



2024-25 Term AGM  
Prince of Wales Hotel  
20 May 2026 7pm

Good evening everyone, and welcome to the South West Irish Community Group BELATED AGM for the 2024-25 Term.

Thank you all for coming tonight and for continuing to support our community over the past year. It's wonderful to see so many familiar faces here, along with some new ones too. Thanks to Mitch and staff at the Prince who have been a great support this year and have hosted us for our meeting tonight.

Looking back on the 2024–25 term, we had a fantastic range of events throughout the year. These included our monthly Irish music sessions at the Welly, our Halloween Party, Irish language workshops, and of course the St Patrick's Festival 2025 held at the Stirling Street Arts Centre.

These events are what keep our community connected and thriving, and they simply would not happen without the dedication of a small group of volunteers working quietly behind the scenes.

I would like to sincerely thank our committee members from this term — Peggy, Seana, Emma, Chris, Mark and Gerard — for the enormous amount of time, energy and commitment they gave throughout the year. The committee worked tirelessly, often balancing family, work and other commitments alongside community responsibilities, and their efforts deserve real recognition.

2025 St Patricks was also an emotional one for us as it was our first festival without our founding member, Ronan. Ronan gave so much time, passion and heart to this project over the years, and his presence was deeply missed. His vision and dedication helped build this community into what it is today, and we remain incredibly grateful for everything he contributed.

To be completely honest, by the end of the 2025 festival the committee was exhausted, and there was unanimous agreement that running the festival in its current format is simply not sustainable long term.

Planning and delivering events of this scale is becoming increasingly difficult. Costs continue to rise, compliance requirements and regulations are constantly expanding, and the workload attached to grants, reporting and acquittals is enormous. For people who are not professional event managers, this represents a very significant commitment and responsibility.

One possible option for the future may be to engage an event planner to help manage or run larger events on behalf of the group, because the pressure currently placed on volunteers is becoming too great.

Unfortunately, despite the success of the festival itself, we ultimately came out at a financial loss due to the amount of external services that needed to be brought in.

That said, we were incredibly fortunate to receive support from the same wonderful community members who consistently step up whenever help is needed. Special thanks go to Shane Fay, Dan Troy, Lee Murphy, Liam and Julie Sheahan, John Hoyne, Simon Kilpatrick, Peter Murphy, Oisín McGrath and Bob from Hay Park for their assistance and generosity throughout the year. There were too many volunteers over the festival weekend to thank individually, but as always, we had great support from members Mary Bryce and Marco, Rachel McEleney, Fran Caffery and Bob and Alison Spence. Mick B, Christian McEleney and Conor Dunlop stepped up again to make the football happen, which as always, was a huge success for all who attended.

Sponsorship was a very important element as well and we would like to acknowledge the City of Bunbury who were our Major sponsor again. Aqwest, Lotterywest and Irish Embassy were also large contributors of funding. Ezybuild WA and Red Hot Render provided fencing and labour that would have been out of reach for our budget, we had and we appreciate this immensely.

As a committee we need to be realistic. Without more people stepping forward to take on active roles and responsibilities, we struggle to see

how a festival of this size can continue on an annual — or even biannual — basis.

We are actively looking for new committee members, fresh ideas, and feedback on what you as a community group want moving forward. Ryan Flynn has already stepped up despite only just moving to Bunbury, which we thank him greatly for. This group belongs to all of us, and we would really love to see more people become involved in helping shape its future.

There are already some exciting ideas in motion, including more cultural events such as Irish language and dancing workshops, football and hurling weekends, and community sundowners. While the format of future festivals will evolve, the planning for St Patrick's Weekend 2027 is already underway, and we are hopeful about what can be achieved with broader community support and involvement.

This community is incredibly special, and we all want to see it continue to grow and succeed. But for that to happen sustainably, we need broader involvement, fresh volunteers, and shared responsibility moving forward.

Despite the challenges, we should still feel very proud of what has been achieved in the transition period that 2024-25 was. We created opportunities for people to come together, celebrate Irish culture, build friendships, and maintain a strong sense of community here in the South West — and that is something truly worthwhile.

Thank you again to everyone who supported the group throughout the year, whether by volunteering, attending events, sponsoring activities, performing, helping behind the scenes, or simply showing up and being part of the community.

We appreciate every one of you, and we look forward to discussing how we can continue building a strong and sustainable future together.

Thank you.

Sarah Grant  
Chair, SW Irish Community Group