meet the needs of patients, families, carers and visitors to the Hospice. The confidentiality of the patient is respected at all times.

St. Francis Hospice received a total of three complaints during 2014; one in each of the following categories - Privacy, Participation, and Safe and Effective Care. All three complaints were dealt with and resolved in accordance with our Complaints Policy.

## ORGANISATIONAL CHART

St. Francis Hospice Dublin - SFHD (Raheny – SFHR and Blanchardstown - SFHB)



## **Our Services**

### **Community Palliative Care Team**

The St. Francis Hospice Community Palliative Care Team is a group of specially trained doctors, nurses, social workers and chaplains who provide professional palliative care expertise and support to patients and families in their own homes.

Many patients facing a life-limiting illness prefer to remain at home, in familiar surroundings, being cared for by friends and family. The relief of symptoms is a key element in enabling many patients to remain at home.

Our Community Palliative Care Team works closely with the patient's GP and Public Health Nurse (who continue to have overall responsibility for the patient) to provide optimum symptom control and promote quality of life. The Community Palliative Care Team's support also extends to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of patients and their families.

### **Outpatient Services**

The Outpatient Services provided are Complementary Therapy, Lymphoedema treatment, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Medical/Nursing review. Services include individual visits and some group sessions, such as Breathe Easy and Relaxation Technique clinics. Outpatient services are available five days per week in Raheny and two days per week in Blanchardstown.

### **Hospice Day Care**

Illness can make it difficult to meet other people and to continue an active social life. Hospice Day Care offers a place to meet other people in similar situations while being cared for by a skilled interdisciplinary team. The team works with each patient to develop a programme of care to meet the person's needs. Support is offered to families through telephone contact and families are often invited into Hospice Day Care to meet the team. Day Care is open four days per week in Raheny and two days per week in Blanchardstown.

### **In-Patient Care**

St. Anne's In-Patient Unit, at our Raheny site, provides 19 specialist palliative care beds. In September 2014, we were pleased to begin opening the 24 new in-patient beds at our Blanchardstown site. Patients are admitted when they have care needs which cannot be met in other settings such as their own home, hospital or nursing home. Patients are admitted to manage problems such as pain or other symptoms, and are discharged home; patients are also admitted for care until their death.

## **Bereavement Support**

St. Francis Hospice Dublin offers bereavement support to the families and friends of deceased patients of St. Francis Hospice In-Patient, Community Palliative Care and Day Care Service. In addition to regular services of remembrance and bereavement information evenings, individual support is offered to those who need it.

The Volunteer Bereavement Support Service consists of a team of trained and experienced volunteers who work under the supervision of the Social Work Department of St. Francis Hospice. It is a confidential listening service and the volunteers meet clients on a one-to-one basis at the Hospice.

## **Education and Research**

St. Francis Hospice Dublin strives to meet the palliative care education needs of the wider healthcare community through its courses, study days and annual international conference. Staff from all departments of the hospice contribute their knowledge and clinical experience to the teaching of many courses. This specialist palliative care knowledge benefits staff from many different work settings such as general hospitals, nursing homes, intellectual disabilities and mental health. St. Francis Hospice partners University of Dublin Trinity College in running an interdisciplinary MSc in Palliative Care. In 2014, there were 14 students progressing through year 1 and year 2 of the programme.

A new initiative in 2013 was an outreach education programme to secondary schools in our catchment area. In 2014, a member of the Education Team visited 6 schools and spoke with 150 students, mainly in transition year, about the work of St. Francis Hospice and about the principles and philosophy of hospice/palliative care. Results of pre- and post-talk questionnaires given to the students showed an increased understanding of and more positive attitudes toward hospice and palliative care after the talk.

There is an active culture of research in St. Francis Hospice, overseen by the Research Ethics Committee. It approved seven research applications in 2014:

- An examination of healthcare professionals barriers and facilitators to adopting e-learning in palliative care education, Ms. Joanne Callinan, Librarian, Milford Care Centre, Castletroy, Limerick.
- Evaluation of an interdisciplinary specialist palliative day care programme on quality of life and function in patients with a non-cancer diagnosis, Ms. Lisa McGirr, Acting Physiotherapy Manager, SFHD.
- Physiotherapy led palliative exercise program for parkinson's disease (PEP-PD) patients in an out-patient setting - a feasibility study, Mr. David Hegarty, Physiotherapist, SFHD.
- Prevalence and management of diabetes at the end of life in St. Francis Hospice, Dr. Faith Cranfield, Locum Consultant and Medical Lead, Community Palliative Care Team, SFHD.
- Identifying key elements of palliative care in patients with advanced lung cancer, Dr. Karen Ryan, Consultant in Palliative Medicine, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Eccles Street, Dublin 7.
- Evaluation of a physiotherapy exercise programme on quality of life, fatigue and mobility in patients under the care of St. Francis Hospice, Ms. Lisa McGirr, Acting Physiotherapy Manager, SFHD.
- The impact of a psychiatric assessment on palliative care patients' experience of pain: a randomized controlled trial, Dr. James Kinahan, Senior Registrar, Liaison Psychiatry, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin 9.



## St. Francis Hospice Annual Statistics 2014 – Raheny

<b>Community Palliative Care Service Raheny</b>	
Nursing – Home Visits	5,045
Medical – Home Visits	407
New Patients	453 (2 under 18 years of age)
Total Patients	573 (496 cancer/77 non cancer)
<b>Hospice Day Care Raheny (4 days per week)</b>	
Total Attendances:	2,102
New Patients ( <i>included in total patients figure</i> )	126
Total Patients	181

<b>Out-Patient Department Raheny (4 days per week)</b>	
Complementary Therapy	101 patients (72 new patients)/602 attendances
Lymphoedema	31 patients (23 new patients)/132 attendances
Occupational Therapy	52 patients (50 new patients)/128 attendances
Oncology Lymphoedema	87 patients (17 new patients)/230 attendances
Physiotherapy	79 patients (30 new patients)/210 attendances
<b>In-Patient Unit Raheny</b>	
Admissions	245
Discharges	34
Deaths	202

## St. Francis Hospice Annual Statistics 2014 – Blanchardstown

Community Palliative Care Service Blanchardstown	
Nursing - Home Visits	4,346
Medical – Home Visits	266
New Patients	350 (1 under 18 years of age)
Total Patients	478 (405 cancer/73 non cancer)
Hospice Day Care Blanchardstown (2 days per week)	
Total Attendances	752
New Patients ( <i>included in total patients figure</i> )	49
Total Patients	69

Out-Patient Department Blanchardstown (2 days per week)	
Complementary Therapy	45 patients (14 new patients)/167 attendances
Lymphoedema	18 patients (14 new patients)/33 attendances
Occupational Therapy	29 patients (24 new patients)/44 attendances
Physiotherapy	76 patients (61 new patients)/171 attendances
In-Patient Unit Blanchardstown	
<b>From 29<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014</b>	
Admissions	72
Discharges	9
Deaths	51

## **Your Community / Your Hospice**

**St. Francis Hospice Dublin is privileged to benefit from the generous support of our Northside Dublin community. This support comes in many forms, including volunteerism and financial support through fundraising.**

### **Volunteers**

There are more than 280 volunteers who give of their time and talents. They range in age from 29-84; approximately two-thirds are female.

The work that our volunteers do at St. Francis Hospice helps us to expand the range of services we can provide to our patients and their families. Volunteers usually commit to work for four hours once a week. The roles they fill are diverse and include reception, hospitality, gardening, music, complementary therapies, art, hairdressing, driving, dog visits, fundraising and more.

### **Fundraising**

St. Francis Hospice Dublin needs to raise €4 million each year in order to maintain our services and pay for the building of the hospice in Blanchardstown. In future years, this figure will rise to cover our expanding services and the repayment of the bank loan for St. Francis Hospice Blanchardstown.

In 2014 we raised approximately €3.6 million through donations, bequests, and events such as the Women's Mini-Marathon, National Coffee Morning, and Sunflower Days.

We thank the people of Dublin's Northside and beyond, who continue to show their support and generosity by participating in events and giving donations to the hospice. We are especially grateful in 2014 for the wonderful support from the community of Blanchardstown.

### **Community Events**

Two annual events that draw members of the community to St. Francis Hospice are the Annual Dr. Mary Redmond Foundation Day Lecture, which was delivered in February 2014 by Ms. Norah Casey, and the Tree of Life Ceremony, which took place at both the Raheny and Blanchardstown hospices in early December 2014.

## **St Francis Hospice Dublin 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1989-2014)**

*In February 2014, St Francis Hospice Dublin celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. In the following pages, some staff members and volunteers recall their participation and memories from the early years.*

### **A Reflection on 25 Years of Caring**

On moving to live in Galway in 2012 I resigned from St. Francis Hospice as a Trustee, Director and Company Secretary. My resignation brought an end to an association with the hospice which commenced in 1989 when I was invited by Sr. Bernadette MacMahon, the Provincial of the Daughters of Charity, to become part of a new hospice being developed at Raheny. In addition to my official roles I also unofficially assisted in the administration of the small Home Care Team led by Sr. Dorothy Kearon, D.C. Our Head Office, in fact our only office, was a portacabin in the grounds of the Capuchin Friary in Raheny. Sr. Dorothy's optimism was infectious and her "God will provide" rings true twenty-five years later.

The Hospice was fortunate in those early days when endeavouring to secure funding for staff and to develop infrastructure, in having the support of the Irish Hospice Foundation and the extraordinary generosity of the Capuchin Order and the Daughters of Charity. The Capuchin Order provided the land free of charge on which the hospice at Raheny was subsequently erected and the Daughters of Charity provided substantial funding towards the building and fit-out costs. This generosity was supplemented by the local community and that support in terms of volunteers and fundraising continues to the present day.

The establishment of a Board of Directors on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1990 was a key date in the history of the new hospice. Chaired by the late Ms. Justice Mella Carroll, the Directors gave the Board the wide range of expertise and experience necessary to develop the medical, nursing, administrative and governance requirements. The Board set out to plan the future expansion of what was to be a comprehensive palliative care service for the people of the north side of the city and county of Dublin. Services would be provided free of charge.

The Board's vision of a Home Care, Day Care and In-Patient Unit on the site donated by the Capuchin Order progressed from outline drawings to a phased reality by 1995. The original Home Care/Day Care Centre opened in 1992 and was funded by the Daughters of Charity, the Irish Hospice Foundation and local fundraising. I had contacted my own Bank of Ireland Manager, Mr. Denis McAdam, and through him had arranged a one million punt loan to fund what we called Phase 1. The loan was never drawn down.

As soon as Phase 1 was completed and opened the detailed planning for Phase 2, to include the In-Patient Unit, commenced and the project with its nineteen beds was opened in 1996. The three million punt, ten year loan which the Board secured to pay for Phase 2 was repaid after four years.

Meanwhile, as we moved away from the portacabin era and staff numbers grew, the development of management and administrative structures was vital. An administrative structure was developed and an Executive Team consisting of the Medical Director, Matron (now Director of Nursing) and Administrator was appointed.

Having completed the In-Patient Unit and in order to meet the growing demand for day services and education services, the Board commenced development of an education centre, therapy rooms, a library, administrative offices and a large meeting hall on a one acre additional site donated by the Capuchin Order. This project (Phase 3) was completed in 2002.

Following publication of the Report of the National Advisory Committee on Palliative Care, St. Francis Hospice worked in partnership with the Northern Area Health Board in producing a Development Plan in 2001 for the future development of palliative care services in the Health Board's catchment area. This plan included the development of a palliative care unit for Dublin North West. It was accepted by the Northern Area Health Board that St. Francis Hospice Raheny would be the main provider of palliative care services for

the Board's catchment area. A review of the demographics for the catchment area identified the need for twenty-four extra beds to meet future needs. The search commenced for a suitable site to the west of the catchment area and we were fortunate in securing a large site from the State close to Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown. Following detailed planning and a fortuitous delay in securing access to the site, construction commenced shortly after the building industry collapse of 2007/2008. The delay reduced the projected overall cost of the project from €35M to a final cost of €24.5M.

When the In-Patient Unit finally opened in September 2014, the amount outstanding on the bank loan was €7.5M. Approximately €15M had been raised locally by fundraising groups, including the Blanchardstown Centre Oratory Group. It is worth noting that all the infrastructural developments completed over the twenty-five years came in on or under budget due to detailed planning, an excellent design team and rigid project management at Executive and Board level.

The role of volunteers throughout the twenty-five years has been critical in supporting the day to day running of the service and in its governance. The hospice has been fortunate in the leadership provided by its first Chairperson, Ms. Justice Mella Carroll (R.I.P.) and its current Chairman, Mr. Justice Peter Kelly. I consider it to have been a privilege to have served with my fellow Directors, a number of whom have passed to their eternal reward.

If I thought I was finished with St. Francis Hospice in 2012, I was mistaken as I returned to function as Board Representative in September 2014 arising from the temporary absence of the Chief Executive Officer. It has been an exciting and demanding time as it coincided with the opening of the twenty-four bed In-Patient Unit at St. Francis Hospice Blanchardstown. As ever, securing revenue funding to ensure the delivery of a quality palliative care service remains high on the agenda. Hard work by all coupled with Sr. Dorothy's "God will provide" attitude will ensure the continuation of St. Francis Hospice over the next twenty-five years.

- **Joe Fallon, Board Representative**

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## **Memories of a Founder**

In 1989, Sr Bernadette MacMahon was Provincial of the Irish Province of the Daughters of Charity. Much was afoot on her watch and she had many eggs in many baskets to be attending to: a new mission to Sierra Leone had to be nurtured; the buildings at St Vincent's Centre, Navan Road were in a critical state and residents required urgent rehousing, while St Anne's Cancer Hospital on Northbrook Road was closing with services being transferred to St Luke's Hospital at Rathgar. No doubt there were others, but enough of an agenda one might suggest for the Chair of any large Irish organisation of its time, while attending to keeping the mission of the Daughters on course in the midst of all that. But visionary people don't think like that, they see possibilities where you or I might say "enough" and see obstacles.

As St Anne's was closing, Sr Bernadette, a teacher by professional background, was guided by her nursing consoeurs, Sr Annette McKenna and Sr Dorothy Kearon in seeking out a way of continuing the "*pain management clinic*" element of St Anne's in a new location. To achieve this objective the Daughters negotiated with the Department of Health that the public revenue associated with St Anne's would in principle continue to be available for such a new clinic in the future. That in itself was no mean feat, given the state of public finances at that time, then under the stewardship of Finance Minister Ray McSharry.

So one element of a Clinic was available. A second of course was the established mission, knowledge and expertise associated with St Anne's. But a location was required, as if there was no building to provide

services, no revenue would materialise, and the Daughters had to provide that element. The assistance of Auxiliary Bishops Dermot O'Mahony and Desmond Williams was sought for possible suitable properties that might be available in North Dublin through the good offices of the Archdiocese. A number of unsuitable locations were reviewed and on Good Friday 1989, a call from Bishop O'Mahony alerted Sr Bernadette to the Capuchin Friary garden site at Raheny, with the advice, *carpe diem* – seize the day. So Sisters Bernadette and Annette visited the Friary the very next day, Holy Saturday, where they met first with Fr Michael Duffy OFM Cap, who is presently chaplain to SFH.



Several founders of St Francis Hospice at the Raheny In-Patient Unit opening in 1995

While the rest is not quite history, to revenue was now added the ingredient of location. Dr Mary Redmond, who was instrumental in starting the Irish Hospice Foundation, was centrally concerned with a Hospice – as distinct from a Clinic – for North Dublin. Cross fertilisation of ideas, synergies and a shared sense of mission led to the foundation of what came to be known as St Francis Hospice. The name Francis was chosen to honour the extraordinary generosity of the Capuchins, and within the next seven years, the opening of St Anne's In-Patient Unit at the Hospice, honoured the patronage and traditions of the former Northbrook Road Hospital.

There followed the famous portacabin and its successors in bricks and mortar. However it is the people whom Sr Bernadette recalls – the two bishops, the Capuchins, Sr Annette and Sr Dorothy and their nursing consœur Sr Agnes McSweeney DC, Dr Mary Redmond, the late Dr Hugh Rafferty (palliative care specialist), Board members like Harry Boland, Tom McMahon, Joe Fallon. There were also the first Volunteers, Pat Breslin (Cash Office) and Anne Langan (Fundraising), who faithfully continue their work 25 years later. These are the people combined who made the beginnings possible. *"It was a very humble beginning,"* notes Sr Bernadette.

Funding for Phase I of construction at Raheny also had to be found in the early years. The Daughters of Charity volunteered a contribution of IR£500,000 which had to be borrowed and repaid to the English Province of their Congregation. As Joe Fallon describes elsewhere in this report, this was accomplished without that contribution ever having to be touched. But when sought and received that loan was a risk, responsibility for which fell on Sr Bernadette.

Her invitation to Joe Fallon, *"...to be Secretary to a small Board that won't take up too much time,"* helps illustrate her own participation and personal management style. She smiles charmingly as she recalls that story. Meanwhile as already alluded to, Sr Bernadette, in her position as Provincial, had other fish to be frying, other projects to be overseeing. Personally she likes projects: *"Go in, get the job done and move on to the next task"*. Looking back, *"I did my bit and other people did their bit."* She also recalls the very significant welcome and efforts made by the local community in Raheny to the launching of the project. There were lots of obstacles in its way, but with great enthusiasm she pronounces, *"Obstacles, you get around them."*

### Colman Duggan

In conversation with Sr Bernadette MacMahon DC, February 2014.

## Reflections by two of our longest-serving volunteers, as told to Des Nix, Volunteer

### Anne Langan

"It was just a rough, hilly, uneven piece of ground," Anne Langan recalls as she reflects on her first engagement with St Francis Hospice, that inaugural meeting 25 years ago which got the project under way. "But it was our Field of Dreams."

Today Anne, a twice-weekly volunteer fund-raiser, looks around the central sitting room, the Spring sunshine infusing an extra warmth into the wave of comfort that always envelops St Francis and a glow of pride radiates from her, reflecting the certainty that here was a job well done. "I love this room," she says. "I love this building." The dream has come true.

Anne was among the group of 34 at that first meeting. The Daughters of Charity had come with their vision, the Capuchins gave the land willingly, "although one or two weren't convinced they should have given it over for free," Anne laughs. In later years the kindly Capuchins were to give over even more ground for expansion. And Anne has walked every step of the way with them since.

Her own organisational talents had been honed through her involvement with St Michael's House, Edenmore School and with the liturgical committee in the Capuchin Friary, as well as the Raheny Business Association. Rearing three children gave her an added edge. "The entire community seemed to row in. It was that spirit of support which kept us going and made this the wonderful operation it is today."

Anne's mother had died in the care of the Harold's Cross hospice home care team and that contact underlined for her the value of palliative care. "I always felt that everyone was entitled to hospice care. Raheny and the new development opening in Blanchardstown have made that possible here on the northside. Years ago when people died at home it wasn't always that pleasant. The experience now is so holistic for the whole family. It isn't done in a 'holy, holy' way; it's interdenominational and there is a serenity about it. It is always a sacred moment when a person dies. It's just amazing what has been achieved in 25 years."

Recalling the simplicity of those early portacabin days and the coffee mornings in the old Retreat House, Anne remembers the fun times they had too. "Brid (Stanbridge), Pat (Breslin) and I used bake six dozen scones for the monthly coffee mornings. Afterwards we realised we might have done better just to put the money in ourselves and forget the coffee mornings," she laughs. "Those were our 'Sugar for Jesus' days, when some of the gang would pocket a few sachets of sugar when out in cafes. We even had a few smuggled in from fancy coffee shops abroad. It was Sister Dorothy who named it 'Sugar for Jesus'; she always said it was Jesus who was proving it."

Sister Dorothy always maintained there was a miracle of the loaves and fishes in play wherever the Hospice was concerned. Anne's work in fund-raising confirmed it to her. "Whenever we needed money, it always seemed to appear. We had a draw-down facility with the bank but never had to implement it. When a bill had to be paid the money turned up. We couldn't believe how much money was coming in, there was so much good-will for the project right from the start."

Sadly, Anne's husband, Sean, who was a co-founder and partner in Liffey Oil, died in an accident some years ago but she feels her involvement with the hospice has helped her along the way since. "Not just because of all the lovely friends I have made here but I've always felt it a privilege to be involved and to be able to come in here to this building. There are so many unsung heroes out there who do their volunteer work quietly and diligently and never get to come in. I just love this place and to engage with the people who work here.

"I said I'd quit when the Raheny building was finished, and then I thought I would hand over when Blanchardstown was built." Somehow, you get the feeling that Anne will live with her dream for a long time yet.

## Pat Breslin

Early on 29<sup>th</sup> June (the feast of St Peter and Paul), 1937, 10-year-old Pat Bryce woke to see a ripple running across the ceiling. "I thought it was water, that the rain was flooding in," Pat Breslin says, casting her mind back those 77 years. It turned out the ceiling was melting; overhead an inferno was raging through their three-storey Drumcondra home.

Two Guinness workers on their way to work at five o'clock that morning roused the occupants, Pat and the grandparents who raised her. "We got as far as the front door when my 'mother' asked my 'father' to get her coat. He turned back but couldn't manage to free it so we turned and made for the door again. The moment we got out, the whole interior of the house just collapsed."

"God has always been good to me," Pat says. It's a faith that goes with her every day and inspires the good works that so enrich her own life.

Volunteerism doesn't come any more altruistic than the commitment shown by Pat Breslin. Everyone in the hospice knows the glamorous and stylish Pat. But what makes her stand out even more is the dedication applied to her "26 years" as a hospice volunteer which we celebrate in our silver jubilee year. All the more astonishing when you consider that it all began at an age when others are easing into retirement.

Pat was an accounting supervisor with Great Northern Railways which ran the Dublin-Belfast train service before it amalgamated with CIE. It was there she met Eamonn Breslin who was to become her husband. "It was a lovely company to work for, everybody knew everybody, knew each other's families. In those days women had to give up work in the public service when they married, so I did. He was a marvellous husband. People used say to me: 'You two always look as if you are on your honeymoon'."

Fund-raising is Pat's great gift to the hospice, a talent picked up from her GNR work. In 1981 she became involved with the Raheny Missionary Project for the foreign missions, so that when the hospice arrived in Raheny she joined the team and set up a regular coffee morning venture in the Cedars Lounge which still runs today. And for years she has helped out in the cash office.

Pat wears her contribution lightly and shrugs off the compliments. "It keeps your old brain going," she says. "But I have seen wonderful people making more incredible sacrifices than mine. The nurses here are angels; you couldn't do their work unless it was a vocation. And then there are the hundreds of other volunteers who do it all for nothing. I was working beside a girl one evening when I realised that she had broken into her holiday and driven down from Donegal for her 'shift' and she was driving back there again afterwards.



Anne (4<sup>th</sup> from left) and Pat (on right) celebrate their 25 years of service, with members of the SFH community

"But the patients always amaze me. In all my time here, up to four times a week, I have never heard a patient complain."

Pat suffered a bout of cancer herself. "It makes you appreciate life and how good it is when you are well. I always say to the Lord: 'Send me what you want to give me but give me the grace to bear it'."

Like Pat says, God has been good to her. But Pat has been good to God too.



## Memories of Two Pioneer Nurses

The place is Raheny, 1988, not the Crimea, 1854. The name is Betty McDonnell not Florence Nightingale. The job is to be the first employed Home Care Nurse at St Francis Hospice, not to tend to wounded soldiers in a time of war. But then the commonalities begin to emerge, the sense of adventure, of starting out, of pioneering in an entirely new project in *"the Porta-cabin."* How Miss Nightingale would, most likely, have wished to have had one of those!

Betty was joined in 1989 by Pauline Breen, as second employed home care nurse at SFH, both working under the direction of Sr Dorothy Kearon DC. Also working alongside them was Sr Agnes McSweeney DC.

Betty and Pauline describe the camaraderie and informality of those early days when SFH was starting. They would visit patients at home, carrying medications without thinking at all of their personal security, in the way that is heavily protocolled nowadays. There were no mobile phones, so they used a 'walkie talkie'. But perhaps in the middle of the night in the inner city or outer suburb they might be searching for a phone box (almost redundant 25 years later), to make a call. They were young nurses without commitment to family life and thought nothing of being on 24 hour call. They were conscious of the reputation of the Hospice, a word in itself that one had to be shy about using due to the fear it induced. *"We over visited, because we wanted to get it right"*, says Betty and compares that to the present day when a phone call might be used to triage and establish the purpose and priority for arranging a home visit. Of course there was only 25% of the paperwork compared to the present level of protocol and regulation. However, both Betty and Pauline would say the work is essentially the same today as it was when they started and they should know as they both continue to work at essentially the same tasks they started when SFH was founded, *"...helping people to do well at home. People have not changed."* Younger nurses ask for their advice and they share what they both know, but, *"we are always learning."*

The Capuchins come up for favourable mention in every conversation about the history of SFH. From providing soup on a cold day to the occupants of the Porta-cabin, to help changing the tire of a car, *"they were there."* In return Sr Dorothy would appear to have mothered the Friars, bringing a woman's touch to the austere surroundings of the Friary interiors.

Betty now job shares and Pauline works .5 of a job share. Life has changed for them. What sustains the commitment is the balance of a life outside the workplace. Family life is very fulfilling and they each have diverse outside interests.

The organisation of the workplace has changed as the scale of the service is so much different today. There was no Blanchardstown campus, there were not East and West Teams. At the beginning there were close working relationships with Harold's Cross, while today there is less direct contact. In the early days Our Lady's provided the only In-patient Care available and was a significant provider of education and consultation. When the Board of Management held its meetings in the Porta-cabin, relationships were informal and there was a great deal of contact.

Nowadays, the needs and demands on each separate service are such that this would not be feasible and alongside this, while the basic needs of patients remain as they always have been, public expectations are now very high. Both nurses would also be very conscious that outside Dublin, the provision of palliative care would be so much more scarce and basic by comparison with what can be provided in Dublin, Cork or Limerick. Betty and Pauline see the future being in home based services as people, who do not essentially change, and more and more, assert their preference for home care.

### - Colman Duggan

In conversation with Betty McDonnell and Pauline Breen, Community Palliative Care Nurses, November 2013.

## Founding Fathers

There is nothing coincidental in this life. Grace, genius and opportunity have a happy knack of sometimes meeting up with one another when the need arises. That has been the story of St Francis Hospice over the past 25 years. The experience at Raheny has been replicated over the past ten years at Blanchardstown.

2003 was the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of Fr Eugene Kennedy, Founding Pastor of St Thomas the Apostle Parish at Laurel Lodge in Castleknock. A local golfing society undertook an outing in which they raised in excess of €30,000 and they presented this money as a gift to their two clergy, Fr Eugene and Fr Dan Joe O' Mahony OFM Cap, Parish Chaplain. This was to honour their work together over many years.

Eugene was parish priest for twenty-eight years, retiring in 2005 and Dan Joe had assisted for much of that time and continues on in Laurel Lodge, one among many of his varied pastoral commitments. One could say they were like two engines, one Rolls Royce and one Harley Davidson, but travelling in harmony. Talking over how the money might be spent, as *"the place and the people have been good to us"*, Eugene remembers, *"I said to Dan Joe, it's payback time, we should make our own tribute to the people, so what can we do with this money?"*

*"We'll build a hospice boy!"* Dan Joe replied. Asked how much that would cost, Dan Joe, true to character, said *"I haven't a clue"*.

Simultaneously St Francis Hospice in Raheny had just recently taken on responsibility for providing hospice services to all of Dublin, north of the Liffey. So the work commenced towards development of the infrastructure that has become SFH Blanchardstown. Thus, St Francis Hospice and St Thomas' Parish joined together over time, facilitated in all things by their Capuchin links.

## Local Fundraising

While responsibility for service provision and governance of the Blanchardstown Hospice remained with St Francis Hospice in Raheny, the local fundraising efforts were central to realising the project. As is usual in these circumstances the "marriage" was preceded by a delicate courtship between the two.

A local fundraising committee was formed under the chairmanship of local men, Michael O Keefe and Jim Flynn. They coordinated events and asked organisations to host events. For example, a GAA Club would run a race night; bridge clubs raised €100,000 in one year and €80,000 in another; individuals would run events; many organisations gave a hand. There was hardly need to ask. There was great goodwill. Everybody has been touched by cancer. It's that common experience which creates such interest.

Car raffles were started and are run to this day. Ryans of Blanchardstown were followed by local Renault and currently Blanchardstown Ford, in providing the winning cars.

All fundraising efforts were happily embraced in the name of a 'Hospice for Blanchardstown', on the sole condition that authority and funds rested with the established Local Fundraising Committee.

Eugene, in keeping with those times, says, *"It was easy to fundraise in those days"*. On occasion, €250,000 was raised from a Golf Classic. Nowadays the equivalent would be €20,000. Employers were in a position to be generous with time, but are not in a position now to give people time off to play in a golf outing. Fundraising is slower now as the same money is not in circulation. But it is noteworthy that €5,000,000 was raised locally by 2011 when the SFH campus in Blanchardstown became a reality.

These funds received a significant boost in March 2013, when Castleknock Lawn Tennis Club donated €1m, part of monies they received for a parcel of land. So, in effect, Dublin 15 has raised in excess of €6m to date.

Meanwhile, St Francis Hospice, following agreement with Our Lady's in Harold's Cross and HSE started its Home Care Team for Dublin North West in Cabra and has since been able to relocate services to the new Blanchardstown Campus since March 2011, followed by Day Care in November 2011.

### **Governance**

As the project matured, roles and functions became more clearly defined. The local fundraising committee very much continues, essential to fostering and sustaining local goodwill. "The Hospice" remains the charity of choice in the area. But the fundraisers never envisaged themselves establishing and managing a Hospice themselves. Modestly, Eugene Kennedy describes the local contribution: "We were only local fundraisers. Personally I was a small cog in a big wheel and served on the Board of St Francis Hospice for three years." North West Dublin continues to be represented on the Board, but Eugene Kennedy pays particular tribute to the guidance of Joe Fallon, former Secretary to the Board, CEO Ethel McKenna and Board Member Tom McMahon.

### **Influence in Government**

One of the major local promoters was the late Minister for Finance and local TD, Brian Lenihan. He negotiated with his Government a grant of seven acres from Abbotstown lands, which required Cabinet approval. Later he was himself a patient of the Blanchardstown service. He was a major driver and other local politicians were also supportive, but it was Brian Lenihan who had the ball at his feet, and he scored a winner. Ministers Joan Burton and Leo Varadkar, local TDs as they are, continue to lend their support to the cause of funding provision to enable the opening of in-patient facilities, which, reflecting the changed economic picture remains a slow burn. However as 2014 started, it is encouraging that Government has committed €1,000,000 in this year's health budget towards the graduated opening of in-patient beds at



**St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown**

Blanchardstown. That is less than one third of the revenue stream in current terms which would be required to open all the facilities at Blanchardstown. However in a year when the National Health Budget has been reduced in excess of €600m, the provision for SFHB is to be welcomed and is testament to the perceived value of this facility to the catchment population, and the continuing efforts of so many, over such a length of time to bring inclusive and comprehensive palliative care to Dublin North West.

### **- Colman Duggan**

Based on conversations with Fr Eugene Kennedy PP Emeritus, Fr Dan Joe Mahoney OFM Cap and Ethel McKenna, CEO. Additional material-courtesy of *Community Voice* Newspaper, I.I.I.I.

## Financial Statement

ST. FRANCIS HOSPICE DUBLIN  
(COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING SHARE CAPITAL)

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT  
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

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	€	€
<b>TURNOVER</b>		
Donations, Bequests and Legacies	2,503,871	3,194,709
Fundraising income	1,869,461	1,847,011
Investment and Rental income	49,255	60,418
HSE Grants and similar income	7,927,579	7,033,970
<b>Total Turnover</b>	<b>12,350,166</b>	<b>12,136,108</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>		
Costs of generating voluntary funds	239,025	303,867
Charitable activities	11,313,029	10,411,658
Governance costs	121,288	63,562
Interest payable	377,604	406,877
<b>Total Distribution and Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>12,050,946</b>	<b>11,185,964</b>
<b>PROFIT ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION</b>	<b>299,220</b>	<b>950,144</b>
Taxation charge	-	-
<b>PROFIT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>299,220</b>	<b>950,144</b>

There are no unrecognised gains and losses other than the net movement in funds arising from continuing operations for the financial year.

## Financial Statement

ST. FRANCIS HOSPICE DUBLIN  
(COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING SHARE CAPITAL)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

	2014 €	2013 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible assets	35,758,258	35,526,124
Financial asset	100	100
	<u>35,758,358</u>	<u>35,526,224</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	4,342,926	3,027,441
Sundry debtors and prepayments	74,055	55,023
	<u>4,416,981</u>	<u>3,082,464</u>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(1,797,254)</b>	<b>(914,469)</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>	<u><b>2,619,727</b></u>	<u><b>2,167,995</b></u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<u><b>38,378,085</b></u>	<u><b>37,694,219</b></u>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year</b>	<b>(7,213,180)</b>	<b>(7,500,909)</b>
<b>Government (HSE) grant</b>	<b>(2,300,375)</b>	<b>(1,628,000)</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><u><b>28,864,530</b></u></u>	<u><u><b>28,565,310</b></u></u>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
<b>Unrestricted reserves</b>	<b>28,804,530</b>	28,565,310
<b>Restricted reserves</b>	<b>60,000</b>	-
	<u><u><b>28,864,530</b></u></u>	<u><u><b>28,565,310</b></u></u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and authorised for issue on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015. They were signed on its behalf by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Peter Kelly  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Flynn  
Director

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RAHENY



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BLANCHARDSTOWN



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## Company Information

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