



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of
Ability West held on Monday, 28th May 2018,
at 7:30p.m., in The Clayton Hotel, Galway.**

PRESENT: Mr. Ray Kelly, Chairman, presiding
Mrs. Breda Crehan-Roche, Chief Executive
Mr. Patrick J. Daly, Company Secretary
Mr. John McHugo, Director of Finance
Various Attendees, Approx. 70

APOLOGIES: 40 apologies were received in advance of the meeting

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Carol A. Browne, Recording Secretary

Mr. Ray Kelly, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting of Ability West, and called on Ellen Jennings to commence the formalities and advise re housekeeping rules.

1. BEST BUDDIES PROGRAMME – CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Mr. Kelly welcomed Linda Keane, Volunteer Programme Manager, John Farragher, Ellen Jennings and Sara Fuller, President, Best Buddies Programme NUIG, to present on the programme and their experiences during the 10 years of the Best Buddies Programme. Linda reported on how Ability West brought the Best Buddies programme to Galway. The Chief Executive secured funding from the AIB Better Ireland Programme and within two years the Best Buddies School Programme began in May 2008. Sinead Anderson was the first Best Buddies Facilitator. One of the core values of the programme is mutually beneficial and peer friendship so people in our services got older and their buddies moved on to college, it became apparent that we should move along also, and the Best Buddies College Programme was launched in 2010 in NUIG. In 2011, it was launched in GMIT. Best Buddies has changed the lives of the individuals involved in Ability West but it has also changed the lives of students and young people who have aged in the programme over the 10 years with us.

Linda advised that she still meets former students who are now working who tell her that Best Buddies was the best part of their TY or college experience. Ability West is the only organisation in the country delivering this programme. Students have been given the opportunity to learn about what life is like living with a disability and they have learned the true value of equality, social inclusion, adapting to the needs of others and most importantly, accepting difference.

Linda introduced John Farragher to share his experience of the Best Buddies programme. John advised that he is a service user and employee of Ability West and became involved in the programme at the beginning, 10 years ago. During this time, he has made many friends and often meets up with for a catch-up at different events. John thanked Linda and Paddy Barrins for their support of the programme.

Linda referred to the Best Buddies NUIG programme and introduced the current President of this society, Sara Fuller, whose energy and enthusiasm has ensured the success of this programme in NUIG. Sara reported that she had been involved in Best Buddies for the past three years and when she signed up to it, she had no idea what she was getting involved in. Best Buddies has been a fantastic experience for her in many ways, not least public speaking. Sara advised that her Best Buddy, Ellen, has taught her so much over the past few years, particularly the importance of friendship, being kind and caring to each other. Friendship is at the core of Best Buddies and it really

does have the power to change lives. Sara reported that none of the students involved in Best Buddies consider themselves volunteers, they are just hanging out with their friends. In 2018, Sara was one of 13 individuals involved in NUIG Best Buddies committee and all 13 have such positive things to say about the programme. As a committee, they recognised the platform they had in the college to promote the integration of people with intellectual disability. Various events were held throughout the campus in 2018, one of the highlights being a Friendship Walk which was such a huge success. Another highlight was when Adam Harris from As I Am, spoke on the campus about his disability and turning it to his advantage. Sara reported that they rely on support through their social media platforms and often get very positive messages about the programme. Sara said that she could not recommend the programme enough and thanked Ability West for introducing it.

A video of the NUIG Friendship Walk was shown at the meeting.

Linda referred to the role of the Volunteer Department is to enhance lives, build a social network and create opportunities for fun for those attending our services. Some of the friendships made through the Best Buddies programme are what Linda considers to be the greatest successes of the volunteer programme.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF AGM 2017

Mr. Kelly asked that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 29th May 2017, as provided at the meeting, be taken as read. The minutes were accepted on the proposition of Mr. Jack King and seconded by Mr. Kevin Newell.

There were no matters arising.

Mr. Kelly then welcomed the Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Mike Cubbard, to the meeting and invited him to address the meeting.

The Deputy Mayor said the he was delighted to be at the AGM to represent the city and as his term is coming to a close, he is particularly delighted to accept the invitation to be at the meeting. The Deputy Mayor said that it was a welcome opportunity to acknowledge the significant work the organisation has done and does for children and adults with intellectual disability across Galway City and County over the past 56 years and thanked all involved with the organisation. The organisation was set up by parents and friends in 1962 but like all organisations faces challenges, be it funding, volunteers, etc. He said that is important that people support community groups like Ability West into the future. The Deputy Mayor wished all well for the future.

3. ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MR. RAY KELLY

Mr. Kelly reported at the meeting there is an opportunity to review the performance of the organisation over the past year and look at how the current year is shaping up. He reported that it was another financially challenging year for the organisation, however, he advised that services and supports continued with frontline services being protected. The operating budget for 2017 was increased on the previous year's budget taking into account full year costs for six individuals who transferred to our services from another service providers in 2016, and the full year adjustment for 2016 school leavers.

Mr. Kelly advised that Ability West prepared its financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice and the Companies Act 2014. Copies of the financial statements were circulated at the meeting and are available on our website: www.abilitywest.ie. Mr. Kelly referenced the Directors' Report, Structure, Governance and Management in the annual report for information and advised that the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017 would later be presented by Mr. John McHugo, Director of Finance. .

During 2017 the Charities Regulator published "Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public" which is to assist the Board of Directors to run the organisation effectively, avoiding difficulties in respect of fundraising activities and complying with our legal duties, while also boosting public trust and confidence. Mr. Kelly reported that Ability West introduced a

number of new policies and procedures for fundraising and donations and these are available on our website.

During 2017 work on the Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018 progressed, and a report is included in the Annual Report on page 17. Work will shortly be commencing on a new strategic plan which will be published in 2019.

Mr. Kelly reported that Ability West underwent monitoring inspections by HIQA in 2017 and the renewal of registrations began towards the latter end of the year as registration is only for three years. He advised that a number of our residential and respite services have had their registrations renewed this year, and he acknowledged everyone who contributed to this success.

Mr. Kelly welcomed Mr. Kevin Newell who commenced on the Board of Directors in June 2017. He thanked the departing board members for their support, hard work and commitment to Ability West and people with intellectual disability over the years; in particular Mrs. Bridie Newell, Mr. Jack King, and two of the longest serving directors – Mrs. Marie O'Dowd and Mrs. Mary O'Mahony. Mr. Kelly paid particular acknowledgement to Marie who served as a director for almost 28 years, and Mary who served for almost 19 years.

Mr. Kelly welcomed the Moycullen Branch of Ability West which commenced operation in June 2017. The branch members have already held a number of fundraising and community events in their 12 months of operation and we wish them every success into the future.

Ability West is reliant on the generous support of branch members, staff, volunteers, the general public, and friends of the organisation for their assistance with supporting service users, organising and supporting fundraising events and raising awareness of intellectual disability and the services we provide. Mr. Kelly advised that the organisation is grateful to everyone for their ongoing support. Fundraising activities provides the organisation with funds for our capital programmes which includes: new buildings and refurbishment of existing buildings, the purchase of specialised equipment and minibuses for services. Without these funds, it would be difficult to maintain and develop high quality services. Mr. Kelly advised that there is an article on fundraising and community development in the annual report which details many examples of events and fundraising activities held in 2017. Mr. Kelly congratulated all involved.

Mr. Kelly thanked his fellow Board Members for their support and commitment, advising that the Board Members work in a voluntary capacity and take their role as governors of the organisation very seriously which helps to set a high standard of governance that permeates throughout the organisation.

Mr. Kelly advised the organisation continues to operate in financially difficult times and more and more in a compliance driven environment. In this regard and on behalf of the Board of Directors, he like to thanked the Chief Executive, Breda Crehan-Roche, members of the Senior Management Team, Middle and Frontline Managers and all staff for their ongoing hard work, dedication and commitment to providing high quality services and supports to people with intellectual disability and autism. Mr. Kelly thanked Carol Browne for her work as Recording Secretary for the Board meetings and this meeting.

Finally, Mr. Kelly thanked and acknowledged everyone who has supported Ability West during the past year.

4. ADDRESS BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MRS. BREDA CREHAN-ROCHE

The Chief Executive welcomed Gerry Burke, HSE, Eamon Loughrey and Seamus Durkin, Brothers of Charity Galway, Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív to the meeting. She welcomed Audrey Pidgeon, Director of Client Services, who joined Ability West in April. The Chief Executive reported that there were no funding cuts to the organisation's HSE allocation for 2017, the initial core funding allocation for the year was €23.8m which took into account the full year effect of funding provided in 2016 and also some once-off development funding for the new community hubs.

The Chief Executive advised that notwithstanding this, 2017 was a particularly challenging year which was compounded by a number of issues, such as safeguarding concerns, endeavouring to respond to the changing needs of an ageing cohort of service users, emergencies arising, the ever increasing demands for respite and supports, and the increasing trend of children with complexities and medical fragility, all of which we endeavoured to respond to from within existing resources. Unfortunately, the organisation also experienced increased non-pay costs last year which can be attributed with rising costs of insurance and the ongoing maintenance of our facilities to ensure they are of a high standard and comply with all legislation.

During the year we worked hard alongside service users and their families to meet all of these challenges and the Chief Executive said that she pleased to advise that we managed to protect frontline services and respond to some additional needs.

The Chief Executive to acknowledged and thanked staff, service users and their families for their co-operation and assistance during the year. Unfortunately, we did not achieve a breakeven financial outturn for 2017 as John McHugo will report on later during his presentation of the financial accounts.

The Chief Executive reported that Ability West provided the following services in 2017:

- 116 special school places
- 435 adult day places
- 121 residential places
- 297 respite places
- 43 home sharing/contract family places
- 78 community support places

In 2017, Ability West provided 10,095 residential respite bed nights to adults, and 1,810 residential respite bed nights to children.

The Chief Executive reported that there were many major and minor renovations carried out last year under our capital programme, including: roof repairs to The Glebe Resource Centre; internal painting and replacement of external timber cladding at St. Joseph's Training Centre, refurbishment of Whitestrand Lodge apartment to provide additional respite facilities for children; renovations to the New Directions Hubs in Galway City and Moycullen; water pipe replacement in Abbeytrinity Group Home and St. Teresa's Respite, the addition of double French doors in a number of group homes for fire safety and evacuation.

During 2017 we also completed a training facility in one of our older buildings, which was originally a sheltered workshop, part of which had not been utilised for many years. This work commenced in 2016 and was completed on a phased basis by external contractors and our own maintenance team as and when funds became available. The addition of this state-of-the-art training facility for staff and service users is particularly beneficial as it has discontinued the costs associated with utilising external training facilities. The Chief Executive acknowledged Peter Burke, Manager of Ancillary Services, Ronan Waldron, Maintenance, and Community Employment Scheme Participants, for all their work on this facility.

During 2017 we were able to replace three of our buses for Whitestrand Lodge Respite Centre, Macotar Lodge and Palace Fields Group Homes.

Building renovations and refurbishments, and replacement vehicles are only possible through funds raised and donations made to our capital programme which is specifically used towards the purchase of new buildings, renovations to existing buildings, the purchase and/or replacement of specially adapted buses and specialised equipment for service users.

The Chief Executive reported that as part of new public procurement guidelines launched in 2017 (Office of Government Procurement), Ability West was obliged to advertise procurement opportunities and in this regard, Ability West e-tendered for our external transport routes. Contracts were awarded in September 2017 and she advised that there was minimum disruption for the service users during

this change. It is envisaged that savings from the process will be realised in 2018. The Chief Executive acknowledged the huge work undertaken by Peter Burke, Manager of Ancillary Services, and John McHugo, Director of Finance.

The quality of services is very important and as a provider, we continue to improve our services by auditing our services, seeking feedback from service users, their families and staff, and learning from the findings of external independent audits and inspections. This is an ongoing process and the Chief Executive thanked all Managers and Persons in Charge, their staff teams, staff in Quality & Compliance, Client Services, HR, Finance, CEO's Office, Administration and Support Services.

All of our residential and respite services received HIQA registration since inspections commenced in 2015. Ability West was in the process of renewal of registrations and the Chief Executive advised that to date we have received registration for three respite services and five residential services, and it is expected that the renewals of all residential and respite services will be completed this year or early 2019. In 2017 we had 22 unannounced HIQA inspections and the learning and outcomes from these inspections has been transferred to other residential and respite services.

An Excellence Through People surveillance audit was completed by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) in April 2017 during which the Assessor audited our services against this standard which was first obtained in 2012. We retained accreditation and most recently we had an audit earlier this month and again we were successful in retaining this accreditation. The Chief Executive acknowledged Enda Maloney, Director of Human Resources, and all involved in same.

Ability West is accredited to the ISO standard I.S. EN 9001:2015 which has increased focus on leadership, management, being customer focussed and continuous improvement. NSAI completed a surveillance audit in July 2017 and we attained this latest standard. Only recently we had this year's ISO audit which went well and we are currently awaiting the report from NSAI. The Chief Executive acknowledged Eileen Costello-Conneely, Quality and Compliance Manager, and all involved in achieving this standard.

During 2017, Ability West set up a new community hub in Galway City for young people leaving school and for adults leaving rehabilitative training. The Chief Executive advised that this hub was set up in line with New Directions policy which embraces the premise of contribution and participation in the community. She acknowledged the many staff who were instrumental in setting up this service.

In 2017, Barna-based, web development company, Bad Dog, developed a new website for Ability West on a pro bono basis. During the many meetings between Ability West and Paul Cotter and his team at Bad Dog, Paul proposed creating a new logo for the organisation along with the development of the new website. Ability West had re-branded in 2007, given that this was 10 years ago it was timely to look at this possibility. Board Member, Kevin O Flatharta, had already completed a piece of work on logo development and re-branding, and the colours in our new logo can be attributed to him. With this work and the graphic design expertise of Paul and the team in Bad Dog we now have our new logo which is modern, colourful and eye-catching. The Service User Council were consulted about the changes to the logo and their feedback was extremely positive.

Paul and his team gave up a huge amount of time and provided expertise to bring this project to fruition, and the new logo and website were launched in November 2017. We were delighted to be joined on the occasion by Mahmood Sobhani from Bad Dog, Micháel Donoghue, Galway Senior Hurling Team Manager, and Galway senior players Jason Flynn and John Hanbury. The Chief Executive thanked all for their generosity and volunteerism in this regard.

The Chief Executive advised that the feedback on the new logo has been extremely positive from service users, staff and the general public. She noted that service users are very happy with it and they feel it is a logo that better represents Ability West and the work that we do.

The Best Buddies Annual Ball took place in May 2017 with over 150 people in attendance. It was a wonderful night for all involved. This Ball celebrated the 10th anniversary of the programme and was a very special occasion which was enjoyed by all. The Best Buddies Programme has been and

continues to be a huge success in Ability West and great partnerships have been forged with the students and societies of NUIG and GMIT as a result.

The Chief Executive congratulated and thanked all involved and to the many volunteers who dedicate so much time and give so much support to children and adults with intellectual disability and autism. She thanked Linda Keane, Paddy Barrins and Patricia Donoghue for their work with the Best Buddies Programme.

The Service User Council continued to meet throughout 2017. John Farragher, Chairperson of the council, chaired a very successful Service User Consultation Meeting in November 2017 with 120 people attending the event. The Chief Executive and Senior Management Team attended part of the meeting to respond to questions including: funding, work and leisure, access to volunteers, etc. and we briefed the service users about developments within the organisation. There were also ongoing meetings throughout the year between the council, management, relevant staff members and external parties in relation to various issues such as transport, human rights, the new logo and corporate colours, advocacy among others.

The Chief Executive reported that the Family Forum was postponed in late 2017 due to the adverse weather at the time. However, a family forum took place in April 2018 in Tuam and another is meeting in early October. The meeting provided for good discussion and feedback and also an opportunity to network. The Chief Executive advised that the organisation is always happy to hear from people and welcomes feedback. Both Audrey Pidgeon, Director of Client Services, and Eileen Costello-Conneely, Quality and Compliance, will be looking at ways to best communicate with parents and families going forward.

The Chief Executive advised that the trend of challenging times has continued into 2018 with budgets being tight and we need to provide services and supports as effectively and efficiently as possible. She stated that safeguarding continues to challenge the organisation and we continue to have a no tolerance approach to any form of abuse. The changing needs of service users and services, demand for respite and residential services continues to increase.

Ability West is acutely aware of the changing needs of our ageing population and while we have active ageing programmes in place throughout the city and county, an area we are looking at is a model that caters for an ageing profile who do not have such an active lifestyle but would benefit from having a more appropriate service for their needs rather than attending an adult day service or active ageing programme. We also are endeavouring to further work in the development of a model for people with early onset dementia/Alzheimer's.

The Chief Executive advised that funding for respite and for alternative respite was provided by the HSE in the first quarter of 2018 which will make a big difference for many service users and families. We continue to roll out a comprehensive capital programme and we appreciate the generosity of so many of our supporters.

She advised that we will be developing a purpose-built day service in Headford following the securing of a site and we are working on plans and a planning application will be submitted to the County Council in the coming months. The Chief Executive acknowledged Board Member, Mick Finnerty, for his support in securing this site. She advised that the organisation currently rents a small hub in Headford. She advised that Boston Scientific chose Ability West as their Charity Partner in 2012 and a huge amount of money raised that year has been ring-fenced for a trike park. Unfortunately, over the years, we were unsuccessful in securing a site or part thereof in the past five years to develop this, however, she was delighted to advise that this will feature in the plans for the Headford Site.

The Chief Executive reported that we are planning to re-locate the respite service from Mountbellew to Glenamaddy as the existing house in Glenamaddy would provide for a more homely environment for respite breaks. In order to accommodate the respite the day service currently in Glenamaddy would re-locate to St. Francis, Kilkerrin, once a purpose built extension has been approved for planning.

Work will also be commencing on a state-of-the-art extension for Clochatuisce Group Home in Galway City which is a priority requirement due to the changing needs of the residents.

The Chief Executive advised that the capital funding programme is critical in relation to these developments and other minor developments. Without this funding, it would be impossible to continue providing high quality facilities for the people availing of our services.

The Chief Executive reported that Ability West works closely with Carraig Dubh Housing Association in relation to housing for adults with intellectual disabilities. To date, Carraig Dubh Housing Association has developed a number of houses and apartments which are now occupied by adults with intellectual disabilities who avail of our services and are tenants of Carraig Dubh Housing Association. The most recent developed by CDHA has been a block of four apartments which will provide for a more independent lifestyle assisted by technology and support staff.

During 2017, four service users passed away: Kathleen Glynn, Fiona McNamara, Bernie and Michael Gibbons. Many of our service users, families, staff, branch, board members and volunteers also experienced bereavements and we extend our deepest sympathies to them. We especially remember Chris Conneally, former Principal of St. Joseph's Special School and former board member of Ability West, who passed away in April 2017. Chris was a great advocate for children and adults with intellectual disability and was made an honorary member of Ability West in 2011. May all who passed away rest in peace.

The Chief Executive thanked the Chairman, Ray Kelly and Board Members for their guidance and support and for giving so generously of their time, expertise and skills to Ability West. She thanked service users, their parents, families and carers for their ongoing co-operation. Special thanks to members of the Senior Management Team, Assistant Directors of Client Services, Human Resources and Finance, Department Heads, Managers, Unit Directors, staff, branch members, Community Employment Scheme and TÚS participants, and all volunteers for their ongoing dedication and commitment to people with intellectual disability and autism. Thanks also to Carol A. Browne, Executive Assistant, for organising tonight's meeting, project managing the annual report and for her ongoing support and invaluable assistance.

The Chief Executive thanked HSE CHO2 staff, in particular Tony Canavan, Chief Officer, Elaine Prendergast, Head of Service - Social Care, John Fitzmaurice, General Manager - Disability Services, Mary O'Donnell, Disability Services Manager Galway, Liam Fogarty, Head of Finance, and Gerry Burke, Integrated Services, for their ongoing support and assistance. She also thanked the many statutory, non-statutory and voluntary service providers that Ability West works with for their ongoing co-operation and assistance.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive advised that Ability West works in partnership with service users and their families we will work together to ensure that we provide person centred quality services and supports to ensure that the people we are privileged to work with, be of service to and support are empowered and enabled to live the lives of their choice in their local communities.

5. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2017

Mr. McHugo reported that a full copy of the Financial Statements was provided at the meeting due to changes in legislation and in particular the commencement of the Companies Act 2014 which has meant that the financial statements must meet the new requirements laid down by the act. In order to ensure compliance, the financial statements for 2015, 2016 and 2017 have been prepared and audited in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in Ireland". Additionally, even though the Charity Regulator has not finalised the adoption of the "Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities", better known as the "Charities SORP", the Directors have elected to have regard to the "Charities SORP" in the preparation of the Financial Statements.

Mr. McHugo acknowledged the presence of Dermot Callanan from FCC Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors and acknowledged the help and assistance provided by FCC in the preparation of the financial statements.

Mr. McHugo advised that previously Revenue Income and Capital Income were recorded separately however, in the new format of the Financial Statements, all income and associated expenditure is recorded in "The Statement of Financial Activities" (SOFA). Another departure from previous years is that Income and related Expenditure are recorded under the headings of Restricted and Unrestricted Funds and Pension Funds. Mr. McHugo explained that "Restricted Funds" in related to funds which we received that must be expended as contracted, for example, the HSE provide us with funding on an annual basis which must be expended in accordance with the Service Arrangement in place between us. On the other hand, "Unrestricted Funds" refers to funds which are spent or applied at the discretion of our Board of Directors. Fundraising and Donations are an example of this, where the funds received are spent on the development of buildings and to purchase of much needed equipment and minibuses. The Pension Funds refer to the required accounting treatment of our old Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.

Mr. McHugo highlighted particular items of importance for consideration:

All income and associated expenditure is reported in "The Statement of Financial Activities" (SOFA) on page 10 of the Financial Statements. Under the heading of "Unrestricted Funds" various sources of income are detailed. In relation to "Fundraising and Donations" a total of €96,059 was received in 2017. During the year the Branches raised €34,499 and a branch by branch summary is detailed on page 35 of the Annual Report. This is a significant sum and we are extremely grateful to the Branches for the fantastic fundraising they carry out. In addition to Branch fundraising, a further €61,560 was received in 2017 from various other Fundraising initiatives and Donations. Examples of various Fundraising initiatives and Donations are detailed on pages 32 and 33 of the Annual Report.

Mr. McHugo thanked everyone involved in raising and/or contributing over €96,000 last year. Without this continued support the organisation would not be in a position to continue the development of buildings and to purchase of much needed minibuses and equipment.

Mr. McHugo advised that the other income included under the heading of "Unrestricted Funds" includes various contributions, interest earned and sundry incomes received during the year. In total €256,793 of "Unrestricted Funds" is recorded for the year and this has been added to our "Unrestricted Designated Fund".

Included in "The Statement of Financial Activities" (SOFA) is Income and Expenditure under the heading of "Restricted Funds". Total Restricted Income for the year amounted to over €26.6 Million and this comprised of €25.046 Million from the HSE and €1.556 Million from other sources. A detailed breakdown of the income received from all sources is detailed on page 28. Mr. McHugo explained that when associated expenditure of €26.457 Million and a Pension related adjustment of €0.151 Million was taken into account, a Deficit in Restricted Funds of €6,262 is recorded for the year. When this is added to the opening "Restricted Funds", the balance on this fund amounts to a negative (€353,588) as at 31st December 2017.

The other information reported in "The Statement of Financial Activities" (SOFA) under the heading of "Pension Reserve" refers to the accounting treatment of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. Full details in relation to this can be found in Note 14 on pages 21 to 24.

Mr. McHugo summarised the overall financial results for the year as detailed in "The Statement of Financial Activities" (SOFA).

Net Movement in "Unrestricted Funds"	€256,793
Net Movement in "Restricted Funds"	(€6,262)
Net Movement in "Pensions Reserve"	€420,520
Overall Net Movement in Funds	€671,051

Mr. McHugo referred to pages 28 and 29 of the Financial Statements which contain detailed Supplementary Information relating to both Income and Expenditure analysed under the headings of Revenue and Capital.

Under the heading of Revenue, total Income for the year amounted to €25.884 Million with Expenditure amounting to €26.199 Million. Mr. McHugo explained that this meant that a Revenue operating Deficit of €314,841 was recorded for the year. Similar to 2016, the Deficit in 2017 was incurred due to the ever-increasing demands on our services and the increasing costs associated with the provision of services. He advised that we cannot continue to incur such deficits and accordingly we are working closely with the HSE to secure additional resources to meet the changing needs of our Service Users. Additionally, managers must continue to monitor all expenditure on an ongoing basis to ensure that we do not incur further unsustainable deficits.

Under the heading of Capital, total income for the year amounted to €1,009,729 with Expenditure amounting to €435,617. However, Mr. McHugo noted that €735,510 of the Capital Income was in respect of grants from the Department of Education and Skills to cover the cost of an extension to St. Joseph's Special School in Galway and to cover costs relating to the Planning and Design of a new school building for St. Oliver's Special School in Tuam.

Mr. McHugo reported that the overall financial position of Ability West is detailed in the Balance Sheet on Page 11 of the Financial Statements, where you will note that total Net Assets amount to €21,052,567 as at 31st December 2017 compared to €20,381,516 as at 31st December 2016.

Mr. McHugo noted the Balance Sheet is broadly similar to previous years however he drew specific attention to two areas: 1) Long Term Loans relating to Capital Assistance Funding received from both Galway City and County Councils over the years to fund the purchase of Group Homes are now being amortised on an annual basis. In effect this means that the balance on each loan is written off on a straight line basis over the term of the charge on each property. Note 15 on Page 24 provides detail in this regard; 2) The various funds detailed on the Balance Sheet were summarised as follows:

1. The "*Restricted Funds*" of (€353,588) refers to ongoing revenue operations, i.e. the balance of funds from the HSE and our other funders.
2. The "*Unrestricted Designated Funds*" of €19,093,265 refers to Capital funds, i.e. the balance of funds which are primarily represented by Tangible Assets such as Properties and Motor Vehicles.
3. The "*Pension Scheme Reserve*" of €2,312,890 refers to the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme and this is matched by the Pension Asset shown at the top of the page under "Fixed Assets".

Mr. McHugo advised that the Financial Statements are compliant with the reporting requirements of both the Companies Office and also the Office of the Charity Regulator and he is confident that they provide full transparency of our financial affairs to any reader.

Mr. McHugo acknowledged the help and support received from our Board of Directors and the Finance Committee under the Chairmanship of Kevin Flavin, our Chief Executive, my colleagues on the Senior Management Team and the various Managers and Unit Directors throughout the organisation. Their help and support in the ongoing management of our finances is much appreciated.

Mr. McHugo thanked Tony Canavan, Elaine Prendergast, John Fitzmaurice, Mary O'Donnell, Liam Fogarty and in particular Gerry Burke from the HSE for their ongoing support.

Finally Mr. McHugo thanked his colleagues in the Finance, Administration and Human Resources Departments for their ongoing commitment and hard work. Their work in the background is appreciated.

Mr. Anthony O'Connor proposed and Mr. Mick Finnerty seconded the adoption of the Annual Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017.

6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Mr. Kelly informed the meeting that the organisation's Auditors, FCC Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, had indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014. The appointment and remuneration of the auditors was proposed by Mr. Páraic Lawless and this was seconded by Mr. Mick Finnerty.

7. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Paddy Daly, Company Secretary, reported that as per Articles 4 and 8 of the Articles of Association, regions were advised to nominate two Directors to the Board, one of whom must be a family member. A family member is defined as a parent, grandparent, legal guardian, sibling, spouse of a sibling, child of a sibling, aunt, uncle, spouse of an aunt or uncle or child of an aunt or uncle of a service user. Mr. Daly was notified of the regional nominees by 1st May 2018 as follows:

Galway City Region Kevin Newell and Ray Kelly
East/South Region Páraic Lawless and Mary Treacy
North Galway Region Mick Finnerty

The Company Secretary called for ratification of these nominees and these were ratified on the proposition of Mr. Jack King and this was seconded by Mr. Anthony O'Connor.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Questions were sought by Mr. Kelly from the attendees and as none were arising, there was no other business to cover.

Mr. Kelly reported that the Tuam Branch of Ability West had recently notified the organisation of closure of the branch and he acknowledged the commitment, wonderful work and support of all the current and former members over the past 52 years. In particular, he acknowledged the current Chairperson, Mrs. Bridie Newell, and founding member of the Tuam Branch, Mrs. Nellie McGrath.

Mr. Páraic Lawless proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Mr. Ray Kelly and acknowledged his commitment and dedication to Ability West. He reported that Mr. Kelly brought huge expertise to the role of Chairman, noting that he is very professional and ensures that the business of the Board is fair, equitable and transparent.

The Chief Executive thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.