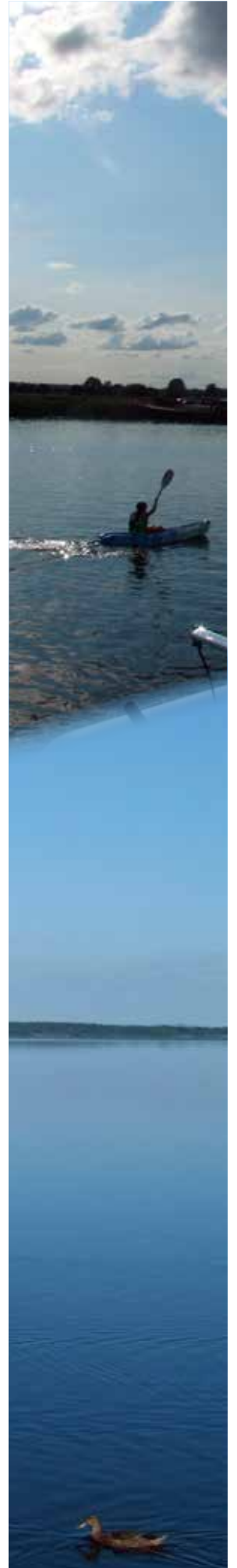




**Inland Waterways Association of Ireland**  
*Cumann Uiscebhealaigh Intíre na h-Éireann*

# Branch Officers Handbook

Version 2.5 / February 2025



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## INTRODUCTION

*If you are reading this as a Branch Officer, then thank you for your key support in running IWAI and enjoy your contribution to the Association.*

*If you are reading this as a member who is maybe considering volunteering as a Branch Officer then, if it's for you, please take that next step. With busy lives, it can be hard to find time to volunteer, however the benefits of volunteering can be enormous to all involved. I have read that a good volunteering match up can help you to reduce stress, be good for your general health and allows you to offer help to others and provides an opportunity to share your knowledge on specific topics with others.*

*This handbook provides a single source of reference for the various established policies and procedures of IWAI and is intended to assist the immense voluntary effort that is the backbone of our great organization by explaining clearly the roles and responsibilities involved in running a Branch.*

*The use of this handbook will assist with maintaining good governance for our membership driven Association which is a registered company and subject to the rules of company law.*

**Kay Baxter** President

Inland Waterways Association of Ireland



## PURPOSE OF THE BRANCH OFFICERS HANDBOOK

The **Branch Officers Handbook** is intended for the use of Branch Officers, Committee Members and IWAI Members.

It also includes a quick reference section which is a summary of the main points extracted from the body of the handbook, note this is for quick reference only, please refer to the relevant section for full details and also the relevant policy document where referenced.

As a limited company and a registered charity IWAI is faced with a number of obligations and ultimately the membership requires good administrative procedures and policies to meet its legal obligations. The purpose of this handbook is to assist all members to meet these obligations.

Any comments on the development of this handbook should be addressed to [honsecretary@iwai.ie](mailto:honsecretary@iwai.ie).

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

This is a summary of the Branch Officers Handbook and is for quick reference only.

### IWAI STRUCTURE:

IWAI is a voluntary Association founded in 1954 to advocate the navigation, use, maintenance, protection, restoration and improvement of the Inland Waterways of Ireland. It currently has 25 branches.

It is a limited company with charitable status, the policies are approved by the IWAI Council with the day to day activities dealt with by a Committee of Executive Directors chaired by the President.

### MEMBERSHIP

IWAI members are members of a Branch of their choice. Second branch membership is also an option.

- *Family Membership* - €55.00 – With votes for 2 family members
- *Single Membership* - €44.00 – 1 vote
- *Young Adult Member* - €22.00 – 1 vote
- *Second Branch Membership* – €20.00 – No additional voting rights
- *NI Family Membership* - £36.00 – With votes for 2 family members
- *NI Single Membership* - £33.00 – 1 vote
- *NI Young Adult Member* - £17.00 – 1 vote
- *Corporate Members* - €150 / £100 – 1 vote
- *Junior Membership* – €12 / £10 – No vote

Only members in good standing can be elected officers.

### KEY ROLES ON BRANCH COMMITTEES

The Branch committee must have a minimum of 3 officers namely Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. These are responsible for ensuring that all officers are IWAI members and promote growth in Branch membership. In addition each Branch must appoint a Child Protection Officer and a Safety Officer. Chapter 2 identifies the key roles and duties.

**Branch Work Parties, Cruises in Companies, Rallies:** These events should be used as an opportunity for recruitment and promotion of the Association. Chapter 4 details the correct procedures to have in place for such events.

### PROTECTION OF MEMBERS:

The Association has a full set of policies in place to protect members and the public. Chapter 5 deals with this area and in particular the following:



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY:**

The Association has a Child Protection Policy in place, it is a statutory requirement for each Branch to implement and operate this policy with a Branch Child Protection Officer(s) and Event Child Protection Officer(s) who have undertaken Garda Vetting through the IWAI.

## **DIGNITY AND RESPECT:**

The IWAI treats everyone equally and respects individuality and diversity and has a complaints procedure and a process for investigation of incidents. The Members Protection Policy is available at [IWAI Members Protection Policy](#).

## **HEALTH & SAFETY:**

The Branch must appoint a safety officer. The Association's Health and Safety Statement contains template risk assessments which can be downloaded from the IWAI website and edited to make it specific to the venue [IWAI\\_Safety\\_-Statement](#) and [IWAI Safety Recommendations for Event Planning](#).

## **INSURANCE:**

The IWAI nationally has insurance to indemnify IWAI officers (in good standing) in the event of a claim for negligence. Chapter 5 Insurance deals with how boats attending IWAI events must declare that they have minimum of 3rd party insurance cover for the period of the event. Branches must inform National Treasurer and Executive Officer with responsibility for Insurance of intended events, high risk activities - work parties should be highlighted. Volunteer members participating in work parties are not covered to use any powered tools unless they have undertaken the relevant training. Chapter 5 also outlines what procedures must be followed by Branches regarding safety statements and recording attendance at these events.

## **COMMUNICATIONS:**

The IWAI communications handbook is available at:

[IWAI Public Relations & Communications\\_Handbook](#)

It is designed to help Branches communicate effectively with members, key stakeholders, the media and the wider public.

## **IWAI COUNCIL:**

The affairs of the Association are managed by a Council, comprising the IWAI Executive, 2 members from each Branch and 6 ordinary members elected at the AGM. The Council meets up to 4 times a year.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

The day-to-day activities of the Association are dealt with by a Committee of up to 15 Executive Directors chaired by the President. These are elected at the AGM.





## CHAPTER 1 – THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

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This section of the Branch Officers Handbook is designed to help Branches understand the role and purpose of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland.

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) is an energetic, voluntary organisation with members from all corners of the island of Ireland, all sharing a keen and passionate enthusiasm for the waterways of Ireland. There are currently 25 branches across the island of Ireland.

IWAI advocates the navigation, use, maintenance, protection, restoration and improvement of the inland waterways of Ireland. It was formed in 1954 to promote the development, use and maintenance of Ireland's navigable rivers and canals.

Currently, IWAI members are active in restoration projects on the Boyne, Newry and Lagan Canals and continue to campaign for other closed navigations including the Kilbeggan Line and the Corbally Line of the Grand Canal. IWAI assistance to the campaign to re-open the Ulster Canal has also borne fruit with work well underway by Waterways Ireland.

IWAI Branches hold approximately 200 events each year across inland navigations with the wider communities in many locations. These events include boat rallies, harbour festivals, walks, social gatherings, heritage activities, family activities and youth focused events.

IWAI is the respected voice of the waterway user, lobbying and advising national and local government authorities as well as other bodies on all matters connected with the waterways including byelaws, pollution and future developments.

### **Goals of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland**

IWAI is set up as a limited company. The goals of the Association are set out in our Constitution which can be found here:

[IWAI Constitution 2022](#)



The organisation is currently comprised of 25 Branches:

TWENTY THREE ARE GEOGRAPHICALLY BASED	TWO ARE ACTIVITY BASED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlone</li> <li>• Barrow</li> <li>• Belturbet</li> <li>• Blackwater</li> <li>• Boyne Navigation</li> <li>• Boyle River</li> <li>• Carrick-on-Shannon</li> <li>• Coalisland</li> <li>• Corrib</li> <li>• Dublin</li> <li>• Kildare</li> <li>• Lagan</li> <li>• Lough Derg</li> <li>• Lough Erne</li> <li>• Newry</li> <li>• North Barrow</li> <li>• Offaly</li> <li>• River Bann and Lough Neagh</li> <li>• River Suck</li> <li>• Royal Canal</li> <li>• Shannon Harbour</li> <li>• Slaney</li> <li>• Ulster Canal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powerboat</li> <li>• Cruising Club</li> </ul>
	IN ADDITION THERE ARE FOUR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charts Special Interest Group (C-SIG)</li> <li>• Environmental Special Interest Group (E-SIG)</li> <li>• Tranquility Special Interest Group (T-SIG)</li> <li>• Nav-Watch</li> </ul>



## CHAPTER 2 – HOW THE IWAI IS ORGANISED

This section of the Branch Officers Handbook is designed to help members understand the organisation of the IWAI and the responsibilities resting with elected officers. It gives an overview of the roles of Members, Branches and Branch Officers, Council and Executive Directors.

### MEMBERS

On joining the Association a person or family usually nominate the Branch to which they wish to belong, and in the absence of such nomination, the Association's Membership Secretary will allocate them to a Branch as appropriate, normally one nearest the postal address. To be regarded as a member in good standing a member must have paid the current membership fee i.e. their status is 'active' on our membership system.

Members may attend events and a meeting of any Branch of the Association, however voting at such meetings is reserved to members of the Branch.

### BRANCHES & BRANCH OFFICERS

For a new branch to be formed, those proposing the branch must have a minimum of 10 people prepared to sign up as members. Proposals to form a new branch must be submitted to [honsecretary@iwai.ie](mailto:honsecretary@iwai.ie) in writing, who will advise as to the procedure to be followed.

The Branch should have a minimum of three officers:—  
Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. It should also have a position of Vice-Chairperson if possible. There should also be a member, who is not an officer, and who, together with one of the officers, will represent the Branch at Council (Council Representative). Each Branch must appoint a Child Protection Officer and a Safety Officer.

The Officers shall be elected or re-elected at the Annual Meeting of Branch members, except that when a new Branch is being formed. In this instance, the Association's Executive Directors shall appoint Officers to serve until such time as there are sufficient members to hold an Annual General Meeting at which elections shall take place. On seeking election to one of these posts the member must have paid the appropriate membership fee for the current year.

In the event of needing to change the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer in a branch midterm due to resignation etc. the procedure is to hold an EGM and elect new officers as required. This will also facilitate bank demands that will require sight of minutes indicating office holders were formally elected by the members. Immediately following any AGM/EGM the outgoing secretary must inform the national secretary of the change in officers with names, email addresses and phone numbers to be emailed to [honsecretary@iwai.ie](mailto:honsecretary@iwai.ie).

If a branch becomes inactive, the Directors have the power to dissolve that branch. In which event, the assets and finances of that branch will come under the control of the Directors in order to safeguard the resources of the Association.





## IMPORTANT NOTE

**The Executive Directors are responsible under the Companies Acts for the good and orderly running of the Association especially in the area of contracts and finance. Only the Directors may sign contracts or take out loans on behalf of the IWAI.**

**Branch Officers MAY NOT sign contracts, with the exception of services being provided for the holding of events.**

## BRANCH MEETINGS

At least 2 weeks' notice shall be given by the Secretary or any deputy acting on their instructions, of the details of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and of every general meeting. The notice should have the Agenda for that meeting. See chapter 7 for details relating to AGM agenda items.

A general meeting must be convened by the Secretary if requested by the Committee or on receipt of a requisition signed by at least four Branch members. The AGM of the Branch must be held in November or December each year at which the accounts of the Branch for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> October shall be tabled for approval, signed by the Chairperson and Treasurer once approved and forwarded to the National Treasurer without delay, accompanied by copies of bank statements.

Some Branches are organised by Committees, these are administered by a Committee comprising the Officers and additional Branch members elected at the AGM. The Committee has the power to co-opt further members to serve on it, but such co-opted members shall be subject to election at the next following AGM, and, if not then elected, shall not be eligible for co-option for at least 2 years.

The Committee shall meet when and where it or its Chairperson decides on giving to each of its members at least 7 days' notice or less if agreed by all committee members. Any three Committee members may call a meeting of the Committee. Three members are required for a quorum for any Committee meeting. When voting on elections and resolutions a show of hands will suffice unless at least two members present object, in which event, the vote shall be secret.

When a Branch conducts its business by General Meeting it is administered by the Officers. Meetings are held when and where it or its Chairperson decides but members must be given at least 7 days' notice or less if agreed. Any five Branch members may also call a meeting of the Branch. Five members are required for a quorum for the Branch meetings. When voting on elections and resolutions a show of hands will suffice unless at least two members present object, in which event, the vote shall be secret.

A Branch may appoint a Sub-Committee(s) or form a committee with another IWAI Branch.



## KEY ROLES ON IWAI COMMITTEES

### THE CHAIRPERSON'S ROLE

- Preside at all meetings.
- Endeavour to ensure that the Branch is represented at each Council meeting and that the representatives report back to the Branch on all Council meetings
- Call an AGM of the Branch to be held in November or December each year
- Ensure that the set of Accounts for that year up to 31st October, Minutes and Correspondence are ready for the meeting
- Use their best endeavours to ensure that there is at least one candidate for election or re- election to each office
- Ensure that tasks essential to the continued, safe operation of the Branch are allocated to officers
- Exercise a general supervisory role over the Branch to ensure that the officers and committees are performing their allocated tasks
- Ensure that proper accounting and financial controls are exercised over the Branch funds and property
- Ensure that one branch officer takes responsibility for recruitment and retention of members
- Encourage members to participate in Branch activities and join sub-committees thus providing for succession to both Branch and National offices
- Liaise with the Branch Treasurer to ensure all signatories on Branch bank accounts are updated following any change of officers at the AGM and that all signatories are members in good standing of the Association.

### THE SECRETARY'S ROLE

- Send out notices of all meetings to those entitled to attend
- Receive and deal with all correspondence
- Keep minutes of all meetings of the Branch and any Committee, and a record of all resolutions passed
- Carry out any reasonable duties requested by the Chairperson
- Ensure that all members attending and voting at the Branch AGM are members of the Association in good standing i.e. their membership status is 'active' on the IWAI membership system
- Ensure that all Branch officers standing for election, or serving on sub or joint committees, are members of the Association in good standing i.e. their membership status is 'active' on the IWAI membership system
- Where a Branch does not have a PRO, the Secretary must liaise with [editor@iwai.ie](mailto:editor@iwai.ie) to arrange branch content for the Inland Waterways News
- Within 7 days of the AGM, if there are changes of officers, the outgoing secretary must email the names, emails and phone number of the new committee members and details of those standing down to [honsecretary@iwai.ie](mailto:honsecretary@iwai.ie)

## THE TREASURER'S ROLE

- Keep proper books of accounts in accordance with the Association's accounting templates and standards
- Bank all receipts and regularly balance the cash book
- Encourage all new and existing Branch members to join the Association or renew their membership using the online system
- Make all payments directly from a branch bank account where possible
- Collect all outstanding debts and pay all duly approved bills as soon as possible
- Prepare Branch accounts and supporting schedules for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> October on the prescribed forms (the Accounts Package)
- Present the accounts to the AGM with copies for all persons expected to attend; answer questions on them raised by members and give explanations as required by the meeting; secure their approval by the meeting and have them signed by the Chairperson and Treasurer
- Send the signed Accounts and supporting documentation to the Association treasurer to arrive with them no later than 7 days after the Branch AGM
- Liaise as necessary with the Association treasurer
- Preserve the Branch's assets and ensure proper controls on receipts and payments and on the use of the Branch's assets
- Liaise and co-operate with the Association's membership secretary. Ensure that any subscriptions received locally are used to activate that membership on the online system
- Co-operate with other officers and members in all matters concerning the promotion of the Association and the work of the Branch

## MEMBERSHIP ROLE

- Takes responsibility for recruitment and retention of members

## PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLE

- Takes responsibility for branch public communications with members, key stakeholders, the media and the wider public. Use the policy document [IWAI\\_Public\\_Relations\\_&\\_Communications\\_Handbook](#)
- Provide branch content to [editor@iwai.ie](mailto:editor@iwai.ie) for inclusion in IWN (the Inland Waterways News)

## COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE'S ROLE

- To attend council meetings and represent the Branch's views at each council meeting
- To report to the Branch Committee and its members on Council activities

## IWAI COUNCIL

The affairs of the Association are managed by a Council consisting of the following:

- (a) The President
- (b) Vice-President
- (c) Honorary Secretary
- (d) Honorary Treasurer
- (e) The immediate Past President
- (f) The elected Directors
- (g) Two representatives from each Branch, the Chairperson or Secretary and one other member
- (h) Representatives of affiliated organisations such as the RCAG, Kilbeggan Harbour Restoration
- (i) Up to six members of the Association elected to the Council at the AGM. Persons co-opted by Council
- (j) The Council may from time to time, invite such other persons as it deems appropriate, to attend meetings

The Council meets up to four times a year. Agendas and papers for these meetings are emailed by the Secretary. Branch officers are encouraged to inform their Branches of the Council business and to attend as many meetings as possible.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & DIRECTORS

The day-to-day activities of the Association are dealt with by an Executive Committee. The Executive meets on a more frequent basis than the Council and ensures that the items discussed and agreed at Council are put into action.

The Executive of IWAI is made up of a maximum of 15 (Minimum of 3) members elected by the Annual General Meeting each year: President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer, Membership Secretary and up to 9 others, all of whom are Directors of IWAI.

The Immediate Past President is automatically elected to the executive in accordance with the Articles of Association. The Executive is empowered by the Articles of Association to co-opt additional non-voting members to the Executive as required.

While members frequently serve more than one term in office, they must put themselves forward for election at the AGM each year (except the Immediate Past President). A maximum of three consecutive three year terms is permitted under our Constitution.

The names of members putting themselves forward for election to the Executive are notified to all members of the Association as part of the package of information sent out prior to the AGM. In the interests of transparency, the names of those who are already known to be willing to serve on the Executive shall be published in Inland Waterways News.





## CHAPTER 3 – BRANCH ACCOUNTING

This section of the Branch Officers Handbook is designed to help Branches maintain and complete a simple but effective set of Branch accounts. It offers a standardised way to record and report on Branch financial details, makes preparation of accounts for AGMs simpler and quicker and will reduce the burden on treasurers in maintaining this important function.

The guidance is divided into 10 sections:

- (a) Definitions
- (b) Guidance Notes
- (c) Receipts Record
- (d) Payments Record
- (e) Bank Account Reconciliation
- (f) Adjustments
- (g) Income and Expenditure
- (h) Balance sheet
- (i) Handling cash
- (j) Relations with Donors and Stakeholders

### (A) DEFINITIONS:

**Receipts:** Amounts of cash, cheques etc. received during the year whether or not they refer to the current, past or future years.

**Payments:** Amounts paid during the year whether or not they refer to that year (as above)

**Income:** Receipts as adjusted for those referring to other years plus amounts due but, as at year end, not yet received.

**Expenditure:** Amounts paid out as adjusted for those referring to other years plus amounts owing but not paid until after year end.

\*Note, some Branches may not need any of these adjustments.

### (B) GUIDANCE NOTES

The IWAI as a limited company must conform to the Companies Acts and the principles of good corporate governance. Branches hold members funds and as such there is an onus on Branches to safeguard these funds and the assets of the IWAI which they are holding in trust.

The Treasurer should, not only keep good records, but be seen to be keeping good records. Such an approach ensures that every member and every other person seeing these records will have full confidence in the ability of the Branch and the Association to manage its affairs in a highly professional manner. As well as keeping the books it is the duty of the treasurer to exercise controls over the funds of the Branch. They should ensure that all dues are collected and banked: that all payments are in line with the objects of the Association and properly authorised and that all records are filed for future reference.





The Branch Treasurer may choose to use an online accounting program (eg, Quickbooks, Sage), Excel spreadsheets or a paper-based records system -whichever system works best for them.

### **(C) RECEIPTS RECORD**

This is an item by item record of each and every receipt of cash, cheque, postal order etc. as and when received. All receipts should be banked as soon as possible and the amount banked recorded in the record making it easier to reconcile against bank statements.

### **(D) PAYMENTS RECORD**

All payments should be made by branch cheque, online bank transfer or branch debit/credit card directly, where possible. Where an officer needs to purchase small value items for cash, valid receipts should be retained so costs can be reclaimed from the Branch Treasurer.

Additional items such as bank interest and charges should also be entered to Payments record as they appear on the bank statement.

Branches making purchases or awarding contracts for services in excess of €2,000/£2,000 should seek three quotes as a matter of course, which should then be assessed by the Branch Committee in relation to their value for money.

Rallies should be self-supporting from a combination of rally entry fees and sponsorship or donations.

Branches wishing to make any donation in excess of €1,000/£1,000 must first get approval from the IWAI Executive.

### **(E) BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION:**

The Receipts and Payments records need to be reconciled to the Bank Statement regularly, in particular for Year-end Accounts.

#### **Reconciling items:**

1. Receipt book items not on bank statement, eg, donation not yet banked.
2. Payments book items not on bank statement, eg, cheque written but not yet cashed.
3. Items on bank statement not on Receipts or Payments book, eg, bank charges.

A separate reconciliation may also need to be done for savings or deposit accounts.

There is an example of a Bank Account Reconciliation in the Year End Account spreadsheet circulated by the Honorary Treasurer.

### **(F) ADJUSTMENTS:**

This is the conversion of Receipts and Payments into Income and Expenditure.

1. Income: Receipts related to current Financial Year only.
  - Receipts record total minus items not related to current Financial Year;
2. Expenditure: Payments related to current FY only
  - Payments record total minus items not related to current Financial Year;



As well as the receipts and payments, as covered above, the Annual Accounting Report figures may have to be adjusted for amounts due to the branch on 31 October but not received until after that date (Debtors) and provision for amounts owing by the Branch but not paid until after 31 October (Creditors). Further there may have been similar items in previous year's accounts (and received / paid in current year) which must be reversed.

### **(G) INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES):**

The Summary Income and Expenditure Report (SOFA) is filled out under certain headings, common to all Branches and IWAI Executive, for its audit.

#### **Summary Income Notes:**

From the Receipts record enter the individual totals, as adjusted for Debtors (see section (e) "Adjustments" above).

1. Membership Fees from Executive (Capitation).
2. Donations and Grants received
3. Surplus on Functions or Surplus on Rallies.
4. Surplus on Merchandise Sales (Sales minus Cost of Sales)
5. Interest on Deposits.
6. Other Income. Add all the other income totals (if any) in the Receipts record and enter the total here.

#### **Summary Expenditure Notes:**

From the Payments record enter the individual totals, as adjusted for Creditors (see section (e) "Adjustments" above).

1. Secretarial, Postage and Stationery.
2. Branch Newsletters.
3. Losses on Functions. This item is the opposite of the equivalent item in the Summary Income. There will be only one entry in either Income or Expenditure.
4. Losses on Rallies. As in 3 above
5. Projects. This figure represents the amounts spent on Work Parties, Mooring Buoys, Submissions, and other activities designed to promote the objects of the Association.
6. Grants and Donations.
7. Bank Charges & Interest.
8. Depreciation. All branch assets should be depreciated over the course of 5 years, ie, 20% per year.
9. Add all the other income totals (if any) in the Payments record and enter the total here.



## (H) BALANCE SHEET (STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL STATUS)

The Balance Sheet (SOFS) is a snapshot of the Branch monetary value or financial status at 31<sup>st</sup> October each year.

### Assets:

1. Balances at bank – Current
2. Balances at Bank – Savings
3. Cash on Hand: Insert here any receipts not yet banked and ensure that they have been taken into Income.
4. Accounts Receivable or Debtors: This is the sum of all amounts due to the Branch, taken into Income but not yet received.
5. Stock: If any stock is being held by the Branch, the closing value should be entered here.
6. Property/Assets: This is the written down value of equipment, being the figure in the previous period, less depreciation, plus purchases during the year. The depreciation figure is that amount shown in the Expenditure.
7. Investments: Show here the cost value.
8. Other Assets: As in 7 above

### Liabilities:

1. Accounts Payable or Creditors: This is the opposite of 4 above.
2. Other Liabilities: List here any contingencies provided for in Expenditure and not included in 2 above.

The net of Assets & Liabilities figures is the “Accumulated Fund” of the Branch. This should match the accumulated fund at the end of the previous year plus the Surplus (or minus the deficit) for the current year. This is shown in the “Represented by” section and if everything is correct the Balance Sheet balances.

The Honorary Treasurer will send you the forms/spreadsheet for the current year and these forms will show how the previous year was dealt with and how to complete the current year using examples and explanations. Refer to ‘Guidelines’ sheet on Year End Accounts file.

The Honorary Treasurer (treasureriwai@gmail.com) is available to assist Branches in the production of accounts.

## (I) HANDLING CASH

The key principles governing cash handling by the IWAI are:

- All cash including cheques, postal orders, bank drafts, credit card and gift card donations is recorded and should be capable of being traced through to the branch bank account.
- All cash is banked and acknowledged at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Cash is at all times to be counted by two members or two authorized representatives of the ranch at events and functions.



## **(J) RELATIONS WITH DONORS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

Donors are encouraged to make donations directly to IWAI on-line, by cheque made payable to the IWAI or branch or by credit card where practical rather than cash.

Donors are encouraged never to make a cheque payable to a named individual.

A receipt should be issued for any donation received. Private companies and businesses may claim tax relief for donations of plant, equipment or provision of services to a charity.

To ensure evidence for the Revenue Commissioners if the donor is subject to an audit, it is good practice to also record the details of the donation in a Donors' List Report.





## CHAPTER 4 – BRANCH EVENTS

The purpose of this section of the Branch Officers Handbook is to provide IWAI Branches with guidance when organising and publicising events. These events should be seen as an opportunity for publicising the Association's objectives, recruitment and education. All IWAI branch organised events should feature in the IWN Calendar of events. Any ad hoc events should be notified to the Director responsible for insurance prior to public announcement.

### LAND BASED EVENTS

Events should be planned well in advance to ensure that they are well organised and well publicised. If you are organising a speaker for the meeting it is important to bear in mind what will likely be of interest to all those present. It is worthwhile having a local member as a backup speaker in case the guest speaker cancels at short notice. It is worth contacting your speaker a few days in advance to make sure they still have it in their diary. Remember to invite other local branches to your event.

### BRANCH MEETINGS

#### LOCATION OF LAND BASED EVENTS OR MEETINGS

Careful thought should be given to finding a suitable venue in which to hold meetings. Suitability, facilities and cost can vary considerably.

- Consider ease of access including wheelchair access, parking, lighting, temperature, refreshment / welfare facilities etc.
- Consider WIFI availability if Zoom is required
- Check fire routes and exits are clear and available for use
- Check location of nearest defibrillator
- Check location and availability of first aid kit, fire extinguishers and assembly point(s)
- Know the number of people present (Sign-in sheet)
- Ask the owner / manager of the premises to share their risk assessments if available. If there are none available you can prepare a risk assessment for the venue using the blank templates in the IWAI safety statement [IWAI\\_Safety\\_-Statement](#)

Is the venue easy to find and serviced by good public transport? Publicise Eircode / postcode

Is location suitable for wheelchair users or those with mobility difficulties

### HEALTH & SAFETY

Most meetings are held in a public halls or public houses, but it is necessary for the organiser of such meetings to ensure that the following points are checked:

- Fire doors must be unlocked and free access to them should be available.
- Fire extinguishers should be available and serviced within the last year.





- An evacuation point should be designated.
- The exact number of people present should be known. (Sign-in sheet)
- The location of a first aid kit should be known.
- The location of the nearest defibrillator should be known.

There should be a written risk assessment for each venue used. The Association's Health and Safety Statement contains template risk assessments which can be downloaded and edited to make specific to the venue:

[IWAI Safety Statement](#)

## WORK PARTIES, RALLIES \ WATER BASED EVENTS

### WORK PARTIES DUTIES

Please see the published IWAI Guidelines:

[Safety Rules for Routine Work Parties](#)

and

[Safety Rules for Project Work Parties](#)

### CRUISE IN COMPANY DUTIES

Please see the published IWAI Guidelines at:

[IWAI Safety Recommendations for Event Planning](#)

and

[Cruise in Company - Event Guidelines and Forms.](#)

### KEY POINTS

Agree a cruise in company itinerary:

- Draw up a schedule for visiting the venues
- Meet and discuss the proposed itinerary with premises owners / lock keepers
- Record meetings, contact name(s) and telephone numbers
- Appoint a Cruise in Company event coordinator / Commodore, Safety Officer and Child Protection Officer
- Compile a contingency itinerary as a backup plan

There are a number of key duties in the event guidelines and a flow chart to help you in planning events.

### BE FRIENDLY

If new members attending your event enjoy themselves, they stay with us and come to future events.

Check the sign-in sheet for new names, welcome them and give them a list of future events or meetings. Tell them about IWAI's work and how they can become more involved should they wish and invite them to join online through the IWAI membership system.

Appoint someone at meetings who is tasked with being hospitable to new or non-members, welcoming them to the meeting and telling them more about IWAI's work and how they can become more involved, should they wish.



## CHAPTER 5 – PROTECTING MEMBERS

This section of the Branch Officers Handbook is designed to help Branches by informing them of the various obligations placed on the Association in the areas of Health & Safety, Child Protection and Insurance.

### HEALTH & SAFETY

1. The Association has a Health & Safety policy in place. This is available at [IWAI\\_Safety\\_Statement](#) and should be brought to the attention of all new officers and those involved in the running of events. See also [IWAI Safety Recommendations for Event Planning](#).
2. Health & Safety obligations impact on the Association, Branches, the organisers of events and individual members. Officers should familiarise themselves with these obligations.
3. Branches should appoint a Safety Officer. In the absence of the Safety Officer at any event the most senior member of the committee in attendance takes on that role.
4. The key to protection is carrying out Risk Assessments, the IWAI Health and Safety Statement contains template risk assessments that can be edited and made location and activity specific.
5. Branch safety officers should make every effort to attend Association health and safety briefings when organised.
6. Health & Safety briefings should be provided at events where appropriate.

### CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. The Association has a Child Protection Policy in place a copy of which is available at [IWAI Child Protection Policy](#) and [Child Protection Policy Appendix](#).
2. It is a statutory requirement for each Branch to implement and operate this policy.
3. Each Branch must nominate a Branch Child Protection Officers (BCPO) and Event Child Protection Officer(s) (ECPO) and inform the Branch membership of the appointments. (The BCPO and ECPO can be the same person)
4. Contact details of the BCPO & ECPO must be provided to the IWAI Vice President who will assume the role of National Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection under this policy.
5. BCPOs & ECPOs must complete an online Child Protection training programme and undertake Garda Vetting through the IWAI. Vetting held for other professional or voluntary roles in other organisations do not suffice. Vetting must be undertaken every two years.
6. Any BCPO can act as ECPO at any IWAI event.
7. The nominated ECPO must attend throughout the event.

### INSURANCE

1. The IWAI at national level has taken out Insurance Policies to indemnify IWAI officers in the event of a claim for negligence.
2. The indemnity covers IWAI officers and designated organisers at IWAI organised events for members and the general public.



3. Event organisers and IWAI Officers are only covered by IWAI insurance if they are members of the Association in good standing i.e. their membership status is active on our online membership system.
4. Boats attending IWAI organised events are required to declare that they have a minimum of 3rd party insurance cover for the period of the event
5. Branches must inform [honsecretary@iwai.ie](mailto:honsecretary@iwai.ie) of planned events / activities they intend to hold in a year. Any particular activity that carries high risk such as work parties should be highlighted.
6. Volunteer members participating in work parties must be fully trained to use any powered tools.
7. Volunteer members participating in work parties must read and sign a copy of the IWAI Safety Rules for work parties.
8. Branches should record attendance at these events and work parties and retain these records for **3 years as required by the Association's Insurance Policy.**
9. A cover note to show the insurance policy is in place is available on request from Executive.
10. Non-members can be invited to events on a once off basis as a 'try it and see' tool for member recruitment.

## MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

1. The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination and intimidation and places considerable emphasis on establishing and maintaining Equality of Opportunity and Dignity and Respect within the Association.
2. The Association has a **Member Protection Policy** in place a copy of which is available at [IWAI Member Protection Policy](#).
3. This policy document explains what is meant by Equality of Opportunity and Dignity and Respect from the perspective of the IWAI and outlines measures that will be taken to achieve them.





## CHAPTER 6 – COMMUNICATIONS

This section of the Branch Officers Handbook is designed to help Branches communicate effectively with members, key stakeholders, the media and the wider public. There are many reasons why IWAI seeks publicity and some are set out below:

- Increase our profile, locally, regionally and nationally
- Attract new members
- Place a subject/activity on the public agenda, i.e. create and raise awareness/interest of activities in IWAI
- Create a platform for ongoing media interest
- Encourage public support and endorsement of IWAI
- Deliver in-depth information and messages e.g. water abstraction, navigation closures
- Provide lobbying and support to further the cause of improving the inland waterways

### **The activities of public relations include:**

- Publicity- sending out a planned news release/article through selected media
- Promotion- to seek support for IWAI goals and objectives
- Issues management- identification of issues of potential concern to IWAI and the development of a system to respond to them
- Media relations- dealing with the media in seeking publicity for, or responding to, media interest in the inland waterways.
- Merchandising support- the use of IWAI sales materials e.g. burgees, ensigns etc.
- Event management- involves planning activities or staging events, which will attract media attention. A rally or cruise in company would be typical examples
- Promotion- the goals and objectives of IWAI
- Public Relations involving community and government relations - which is dealing with officials within the community and working with legislative groups and agencies

### **COMMUNICATION METHODS**

This section aims to develop our collective skills in utilising as many different channels of information sharing as we can - get people talking about IWAI. Refer the IWAI Social Media Policy at <https://www.iwai.ie/policy-documents/>

### **Some platforms for your consideration include:**

- The IWAI Website
- Your own Branch page on IWAI.ie
- Your local town /county website, use both volunteers and statutory agencies
- Tourism websites and events guides - get some exposure for your rallies, events, and launches
- Facebook, personal, Branch other, Twitter



- IWAI Forum
- Inland Waterways News, National and local media including press and radio

Branches should compile a list of local contacts to help with promotion.

- Festivals Committees in your area - e.g. Scarriff Festival, Co. Clare; St. Patrick's Day Festival Dublin

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Try and identify the key stakeholders in your area e.g. local politicians, heritage officers, clubs etc., and try to establish a rapport so that you may use joint communication methods and reach a wider audience. Remember the importance of the IWN as a communication tool.

## REASONS TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

It is important for IWAI as an organisation to remain visible to its members and to the public in general. Branches can utilise the tool of Press Releases to inform the general public about events, issues and information relating to the inland waterways.

Further detailed information is available at [IWAI Public Relations and Communications Handbook](#).

The Association PRO ([PRO@iwai.ie](mailto:PRO@iwai.ie)) is also available to assist Branch PROs in their duties.

## INLAND WATERWAYS NEWS (IWN)

Our quarterly magazine is a hugely influential publications that is sent to many stakeholders. It is important that branches promote themselves by highlighting the work they are doing and the activities they are undertaking. It is equally important that high quality content for the magazine is sent to the editor in good time for publication. Contact [editor@iwai.ie](mailto:editor@iwai.ie) for more information.





## CHAPTER 7 – MANAGING MEETINGS

This section of the Branch Officers Handbook is designed to help Branch Officers run effective meetings to allow efficient running of business and achieve results.

There are five key steps to running successful meetings:

1. Plan
2. Prepare – Agenda
3. Notify
4. Record – Attendance – Key points – Actions
5. Running the meeting

### 1. PLANNING THE MEETING

A meeting has to have: a **Purpose**, an **Agenda**, and a **Timeframe**.

Most meetings within the Association are usually general meetings with a variety of items to be discussed and planned.

### 2. PREPARE YOUR AGENDA

Set an **agenda**. List the items you are going to review/discuss. It may help to assign a time limit to each agenda item.

Set a **timeframe**; at the very least set a start and end time. It may help by setting the duration for each item on the agenda. These should total to the overall meeting timeframe.

You can avoid the pressure for 'Any Other Business' at the end of the meeting if you circulate a draft agenda in advance of the meeting and ask for any other items for consideration.

#### NOTIFY

To ensure that you reach all your members obtain an up-to-date membership list for your Branch by contacting the National Membership Secretary at [membership@iwai.ie](mailto:membership@iwai.ie).

### 3. RECORD – ATTENDANCE – KEY POINTS – ACTIONS

#### ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS SHOULD BE RECORDED

The Secretary or another person nominated by the Chairperson should keep minutes of the meeting. The minutes should record who attended, what was discussed, any agreements that were reached, and any action items that were assigned.

Soon after the meeting the minutes of the meeting should be distributed, usually by email, to all who attended and any members who did not attend. Distributing the minutes informs those not at the meeting of the progress that was made and reminds everybody of their action items.

The minutes should be retained in a safe place either in paper or electronic format. The minutes should be agreed at the next meeting.



## 4. RUNNING THE MEETING

### DON'T WAIT

Start on time. If someone arrives late, don't go back and review what has already been covered.

### STAY FOCUSED

Sometimes a meeting may stray off topic. The Chairperson should interrupt whenever the discussion strays from the topic under discussion. These new topics can either be tabled until later or scheduled for their own meeting.

Ask attendees to silence all mobile phones and other personal electronic devices. If appropriate, have attendees introduce themselves when speaking.

The Chairperson should make sure that speakers are not interrupted by anyone while they are speaking, even if they disagree strongly. Members should be encouraged to wait until the proper time and be acknowledged by the chairperson to speak.

Be clear and concise when speaking and be sure what you are saying is relevant to the topic being discussed. Maintain all requested confidences relative to the meeting.

## 5. BRANCH AGM

The above guidance applies equally to the running of an AGM. The following is a sample AGM Agenda with items that should be on the agenda. A quorum of 5 is required at a branch AGM, this can be comprised of members in the room and members joining online (if option given). All members must be in good standing.

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. Correspondence
5. Chairperson's Report
6. Hon. Secretary's Report
7. Hon. Treasurer's Report & sign off accounts
8. Election of Branch Officers
  - Chairperson
  - Vice Chairperson\*
  - Hon. Secretary
  - Hon. Treasurer
  - Webmaster\*
  - PRO\*
  - Branch Executive Members\*
  - Child Protection Officer(s)
9. Nomination of 1 Branch Representatives to IWAI Council
10. AOB

Items 2, 7, 8 & 9 should be proposed and seconded.

All roles become vacant and are open for election at the AGM

\*The branch can fill these roles as they see fit. Roles can also be shared. AGM must elect a Chairperson, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer.



## IWAI RALLIES & CRUISING IN COMPANY EVENTS - POLICIES & GUIDANCE

- [Safety Recommendations for Event planning – 2024](#)
- Event [Safety Statement](#) & Risk Assessment Guidance – 2020
- [Child Protection Policy](#) and [Child Protection appendix](#) – 2018
- [Member Protection Policy](#) – 2019
- [Cruise in Company – Event Guidelines & Forms](#)

## IWAI BRANCH POLICIES, GUIDANCE & ADMINISTRATION

- [Branch Officers Handbook](#)
- Branch Account Spreadsheets – [Cash Book](#) & [Cheque Book](#)
- [Safety Rules for Project Work Parties](#)
- [Safety Rules for Routine Work Parties](#)
- [Special Branch Project Fund – Application Form](#)

## IWAI LIVEABOARD POLICY

- [Liveaboard Policy – Short](#)
- [Liveaboard Policy – In Full](#)

## ASSOCIATION POLICIES, GUIDANCE & ADMINISTRATION

- [IWAI Garda Vetting Policy](#)
- [Public Relations & Communications Handbook](#). First Edition 2010
- [IWAI Logo Manual, Use, Design](#)
- [Communications](#) – Sample News Release
- [Asset Management Procedure](#)
- [Banking Security Policy](#)
- [Website Privacy Statement](#)
- [New Membership System – November 2023](#)

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER POLICIES & GUIDANCE

- [IWAI Trustees – Code of Conduct](#)
- [IWAI Conflict of interest – Conflict of Loyalty Policy](#)



## IWAI CONSTITUTION

- [IWAI Constitution November 2022](#)

## SAFETY ON THE WATER

- [IWAI Boating Code of Conduct including Fast Power Craft](#)

## DEPT OF TRANSPORT TOURISM AND SPORT

- [Marine notices](#)
- [The Law regarding PFDs for Pleasure Craft](#)
- [Code of Practice – The Safe operation of Recreational Craft](#)





