



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

TALLAGHT  
ENTERPRISE CENTRE  
DUBLIN 24



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The main object for which Partas is established is "the relief of poverty for residents of Tallaght, and the suburbs thereof in particular (provided that this shall not preclude us from operating outside this area) by the promotion of beneficial community based facilities and services which, through education and training, facilitate the entry into employment or self-employment or the return to education of long term unemployed persons".

## INTRODUCTION / CEO REPORT

2021 transpired to be the second year of what we will all remember as the two-year Covid pandemic and period of lockdowns. As I had reported on the first year – 2020 – so also 2021 turned out to be a successful year despite the many potentials for the opposite. Saying that this proves the resilience of social enterprise is not the full story here. Collaboration and a supportive framework was also a major player in averting what could have been a much worse scenario for us, our sector and our clients. Too often we can, justifiably, be critical of government and agencies but conversely when they have performed well we should not be slow in acknowledging their performance. Undoubtedly, without the support of government, South Dublin County Council, Enterprise Ireland, Pobal, Sustainable Energy Action Ireland, Department of Rural and Community Affairs and Department of Justice (and others) this review would not be as positive as it is my pleasure to report. I am proud to place my gratitude to these up front in my review and commend their actions as the model for the support that enables organisations like Partas to flourish and repay many times over in impact within our communities.

The successful provision and management of our four enterprise centres is very central to the work that Partas carries out in making Tallaght an inclusive and thriving community. We are especially proud of the current jewel in our crown – The Edge. Opened early in 2021 it very quickly achieved full occupancy and popularity with the local community as a facility for all and a favourite meeting spot. The scheme to provide funds to encourage outdoor dining also enhanced the attractiveness of The Edge. The co-working space – The Annexe – did not open at the same time due to Covid but has since opened and starting to gain traction.

Funding was also provided through Enterprise Ireland to improve our centres in Brookfield and Killinarden and the SDCC also provided funds to refurbish empty units to bring them back to the market. Together they have enabled a much needed makeover for those centres that would not have been possible otherwise and which has led to increased enterprise space that was immediately filled.

Alongside all these positive developments for our centres came the biggest boost of all in relation to Tallaght Enterprise Centre in Tallaght village. For some years we have been working on a very ambitious project to invest in a major refurbishment and re-designation of that original centre. We were seeking several million euro for essential overhaul of the structure: roofing, drainage and other essential work to shore up what is quite an old building that had not seen investment over many decades. This refurbishment would allow us to re-designate the centre as a food-focussed centre, which currently accounts for some 20% of start-ups and is a sector which is under-served in our county. During the year we heard that our proposal had been accepted by the Department of Justice and that we could source investment for our project under the Immigrant Investor Programme. That investment has now been secured and our project is now fully underway. This will bear fruit for our organisation and our community for many years to come.

Our collaboration with other agencies continued during the year in other ways. We were part of a small group in the SDCC to work on developing a Food Strategy for the county. We have continued our work as a co-founder of Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland – SERI – to work collaboratively with the sector at national and EU level to advance the framework for the social enterprise ecosystem in Ireland. We also

worked with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to develop the Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 and indeed we are the lead agency in delivering on a concept called 'Neighbourhood Economics' (our Social + Local strategy). We will work with community-led social enterprises throughout the four Dublin areas who will offer physical locations to support artisan enterprises to get established and sell their products or services while offering other nascent entrepreneurs a premises to share space, skills and ideas.

There is a very clear sense that Partas has now transitioned into a new era – one that will allow a new sense of purpose, innovation and collaboration. Such a period of immense change can be challenging for those caught up in implementing it and so I must congratulate those staff and members of the Board who have embraced the challenge and made this transition possible. I hope that together we can look forward to many more successful years such as this and the satisfaction of seeing the full fruition of our labours over these past years. But it is important that we bear in mind that these are not the final chapters of our story and our arrival to the promised land. Rather they are the starting chapters of the next phase of the wonderful works we will achieve for ourselves and others in creating an inclusive and thriving Tallaght.

**John Kearns**  
**Chief Executive**

Some of the key highlights from the year include the following:

1. The successful opening of The Edge and its continuing growth
2. 2021 was a very difficult year for some of our businesses – the level 5 lockdown in particular caused major issues. Thankfully with support from Partas the majority got through and all centres performed well under the circumstances.
3. There were some significant upgrades to both the Killinarden and Brookfield centres under Enterprise Ireland's Powering the Regions: Enterprise Centre Fund
4. We completed the second year of our very successful WEBNet+ programme (Women Excelling in Business Network). This is co funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020
5. Our CE scheme continues to offer meaningful work placements to over 30 participants who are indispensable in terms of the work they do in Partas

### **The Edge**

With thanks to Enterprise Ireland's Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme and Powering the Regions: Enterprise Centre Fund we have been able to complete some works which the original budget did not allow:

- A new roof was fitted to The Annexe and an electronic gate and control system were fitted
- The car park was upgraded with new asphaltting and the redesign of the layout of car spaces
- An air purification system was installed in The Annexe to provide comfort and reassurance to users of the facility that the environment is as safe as can be provided)
- The Black Box was upgraded and converted to a multimedia seminar/meeting/flexible facility with full AV amenities and equipment to enable clients embrace more fully the digital opportunities for their business. It now contains a 72 inch interactive touchscreen TV with widescreen camera and enhanced sound.
- We also extended our green/sustainability credentials with the addition, on the roof of the main building, of an extra 39 solar panels (14.2kw), an upgraded inverter and the installation of an additional 20kwhrs of energy storage
- In addition we installed 70 solar panels on the roof of The Annexe, 30 Kwhrs of battery storage and the associated inverters.
- We now have 4 pedestal mounted dual car charging systems in the centre car park –providing charging capability for eight cars at any time.
- To further promote sustainable travel we installed 6 bike lockers to provide safe facilities for cyclists and their bikes.

### **Solar Power Feasibility Study**

We are working on a study to ascertain the viability of producing Renewable Energy for Partas, our licencees and the Community by installing Solar Systems on our substantial roof space. The current installation at the Edge is working very efficiently and is performing better than the initial study expected.

The plan is to prepare a feasibility study for Tallaght Enterprise Centre, which has a roof area of 1928.58 sq metres. Various grants are available currently, including funding from the Council for viable Renewable Energy projects.

Firstly, we need to establish Baseline Energy Consumption to see the potential energy savings coupled with the return on investment and timescale to recoup. If this study proves viability on our TEC building it should also be viable for our other centres. If the current assumptions are correct we would have the ability to set up Partas Energy and be a leader in renewable energy in the community.

## Training

- **WEBNet+**

In October 2019 Partas commenced a 3 year contract, which is co-funded by the Irish government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014 – 2020, to deliver eight x 18 week WebNet+ programmes over a three year period.

As with its predecessor, the main objectives of the programme are:

- to increase female participation in the labour market
- to enhance skill levels among marginalised women
- to continue to engage with women through networking

When Covid hit in March 2020, Partas quickly moved to get the programme online which was done within 4 weeks and we have continued to successfully recruit participants onto the programme. Due to the need to be in Tallaght for the delivery of the programme the original target group was females in the Dublin 24 region, however the move online turned out to be a blessing in disguise because it allowed us to open the programme to locations further afield. The Webnet+ programme consists of two QQI awards – Level 4 Career Planning (6 weeks) and Level 5 Start Your Own Business (12 weeks).

In 2021

- 87 learners commenced the Webnet+ programme which either started or finished in 2021
- 64 learners completed the 18 week programme (74% completion rate). There were a variety of reasons why the 26% did not complete – took up full time employment; started their own business; family issues and/or health issues being the main reasons.
- 78 learners received Level 4 QQI award in Career Planning (Weeks 1 - 6)
- 57 received a Level 5 QQI award in Start Your Own Business (Weeks 7 – 18)
- In total 135 awards to date.

	Start date	End date	Started	Finished	CP	SYOB
Webnet+2	8/9/2020	2/2/2021	15	11	13	10
Webnet+ 3	8/10/2020	4/3/2021	12	12	12	10
Webnet+ 4	2/3/2021	6/7/2021	13	11	12	10
Webnet+ 5	15/4/2021	29/7/2021	17	13	17	8
Webnet+ 6	7/11/2021	1/2/2022	15	12	13	11
Webnet+ 7	4/11/2021	31/3/2022	15	16	11	8
			87	64	78	57

## QQI Reengagement

Partas has received notification from QQI that we have been scheduled to submit our application for reengagement with QQI in Q2 2022. Reengagement is a legal obligation for all providers who wish to continue to offer programmes leading to QQI Awards.

### **Quality Assurance Committee**

In 2021 Partas set up a Quality Assurance Committee which has responsibility for overseeing all aspects of academic governance and ensuring compliance with external and internal academic regulations, policy and quality assurance standards. This committee, which is chaired by an independent member in the Higher Education sector, consists of an external QA expert from the Further Education sector, a learner representative (past learner), the training manager/Quality Assurance Officer, a QA consultant and the QQI administrator and the CEO of Partas, who attends in a non-voting capacity.

### **Property Management**

2021 has been a very challenging year with Covid with a lot of businesses not able to trade and generate income and some being forced to close on a temporary basis. We worked closely with all our licence holders to offer support and payment plans to help relieve the pressure. Arrangements were put in place with some to pay additional amounts on their current monthly rent to reduce the accumulated arrears and a further review is expected in 2022. We also continued to communicate with them any available financial supports that were available to them which most applied for and succeeded in their applications. This has proved very successful with all but one business remaining trading and in some cases even having an opportunity to expand

The old security office in Killinarden was upgraded and converted into an office which was taken by the Partas property staff and TDC. The three offices which became available in the main Building were soon snapped up. 2 vacant units in Killinarden were refurbished during 2021 with 60% of the cost met by South Dublin Co. Council under the Business Support Fund.

Due to the installation of a new access system the reception area in Brookfield was no longer needed and was upgraded and converted into an office for the CE Supervisor/Assistant Supervisor.

2021 saw the commencement of the upgrade works in Tallaght Enterprise Centre with the tear out of Offices 20-24 to create a huge space (approximately 1500 sq. ft) which will become a hotdesk, conference, and training facility.

Despite the pandemic we still received a number of enquiries for units for the following categories;

Cake business; hair extensions; wreath/flower suppliers; blind manufacturing; property management office space; food production/storage; window storage/office space; dance studio; bible classes; events management office; beauty; yoga classes; office space for IT company; H & S training space; pet supplies; artist; barber; car maintenance; convenience store and deli; health and fitness centre.

### **Staff**

2021 saw additional places provided by TUS in the capacity of security, general maintenance, and cleaning staff in all 3 Centres who work alongside our current JI and CE Staff. We lost a number of CE & TUS staff earlier in the year due to them completing their time on the Project, but were quickly replaced with new members of staff. A couple of the TUS security staff applied and were successful in securing a security place on our CE Project. Feedback from the TUS Team Leaders has revealed that all participants have enjoyed working in our centres and found the experience rewarding and beneficial in terms of personal development and acquiring new skills.



## **Maintenance:**

### **Killinarden:**

- ❖ Repainting and new signage on the Tower was completed during the summer of 2021 which transformed the entrance to the Centre. Partial funding for this was met by South Dublin Co. Council under the Business Support Fund. The exterior toilets were later painted by our maintenance to compliment the Tower.
- ❖ New fire alarm panels were installed in February 2021. During the course of this work, the Contractors identified a significant amount of work on the system that needed to be carried out to ensure compliance with current legislation and this work is due to commence early 2022.
- ❖ Problems with drainage – During 2021 we experienced several problems with the drainage system with blockages on several occasions. It has been intimated by the contractors called to clear the blockages that these are being caused as there is no protective barrier between the concrete and the drains and the concrete is now collapsing, causing a narrowing of the pipes. This matter has been referred to SDCC and awaits further action.
- ❖ Upgrade to Comms Room; IICP carried out a full upgrade to the Comms. Room in the main building.

### **Brookfield**

- ❖ All offices and external units were surveyed and where necessary windows were replaced.
- ❖ A new remote access system was installed which gives the licence holders access to the main building without the need for a receptionist or security officer.
- ❖ An audit of the fire and alarm system was carried out with some improvements implemented.

### **Tallaght Enterprise Centre**

We had ongoing issues throughout the year with leaks from the roof and gutters.

- ❖ Of particular note was the Dance Studio in Unit 12/12a which was flooded every time there was a heavy rainfall resulting in damage to thousands of euro in costumes/props
- ❖ The gutters on the garden side of the building also caused major issues with unit 2a becoming unusable due to water damage
- ❖ The flat roof over the coffee shop was another source of problems with leaves causing blockages in the gutters which then resulted in water pouring in through the ceiling and door.

### **Categories of businesses licensing units within the centres include:**

African Cuisine	Air-conditioning
Asian Cuisine	Barbers (in 2 centres)
Beauty Salons (in 2 centres)	Blind Manufacturer
Café (in three centres)	Cake making
Car Mechanic	Catering for Schools
Charity Bring & Buy	Childcare
Commercial Training	Community Service Providers
Community Support Organisations	Computer Training
Corporate Catering	Counselling Services
Craft Brewery	Curtain Manufacturing
Dance Academy (in 2 centres)	Electrical Contractor
Electrical Supplies Company	Fitness Training (in 3 centres)

Hairdresser (in 2 centres)  
Legal Admin Services  
Party Fare  
Pharmacy  
Quantity Surveyors  
Software  
Stationery Suppliers  
Third level Education & Training College  
Upholstery repairs and refitting (in 2 centres)

Laundry Services  
Local Newspaper Offices  
Pastoral Church  
Photography Studio  
Smoked Meats import and Distribution  
Sports Physiotherapist (in two centres)  
Tattoo Artist  
Time Recording and Access Systems  
Vegan Teats

### **Community Employment**

The 26<sup>th</sup> year of our Community Employment programme began on 25 January 2021 and finishes on 15 January 2022.

During 2021 our numbers remained between 27-30 participants with 1 supervisor and 1 assistant supervisor in place based in Brookfield Enterprise Centre. Our participants are now carrying out their duties in all four centres as Administrators; Centre Attendants; Gardeners; Kitchen Assistants/Chef; Maintenance; Receptionists and Security Operatives.

Throughout the year there was very little training undertaken as most providers were only offering online programmes. These don't suit the majority of our participants because most don't have access to the technology needed to participate and a lot have issues with language and are unable to undertake training until their English levels have been improved.

During the year 6 participants left:

- 3 found employment
- 1 returned to unemployment
- 2 left for personal reasons

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>
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Following their election at the Annual General Meeting the following officers were appointed:

<b>Chairperson:</b>	Barbara Quinn
<b>Vice-Chairperson:</b>	Carol Pemberton
<b>Board Members:</b>	Tara de Buitléar David Kennedy John Lahart TD

During the year the following were co-opted to the Board

<b>Board Members:</b>	Sheri Brennan Michelle Licciardi Peter Vallely
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