



**LIMERICK  
CIVIC TRUST**  
CIVIC PRIDE IN ACTION



*Annual Report & Heritage Review*

2015 – 2016





### **Trustees**

Mr. Gerry Griffin  
Mr. Pat Daly  
Mr. Mark McMahon (retired January 2016)  
Mr Semus Gubbins  
William Peacocke (joined January 2016)

### **Auditors**

Grant Thornton

### **Legal Advisors**

Leahy & Partners

### **Registered Office**

The Bishops Palace,  
Old Church Street,  
Kings Island,  
Limerick.

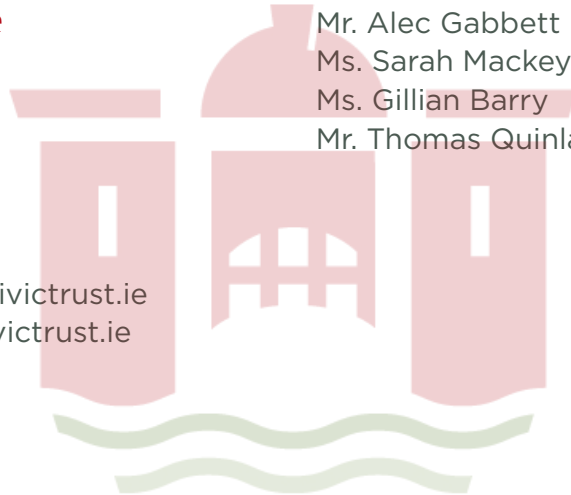
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### **Executive Board**

Chairman Mr. David Deighan  
Vice Chairman Mr. Brian McLoughlin  
Cllr. Marian Hurley  
Mr. Jim O'Donnell  
Ms. Gabrielle Wallace O'Donnell  
Ms. Elenora Hogan  
Ms. Patricia Roberts  
Ms. Jennifer Gabbett  
Mr. Colm deBarra  
Mr. Cian O'Carroll  
Mr. Ken Bergin  
Mr. Thomas Wallace O'Donnell  
Mr. Alec Gabbett  
Ms. Sarah Mackey  
Ms. Gillian Barry  
Mr. Thomas Quinlan



### **Committees Responsible to the Board**

Audit, Legal & Finance Committee, chaired by **Mr Alec Gabbett**

Projects Committee, **Mr James O'Donnell**

Events & Activities & Fundraising Committee, chaired by **Ms Jennifer Gabbett**

Bishops Palace Museum Board, chaired by **Mr Hiram Wood**

Bishops Palace Collections Committee, chaired by **Mr Colm deBarra**

Historical Committee, chaired by **Mr Cian O'Carroll**



**Chairman’s Report**

**CEO’s Report**

**Extracts from 2014/2015 Accounts**



## Introduction



It has been a privilege and an honour to have served as Chairman of Limerick Civic Trust for the last two years. I want to thank the Executive Committee, the members, sponsors, and friends of the Trust who have supported our work in so many ways.

2015 has been a year of transition and change. A new Chief Executive was appointed in June. I especially thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee for their enormous efforts to assist with the recruitment process. The Recruitment Committee, set up by the Executive Committee, deserve a special thanks for the time and effort they put into the recruitment process, and thanks to both Limerick IT and No1 Pery for accommodating the many meetings and all the interviews.

In June, David O'Brien took over as Chief Executive Officer and he has brought an efficient, enthusiastic, and effective management style to his tasks and responsibilities.

Our professional advisors have advised on structural change that is necessary in the light of legislative changes around the operation and structures of Trusts and voluntary organisations. Limerick Civic Trust now needs to adapt to new methods and structures in these ever changing times.


The Limerick Civic Trust name, brand, activities and culture will continue. The structure will change to a company limited by the guarantees of the members.

I would also like to welcome Mr William Peacocke as a Trustee and say a very special word of thanks to Mr Mark McMahon who has stepped down as a Trustee. We are extremely grateful to Mark for all his commitment on our behalf over recent years.

## Projects

The Civic Trust is driven by projects, of which we have a number of significant new starts in the pipeline, a number of previous ones being renewed and most, if not all, of our ongoing projects continuing.

Projects are delivered in four principal areas: -

- 
- 1 The conservation and preservation of historic and valuable buildings.
  - 2 Environmental improvement and conservation to create amenities for the benefit of the community.
  - 3 Collaboration projects with other organisations and institutions in historical and cultural activities, for example, St Mary's Cathedral and Shannon Heritage, Limerick City and County Council, the University of Limerick and ERVIA.
  - 4 Education, Culture and Artistic events and activities. 2015 was the year we re-established the Limerick Schools' Art Competition where the quality and standard was high and we learnt much from the schools and the committed teachers that got involved bringing the Civic Trust to a new audience.

Limerick Civic Trust operates through partnerships and connections. Currently, we are in partnerships projects with:

- **Limerick City and County Council:** Conservation at Mount St Lawrence's Cemetery and the Cemetery Chapel; the canal bank and riverside footways - clearing and tidy ups and "the street a week" cleaning project.
- **The Wild Life Services:** Footways and nature paths along the canal banks and riversides.
- **Local Communities and parishes in various parts of Limerick:** Open and play spaces and cemetery maintenance.



- **The Hunt Museum and Limerick Markets Trustees:** Grounds maintenance.
- **St Mary's Cathedral:** Walking Tours.

The principal funding for the labour resources engaged by the Trust is the Community Employment Scheme of the Department of Social Protection and Training that involves over 70 participants or trainees at any one time. Through the Community Employment Scheme, individuals are allowed the opportunity to improve their core skills, learn new skills and are exposed to constructive challenges of the work place. They are also assisted in finding long term employment.

The Trust's Chief Executive is the Manager of the Scheme demonstrating how a public resource, for the best interests of the city, is supporting and contributing to the personal development and re-training of unemployed people and facilitating their return to the labour force. The turnover of this type of labour force is high and in 2015 40% transferred to full time or part time employment. We offer all the participants career coaching, CV preparation and interview training as an element of their training and personal development.

## **The Bishop's Palace**



The Carroll Collection has been transferred to the Bishop's Palace as a public exhibition. June O'Carroll Robertson's representatives, John and Ann Isherwood visited this permanent exhibition in June. Also, the Chairman, Hiram Wood and Tony Cahill travelled to meet June O'Carroll Robertson at her home in Andover, Hampshire in May. June O'Carroll Robertson has kindly transferred the copyrights of her two books to Limerick Civic Trust. This gift presents the opportunity to re-publish both with the support of a suitable sponsor.

As the Bishop's Palace becomes more a visitor centre than an administrative office, we are recruiting and training volunteer docents to act as guides for visitors to the Bishop's Palace and St Munchins Church and Cemetery. The recruitment of docents has been mainly through PROBUS clubs in the Limerick and Shannon area. I would like to acknowledge the work of Hiram Wood, Tony Cahill, Colm

deBarra and Cian O'Carroll in making the transition of the Bishop's Palace possible. It is becoming an exhibition centre and an historical research centre in the heart of Limerick's Mediaeval and tourism zone.

## **Membership, Fundraising and Finance**

As a voluntary organisation, we depend on the contributions of members, sponsors, the local authority, and the public. The era of large grants and competitions with monetary awards is passing. This presents the Trust with a number of challenges. If we are to continue delivery on our commitments, we need to;

- increase the number of contributing members,
- explore new types of membership,
- formulate new lasting relationships with public bodies by demonstrating competent methods of delivering civil community projects.

Maybe we will also need to use this challenge to examine other ways and means to become more commercial to affect positive outcomes in the area of conservation, historical research and education.

We run various fundraising events that raise necessary additional financial resources and create awareness of our presence and work in Limerick. I thank our volunteers who plan and organise the Business and Ladies lunches, and other activities that create opportunities to engage corporate Limerick in our events. Jennifer Gabbett's and Liz Griffin's contributions make these happen. A key fund raiser is the annual Golf Classic organised and managed by Pat Moriarty.

We are a voluntary organisation where the volunteers who offer their services and participate in our work and projects are the unsung heroes, bringing energy and enthusiasm into action.

Undertaking very large projects requiring significant capital



investment should not deter Limerick Civic Trust from becoming involved; however, such projects should always have a viable end use before commencing.

I would like to acknowledge the financial support of Limerick City and County Council, Ervia, McMahons, Limerick Institute of Technology, the University of Limerick and the JP McManus Foundation for their generous support throughout the year.

Again, in 2015 Limerick Civic Trust, as a not for profit organisation, has managed to create a small surplus as we enter a new year.

## **Oral History**



In 2015 the Civic Trust enhanced its relationship with University of Limerick with the launch of the Limerick Civic Trust's Oral Archive. This is an oral archive of the voices of the people of Limerick recalling their history and real events in their lives. This project started by Denis Leonard in the 1990's consisted of recording the stories of over 150 Limerick citizens at the time. Through the co-operation and support of the Gluxsman Library at the University of Limerick, the Oral Archive has been digitised and preserved. It will become accessible as an archive of Limerick's people and their memories for all to use.

Special thanks to the unyielding support of Cian O'Carroll, Ken Bergin of the Gluxsman Library and Professor Don Barry, President of the University, for their great efforts bringing this stage of the project to a conclusion. The Civic Trust is committed to continuing the bigger project of collecting voices and images of the past and will continue to add to this oral archive in time to come.

## **Limerick's so called "Royal Mile"**

I refer to the route from Thomond Bridge and the Bishops Palace to John's Gate. This is one of the oldest transverse city routes and it is the very same route today as it was in 1610 and earlier.

With a wealth of history surrounding our headquarters at the Bishops Palace on Old Church Street it is an obvious leap to look down what is Limericks Royal Mile past our immediate neighbour Kings Johns Castle, down Nicholas Street and leaving Saint Mary's Cathedral on our right as we head through Mary Street, towards Baals Bridge, Broad Street and the into John's Square. With the assistance of our valued partners Limerick City and County Council, Shannon Heritage, and our neighbours (the people who today live or own businesses along this route), we can re-establish the route as a significant tourism trail. There is much work we can attend to here.

While matters may progress slowly, it is with initiatives such as the Walking Tours and the engagement with our friends in the various locations that we will accomplish this goal.

## **Conclusion**

The future of the Limerick Civic Trust is looking very positive; project teams are active, the Executive Committee is very creative and the management and leadership of the organisation and schemes are in good hands.

I especially mention our Social Employment Scheme Supervisors, Gerard Imbusch and Bernard O'Reilly and the office staff lead by John Collopy. We are very fortunate to have such excellent supervisors who are totally dedicated and loyal to the culture and aims of Limerick Civic Trust.

One of the most pleasant tasks as Chairman is often handing over the reins and this I do to one of the most able and capable of people - Brian McLoughlin our incoming Chairman. I would like to wish Brian the best for his term in office and assure him of my loyalty and support. Given his unique skills and vast experience it augers well of the future.

**David Deighan**  
**Chairman**  
**10th March 2016**

## CEO's Report

As we have noted in previous reports, Limerick's plan for 2030 embraces a number of key Heritage projects involving the restoration and conservation of a number of historic sites alongside the beautification of the city and county.

Limerick has signs of optimism that we might be about to achieve what some towns and cities in other parts of Ireland and throughout the United Kingdom have: the common purpose for a sound and robust framework which provides a degree of certainty for the next twenty years.

One of the sticking points has been the assertion that Limerick needs a huge expansion programme, and this has divided opinion between the political parties. As the rate of growth in Limerick is very dependent on the commercial landscape and inward investment, there needs to be a degree of flexibility on all sides in how they manage their expectations against resources and capacity to manage the inevitable changes ahead over the next number of years.

Calculating how many homes are needed to meet this demand is complicated by the fact that Limerick has a so-called 'backlog of need'. This, with the back drop of an almost depopulated city centre, the attraction of inner city living needs to be revisited and a solution to support and provide incentives to those willing to take the leap needs to be found.

The consequence of all these issues is that some analysts suggest we should aim to provide greater numbers of new homes per year over the remainder of the Local Plan. But where to put them is the biggest question. And what impact they will have on the local infrastructure, traffic count and transport network, utilities, schools and the Green Belt all needs consideration.

From a sustainability viewpoint, it makes no sense to create commuter suburbs, where the population commutes to Limerick City and its hinterland or elsewhere for their work. We need to plan for the minimum of inward and outward migration and make just







as much effort to create employment locally, if we wish to create a fully sustainable and expanding community that can reanimate the medieval, Georgian and other aspects of Limerick City and surroundings with people living and using the streets, the parks and the public areas.

Finally, it has been a great honour to be at the helm of the Limerick Civic Trust. The board, the directors and Trustees have all been very welcoming and supportive as I begin the task of understanding how this ship sails. As the most recent to embark, it is important for me to acknowledge those who have gone before me; the vista today is due largely to the heights my predecessors achieved.

### **Project Review 2015**

When reviewing our activities in 2015, it is worth noting the level of impact the Trust had without a manager for the first 6 months. This was all due to the determination and hard work of the chairman David Deighan with the assistance of the Scheme supervisors Ger, Bernard and John who were ably assisted by Catherine and Caroline in the office.

2015 has been a year where the organisation looked at itself and its future. It earmarked over fifty key projects for Limerick City alone in our Heritage report, expressed a desire to expand further into County Limerick, and identified a number of new strategic partnerships. The board examined the direction of the Limerick Civic Trust, and supported a number of key changes in how the organisation projects itself through various mediums such as print, online, and social media. The effect of this new approach has seen over 30,000 people reached through Facebook alone. While little of this can be capitalised in the short term, it does get the message of the Limerick Civic Trust out and directly under the nose of many previously out with our circle. It is planned in 2016 to have a programmed media campaign managed to drive traffic and clarify the mission and remit of the Limerick Civic Trust to an ever growing audience. A few projects worth mentioning below are:



**The Canal Bank Walk:** the Trust has maintained the Canal Bank for some time but in late 2015 they commissioned a new path to run the length of the Corbally side of the canal, this is expected to be finished March 2016.



**The Limerick Markets:** the LCT provides six members of the CE Scheme to the LMT. The number was raised from three in 2014. They are there to assist with the smooth running of the markets. Without this relationship with the Market Trustees the Markets would not be able to function in the current form.

**Kings Island Community Gardens:** Opened in 2011 in a partnership between LCCC, Regeneration, and the Civic Trust, this project has gone from strength to strength as an enjoyable public amenity and an allotment open all year round.

**Mount Saint Lawrence Cemetery:** Mount St Lawrence cemetery is a particularly great example of what the Limerick Civic Trust can achieve in a short space of time; the trust has tendered to almost 200 graves and restored over 150 to date. The ambiance and attraction of the site has been greatly enhanced and is a credit to all involved.



**Mount Saint Lawrence Mortuary Chapel:** the Civic Trust has completed phase one of the restoration of the Mortuary Chapel. The end result can be seen in glimpses on the LCT Facebook page where there is a very short video of the before and after. The comments and response to our efforts on this site have been overwhelming. We are now engaging with our partners to promote the next stage of restoration leading to an end use and reopening of this wonderful Victorian miniature church.



**The Hunt Museum:** After a successful trial period of seconding a C.E. worker to the museum, the Trust placed two workers to undertake landscaping and maintenance work and other improvements at the front and rear of the building.

**Maintaining ancient burial sites:** St. Johns (C of I), John's Square, St. Michaels, the Jewish burial ground, St. Patricks, St. Munchins (C of I) to name just a few.



**Floral Display in Church St.:** Window boxes and hanging baskets are filled and tended to throughout the spring, summer, and autumn months decorating the houses in Church Street and The Bishops' Palace and beautifying the area.



**Street a Week Campaign:** Building on the success of Limerick's entry into the Tidy Towns, the Trust launched its "Street a Week" campaign two years ago and this year the initiative was greatly enhanced by the addition of a hot water power washer provided through the kind support of the JP McManus Foundation. The project involves power washing streets, removal of gum, cleaning of graffiti, weeding, and general cleaning of the streets. The project moves around the city in an attempt to maximise its overall impact.

**Walking tours of Medieval Limerick:** The Trust is engaged with continuing the existing walking tours and creating a programme of new walking attractions in partnership with other partners such as St Mary's Cathedral and King John's Castle.

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Two fixtures in the Events Programme which rarely get a mention in the Annual Report are the Christmas Lunch and the Ladies Spring lunch, both held at 1 Pery Square. These events serve an extremely useful purpose, the former raising much needed funds for the Trust and the latter providing the opportunity for interested parties to hear about the Trust's activities and the challenges facing the City and County of Limerick.

Beyond that, they are also occasions for members to meet informally and to talk to members of the Board. The success of these events also owes much to Jennifer Gabbett and her team.

During the period covered by this review, there were several memorable members' events. From the launch of the Carroll Collection, to the members city tour, to the handover of the LCT historical Oral Archive and concluded with the full days walking tour of three of the most historic and significant buildings in Limerick - Bishops Palace, St Mary's Cathedral and King John's Castle - where



each venue had its own tour guide from the LCT.

These walking tours have proved very popular and are often over-subscribed. For obvious reasons, we have to limit the numbers but, wherever possible, we will try to arrange repeats, either in the same or subsequent years.

Other events included visits to buildings and locations of special interest. Churches, museums, theatres, talks and gardens are being investigated for the coming year.



## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Trust's aspiration to further develop both membership numbers and the services we offer to members has reinforced the need for a dedicated member's office driving a very committed team of volunteers who would work assiduously for the Trust's membership. With the aid of a resourceful and capable membership secretary, we would continue the crucial and exacting work of administering our individual membership and its database.

During the year, email broadcasting to the membership was extended and improved. We are producing a quarterly newsletter which is emailed to all members willing to accept the mail. The e-zine is designed to disseminate the Trust's news in a user friendly manner. Many of you have valued the Trust's ability to communicate with greater immediacy using email, keeping you updated about the Trust's activities, advising you of short notice events and giving an opportunity of participating in events organised by our colleagues.

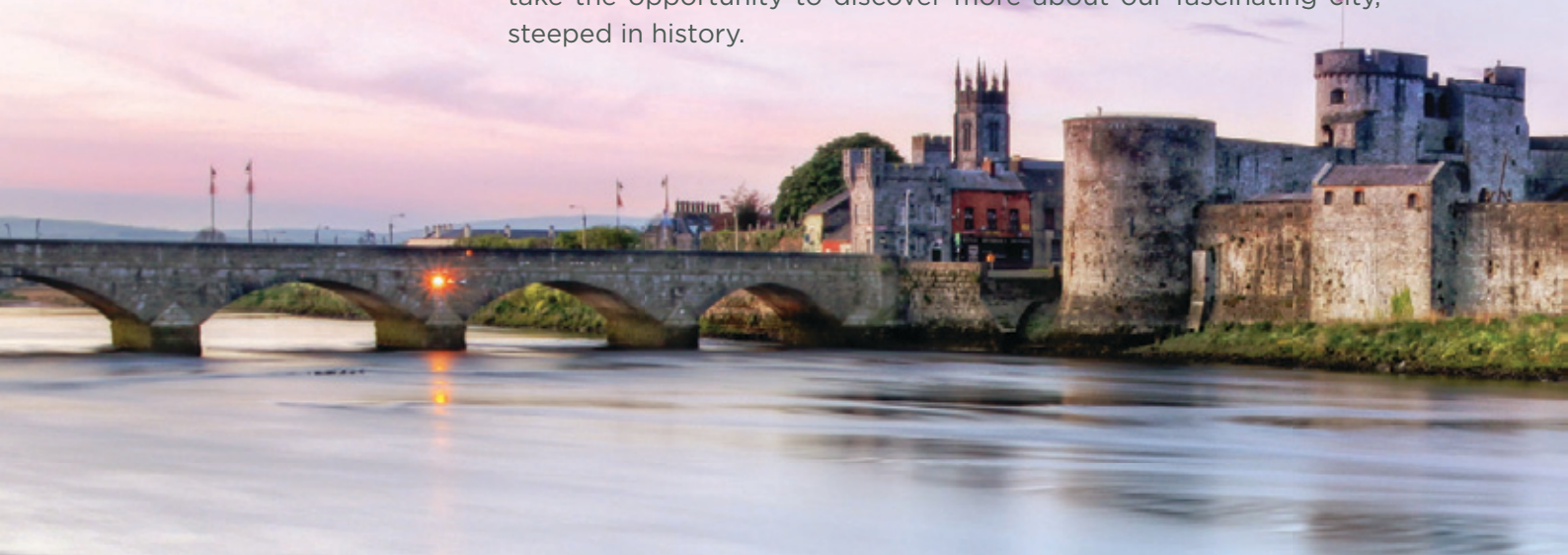
We are hoping to extend communications with the membership by looking at ways in which we can encourage active involvement in the scope of the Trust's work in the future, by using online polling for instance and other online tools.

The Trust is fortunate in having an active, informed and committed membership to help safeguard the future of our City and we are very grateful for their contributions.

### **THE LIMERICK CIVIC TRUST WEBSITE**

<http://www.limerickcivictrust.ie>

The Civic Trust set up its website some years ago, in 2015 it was redesigned. This was a welcome step forward - a modern organisation is expected to have an active online presence that ties in with other social media. We will continue to refresh our site so people enjoy exploring the site, are encouraged to become members and take the opportunity to discover more about our fascinating city, steeped in history.





## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Extracts from Limerick Civic Trust's two key financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2015, namely the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet. They indicate that the Trust had a satisfactory year in financial terms.

These Accounts are not the statutory accounts but a summary of information relating to both the statement of financial activities and the balance sheet.

The full financial statements from which this summary is derived have received an unqualified opinion from the Trust's auditors, Grant Thornton. These summarised accounts do not give sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. The full financial statements were approved by Trustees on the 10th March 2015 and will be delivered to the Charity Commission and Companies House. The full financial statements including the Report of Directors and the Auditor's Report may be obtained from the charity's registered office.





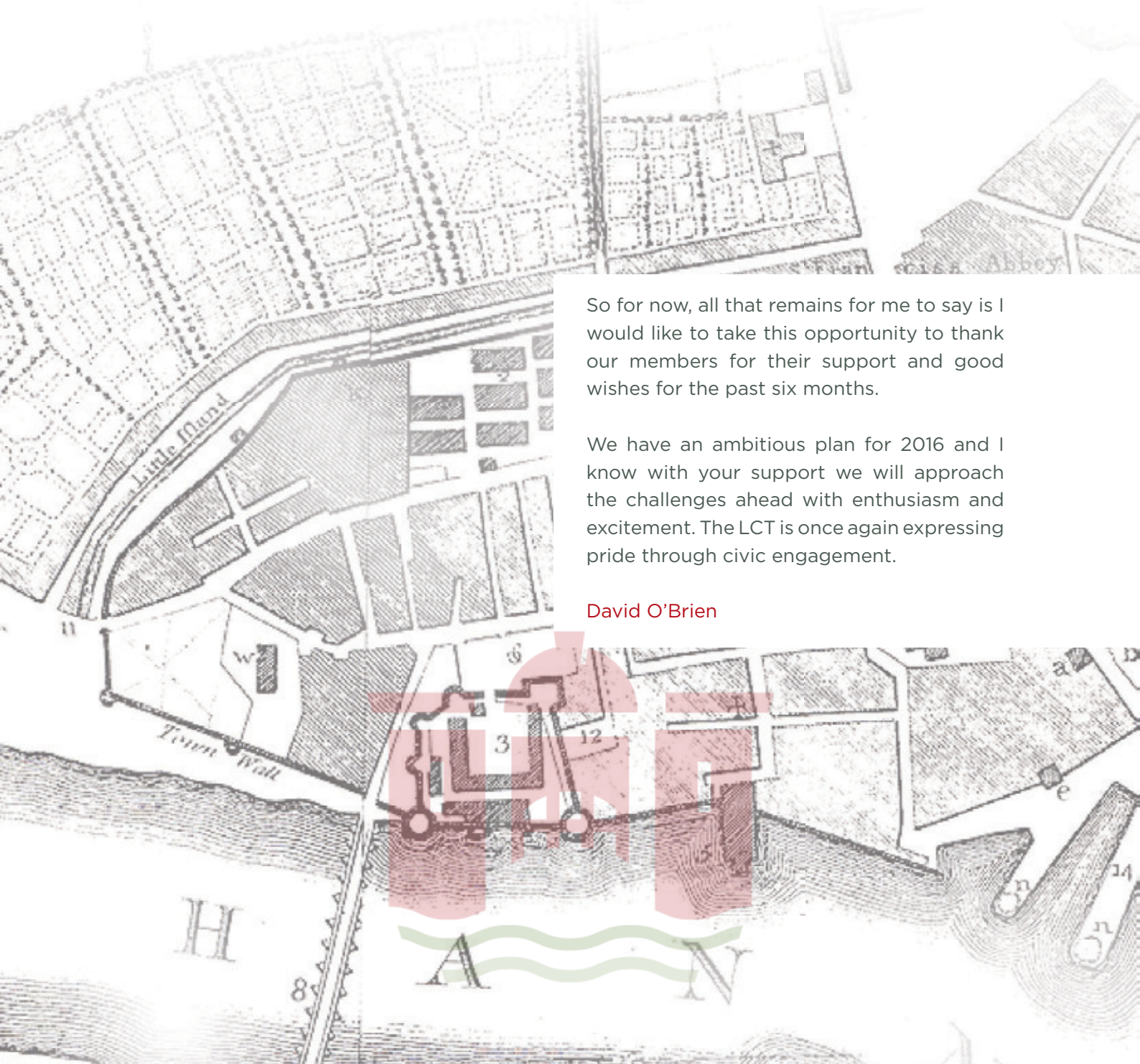
## Summary of Results for the Financial Year Ended 31 December 2015

### Income & Expenditure for the year 31 December 2015

	Limerick Civic Trust	The Limerick Civic Trust Limited	12 months ending 31 Dec 15 total	15 months ending 31 Dec 14 total
Revenue	212,606	984,459	1,197,065	1,516,009
Administration expenses	(210,979)	(975,705)	(1,186,684)	(1,490,852)
Operating surplus	1,627	8,754	10,381	25,157
Bank interest	(249)	(1,407)	(1,656)	(6,303)
Exceptional item	-	-	-	12,112
Surplus for the year/period	1,378	7,347	8,725	30,966

### Balance sheet as at 31 December 2015

<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Tangible assets	1,512	129,587	131,099	125,308
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Stocks	-	333	333	2,110
Debtors within one year	32,345	48,241	80,586	131,821
Cash at bank & at hand	57,051	33,785	90,836	58,450
Creditors within one year	(42,097)	(24,623)	(66,720)	(84,121)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	47,299	57,736	105,035	108,260
Creditors greater than one year	(48,840)	-	(48,840)	(55,000)
<b>Net (Liabilities)/Assets</b>	(29)	187,323	187,294	178,568
<b>Capital &amp; Reserves</b>				
Members funds	(29)	187,323	187,294	178,568



So for now, all that remains for me to say is I would like to take this opportunity to thank our members for their support and good wishes for the past six months.

We have an ambitious plan for 2016 and I know with your support we will approach the challenges ahead with enthusiasm and excitement. The LCT is once again expressing pride through civic engagement.

David O'Brien







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**Opening Hours:** 9am - 4pm



**WORKING TO PROTECT OUR HERITAGE**