Article by Tom Lyons of The Currency - 13th Nov, 2026

Facing a deficit of €8.23m, Scouting Ireland has a plan to meet historical abuse case costs. Will it work?

Scouting Ireland has 38,000 members but is under "significant pressure" due to the cost of historical abuse cases. A presentation gives insight into the scale of its challenges, and how it plans to fund them.

Scouting Ireland told its senior leaders earlier this month that it has an €8.23 million deficit but said it remains in a "sound position" from which to fulfil its mission.

In a presentation on November 7, a copy of which has been obtained by *The Currency*, the 38,000-member organisation said its gross income reached €8.6 million in its most recent financial year and its expenditure was €6.7 million, leading to net income of €1.9 million. Scouting Ireland is experiencing significant challenges as it continues to face court cases from the survivors of historic abuse cases.

"The timing of claims creates a significant financial risk that we must address" over the next two to three years, Scouting Ireland said. It said over the next 18 months, it needed to "rebuild" its cash reserves to face these challenges. Scouting Ireland said its members needed to "work together" to meet its obligations to survivors, while staying in control and keeping scouting activities unbroken. It also said it must "protect our assets."

Scouting Ireland has been in arbitration with its insurers in relation to the bill required to meet historical abuse claims. *The Irish Times* reported in August that Scouting Ireland received a €2 million settlement from this arbitration report, but this was not disclosed in the organisation's recent presentation.

Scouting Ireland does, however, outline how it requires over €10 million over a number of years to meet its obligations while continuing to offer its services to scouts across Ireland.

It said that it was looking at raising €4 million from "financing and loans" and that it was currently in negotiation on how best to fund this using operating cash flow.

It hopes to raise another €3 million from "group advances and memorial purchases". This will involve scouting groups voluntarily raising between €10,000 and €20,000, and Scouting Ireland raising money from bricks, paving stones, trees and plaques as part of a lasting "Remembrance memorial." This memorial will honour the heritage of scouting in Ireland, and work with survivors to develop "a peaceful place to walk and reflect with trees and places to sit".

In addition, Scouting Ireland plans to raise €1 million from property sales. It plans to identify vacant properties with "no future charitable purpose," which can be sold off.

Finally, it hopes to raise between €2 million and €4 million in "emergency measures." This could come from the sale of properties, but Scouting Ireland notes that many of its properties will be required as security when it raises loans to finance its liabilities. Scouting Ireland is also considering an additional membership fee levy of between €25 and €50 per scout.

Anger, rows and "significant pressure"

Scouting Ireland held its annual general meeting on October 10, 2026. Members were taken through its financial position, but some later complained that its accounts were not circulated in advance to allow them to prepare comments.

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https://thecurrency.news/articles/247089/facing-a-deficit-of-e8-23m-scouting-ireland-has-a-plan-to-meet-historical-abuse-case-costs-will-it-work/

Scouting Ireland earlier this month invited so-called "county champions" for an update based on the above presentation to "explore the financial liabilities that we now need to meet to support fellow scouts who have been impacted by abuse during their time in scouting".

It said it was always the organisation's "priority" to ensure its scouts were important and said it was "critically" important county champions attend briefings to discuss securing the future of Scouting Ireland and ensuring the movement would collectively "maintain control of our assets and an unbroken scouting service to our youth and communities. This will be one of the most important meetings in our history".

Scouting Ireland also recently completed its accounts to December 2025. In a letter to members in its accounts, its chair Aidan Magner focused on the positive steps the organisation has taken. "2025 has been a year of rebuilding. Rebuilding our board. Rebuilding our staff team. And most importantly rebuilding trust between our members and the leadership of Scouting Ireland," he said. He added that Scouting Ireland's new chief executive Sean Sheehan had "hit the ground running."

"From a financial perspective we are working towards long-term financial stability," he said. Scouting Ireland's day-to-day operations were "robust," he added, while acknowledging it was still working to support the survivors of historical abuse, which is placing "significant pressure" on the organisation.

"Midway through the year the arbitration process with our insurers concluded," he said. "This brought to an end years of legal wrangling, and whilst the settlement exceeded expectations it still falls short of what is required to fully meet survivors' needs. That reality now demands careful financial planning and debt management."

Magner said he was "angered by the actions of a small minority of individuals from many decades ago. I am humbled by the courage of survivors and I am absolutely determined that Scouting Ireland will continue to support them".

Former Scouting Ireland directors Jacques Kinane and Donnachadha Reynolds previously raised concerns about the finances of Scouting Ireland. They were "removed" as directors in 2024, **as *The Currency* previously reported**, after raising financial and governance concerns.

Among the two directors' main concerns was whether Scouting Ireland was operating as a going concern or not. This risk was acknowledged by officials in a briefing note for Minister for Education Hildegarde Naughton, where they warned her earlier this year that "very significant costs" associated with settling cases "may threaten [Scouting Ireland's] ability to continue operating as a going concern".

The Charities Regulator published a report in April 2026 by an inspector into the affairs of Scouting Ireland and three related charities and unincorporated organisations. The report followed a statutory investigation to try and establish the facts relating to "the control and ownership of charitable assets, including almost 130 properties".

In a statement in April 2026, the two former directors said they felt "vindicated" by subsequent events, including the conclusions of this inspector's report.