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Chartered property,
land and construction
surveyors

IN THIS ISSUE

SCSI NATIONAL CONFERENCE

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
ACT 2024

IMMA EARTH RISING FESTIVAL



LAND MOBILITY IN IRELAND

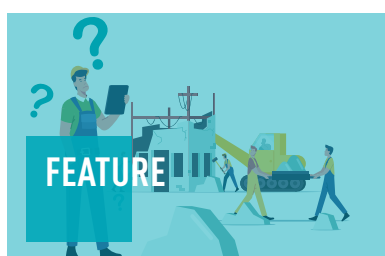




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If you would prefer to receive the *Surveyors Journal* electronically, please email sustainability@scsi.ie.

AN INSPIRING YEAR

THE SCSi'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024 HAVE RAISED THE PROFILE OF THE PROFESSION,
AND LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE SUCCESSES.

As we approach the close of 2024, I am proud to reflect on the remarkable strides our profession has made this year and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

Inspiring the future of our profession

One of the most rewarding aspects of my presidency has been collaborating with the Nexus Committee on my initiative to have young surveyors visit their former schools with me to inspire the next wave of surveying professionals. These visits have already proven to be highly impactful, and with even more planned for 2025, I am confident we can build a stronger pipeline of future graduates to support our industry. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Nexus Committee and the SCSi Education Team for their dedication and effort in this vital initiative.

Progressing apprenticeships

A key priority this year has been advancing surveying apprenticeship programmes. These courses are essential for the future of our profession, offering an accessible pathway into surveying while addressing critical industry needs. I am confident that these developments will deliver long-term benefits for employers and aspiring professionals alike.

Elevating the profession's recognition

The consistent quality and impact of our reports continue to strengthen our profession's reputation. This year, our recognition reached new heights, with the SCSi being the

only professional body attending discussions with An Taoiseach to address solutions to the housing crisis. This acknowledgment underscores the trust and value placed in our expertise by policymakers and industry leaders.

Strengthening leadership and strategy

A key milestone this year has been enhancing the leadership and expertise within our organisation. I am delighted to have welcomed Lily Ellis and Kim Hegarty to the board and to announce the appointment of Brian Chapman as an independent director. As Chief Information Officer at Eir, Brian will bring invaluable strategic expertise that will play a crucial role in driving our digital strategy forward.

Celebrating progress

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication and contributions of our members, stakeholders, and partners. Your invaluable input continues to shape our shared mission of building a sustainable and thriving surveying profession.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season

I want to take a moment to recognise that, for some, this time of year can be challenging. I encourage anyone facing difficulties to reach out and access the supports available, particularly through LionHeart.

On behalf of the entire board, I wish you and your families a happy, peaceful Christmas and a successful New Year. Let us enter 2025 with optimism, determination, and a shared vision for our profession.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kevin Hollingsworth
SCSi President



THE SPECTRUM OF SURVEYING

THIS EDITION SHOWCASES THE WIDE RANGE OF AREAS IN WHICH SURVEYORS CAN PLAY A ROLE.

A range of truly interesting issues is covered in this edition of the *Surveyors Journal*, reflecting the broad spectrum of surveyors' involvement in Ireland's economy and society. This diversity is further evident from the scope of the issues addressed at this year's National Conference, and reported in this edition (pp.16-19).

The variety of surveying roles can also be seen among the winners of the second SCSi Excellence Awards announced at the Conference. Congratulations to all of them. Credit is also due to all the nominees for these Awards.

In the agricultural sector, land mobility is very limited and access to land is a real issue for many who want to develop enterprises or invest in land. I was surprised to learn from the feature by Frank Harrington that access has become even more difficult in recent years (p.24). Frank says he wrote in this *Journal* in 2011 that just 1% of land was transacted per year at that time, which he noted was a very low level, but in 2023, just 0.5% of land was transacted. It is plain that there is an issue here of some consequence. Frank notes the target of planting 16,000ha of forest per annum up to 2050, but reports that in 2023 only 2,000ha were planted. More land will be needed for this; if we fail to expand forestry, Ireland will attract significant potential liabilities and the State will be forced to purchase carbon credits to offset the emissions shortfall. The Irish Fiscal Advisory Council warned about the cost of these in its latest report to the Government.

Aspects of housing are always of interest to readers, and this year marks the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). Rosemary Steen, who has recently taken up the role of Director, is interviewed in this edition (p.13) by Colm Quinn. She says that one of her immediate priorities is the reduction of dispute resolution timelines. To this end, the RTB has hired eight new staff and has implemented a dispute improvement programme. This is to be welcomed. A surveyor with long experience in residential management said to me recently that he remembers the time before the RTB when difficult disputes had to go before the courts, which was always very demanding, given the history of residential landlord and tenant relationships. He was sure from his own experience that the present system, with all its challenges, is a lot better. We wish Rosemary well in her important role.

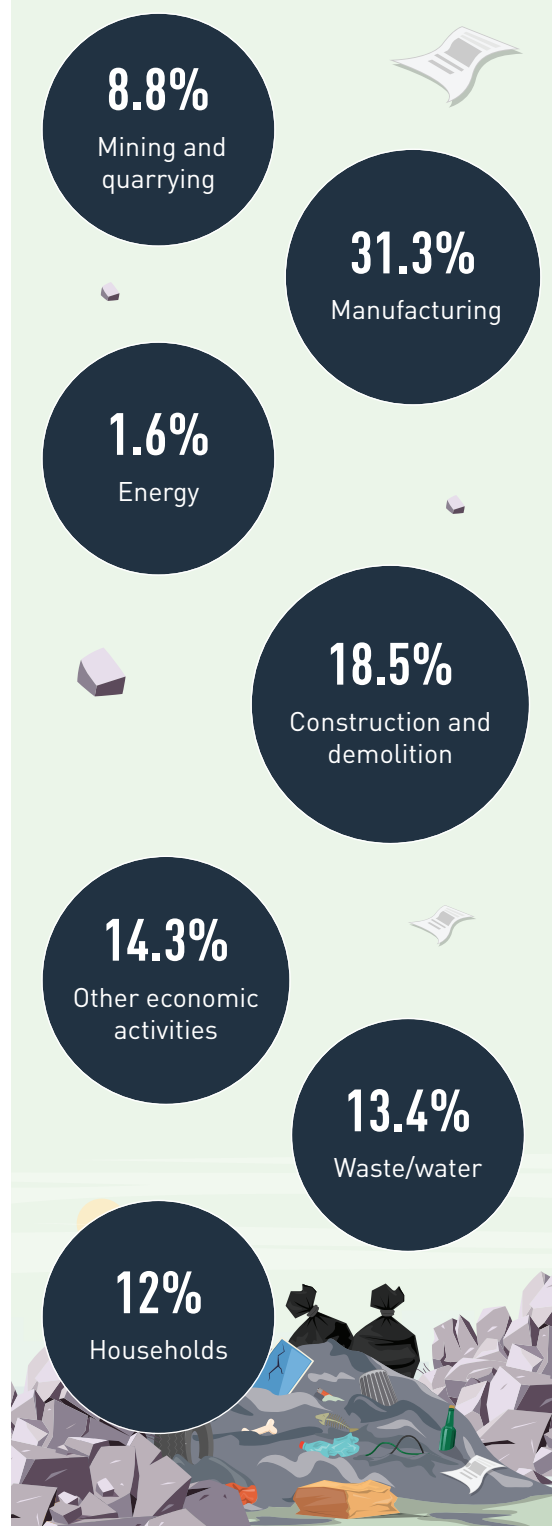
EDITORIAL

Tom Dunne
Editor



WASTE GENERATION BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND HOUSEHOLDS, IRELAND 2022

(% SHARE OF TOTAL WASTE)



Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Waste_statistics

NEXUS BALL 2024



From left: Marcel Stanisz, McNally Handy; Claire McDowell, M7 Real Estate and Nexus Chairperson; John Dunleavy, LDA; Ruth Comerford-Morris, SCSi Deputy Director of Education; Niamh McKenna, Cushman & Wakefield; John Landers, Colliers; Kevin Hollingsworth, SCSi President; Gabija Vaicekauskite, Savills; Tadhg Callaghan, CBRE; Ailbhe O'Sullivan, Knight Frank; Hannah Coombs, SCSi Education and Membership Engagement Officer; Marc Kelly, Cushman & Wakefield; and, Caroline O'Connor, Cushman & Wakefield.

It was fantastic to have 190 young professionals attending our 2024 Nexus Ball in October. Our thanks to the Nexus Committee for their hard work in organising this memorable event, and special thanks to our sponsor, CBRE Ireland, for their support.

Nexus is the SCSi's network of young professionals and newly qualified surveyors. If you would like to build your network, give back to your community, and make a difference, please get in touch to find out how you can get involved in the Nexus Committee by visiting scsi.ie/nexus.



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2024 PROPERTY & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE



The SCSi launched its latest real cost report, The Real Cost of Apartment Block Maintenance, at the recent PMFM Conference.

Some 120 professionals attended this year's Property & Facilities Management Conference. At the conference, the SCSi launched its latest real cost report, The Real Cost of Apartment Block Maintenance. This report assesses the levels of funds being set aside each year by multi-unit developments (MUDs) and compares this with estimated costs for repairing, maintaining and renewing common areas in apartment blocks (e.g., roofs, lifts, balconies and car parking).

Our thanks to all those who contributed to the report and to our conference speakers and delegates. Visit scsi.ie/realcost to access the latest report.



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HELP INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS



SCSI member Luke McCarthy (left) with SCSI President Kevin Hollingsworth.

SCSI President Kevin Hollingsworth has been working to bring the surveying profession to the classroom. This autumn, Kevin and young professional member Luke McCarthy spoke with students at Ashbourne Community College about opportunities in surveying. We're inviting members to volunteer and help bring the property, land and construction professions to students near you. Make a difference and help to ensure a diverse pipeline of surveyors by becoming an ambassador. Visit scsi.ie/getinvolved to find out more.

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KSN CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS WIN 2024 GOLF DAY



The winning golfers from KSN Construction Consultants (from left): Cormac Lindsay; Jack Higgins; Sean Kennedy; Kevin Hollingsworth, SCSI President (presenting the cup); and, Bryan Lett.

We were delighted to have 19 teams take part in this year's annual Golf Day. Congratulations to the winning team from KSN Construction Consultants – Cormac Lindsay, Jack Higgins, Sean Kennedy and Bryan Lett – and well done to all who took part.

GROWING REGIONAL NETWORKS

Some 87 members took part in our West/North West and North East Regional Connections Conferences. Our thanks to MyHome.ie for supporting this year's regional conference events.



Padraig Sherry, Chair of the North East Region, addressing the Conference.



Daragh Turley of Omega Financial Management addressing the West/North West Conference.

SOUTHERN REGION

Members from the Southern Region enjoyed a fantastic networking evening in Cork this November. Thank you to our Southern Region Committee Chair, Brigid Browne, and committee members TJ Cronin, Niamh Grace, Peter McCarthy, Anne Louise Mitchell, Michael Mooring, Majella Galvin and Shane Ryan for their work in co-ordinating this event.



Front row (from left): Brigid Browne; and, Majella Galvin. Back row (from left): John Hollis; Pat Forde; Siobhan Young; David Humphreys; Rob Coughlan; Amanda Isherwood; and, Ger Brady.

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HELP YOUR TEAM GET CHARTERED IN 2025



Whether you are part of a large firm or a small business, the SCSi staff are here to support you and your staff in becoming chartered and growing your professional skillset.

The SCSi continues to partner with companies to provide workshops designed to educate and inform staff about becoming chartered and the benefits of becoming active members of the SCSi, whether they are new graduates or hold greater professional experience.

Book a free APC workshop session or to get in touch to organise a bespoke training session for your team. Visit scsi.ie/apcworkshop.

CHECK YOUR HOME INSURANCE COVERAGE



The SCSi 2024/2025 House Rebuilding Guide shows that national rebuild costs have increased by an average of 6% over the past 12 months. Our figures and updated online calculator provide valuable guidance for consumers across Ireland looking to check that their homes are adequately insured.

A key purpose of the SCSi is to harness the collective knowledge of our membership in order to provide essential advice in the public interest. Thank you to all the quantity surveying members who submitted data for this year's survey. Without your contribution, this guidance would not be possible.

We encourage members to share our free 'Check your insurance' social media content with clients and followers.

GET INVOLVED AND GROW YOUR CAREER IN 2025



Make the most of your membership and grow your career with the SCSi. Whatever your career stage, take advantage of a variety of options designed to help you launch your career, become a leader, and build a legacy.

MySCSi is both about growing your career, and also using your experience and insights to shape your industry. By contributing your ideas, expertise and insights, you can help shape the future of the SCSi and the wider industry. Getting involved can also contribute toward your annual CPD requirement.

Take a look at our new MySCSi page and online form to find the opportunity that fits your goals and priorities. Visit scsi.ie/getinvolved to get started.



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THE GLOBAL QS



Mary Flynn, CEEC Secretary General, and Erik Schulte, CEEC Vice President, at the PAQS Congress in Brunei.

In August, Mary Flynn, Secretary General of the European Council of Construction Economists (CEEC), and CEEC Vice President Erik Schulte, were invited as guests of honour to the PAQS Congress 2024 in Brunei. This year's Congress was hosted by the Institution

of Surveyors, Engineers and Architects (PUJA) in Brunei Darussalam.

The Pacific Association of Quantity Surveyors (PAQS) comprises quantity surveying and cost engineering institutions from 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, covering a substantial

area of the globe in promoting excellence in quantity surveying, with the annual Congress rotating between members.

The aim of the Congress is to provide a forum that fosters dialogue between QSs, shares insights, and creates an environment that encourages collaboration, idea sharing, and transformative thinking, as well as exploring new avenues for greener, more sustainable, responsible solutions that benefit all.

The theme of this year's Congress was 'Digitalisation Towards a SMART Nation', which shone a spotlight on digital transformation and its impact on QSs, the construction industry, the environment, sustainability, policy-making, and ethical practice, to name but a few.

Both Erik and Mary were invited to make presentations at the Board Meeting, where they spoke about the work of the CEEC, as well as the SCSl and the Irish Government's mandate on the International Cost Management Standards (ICMS).

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Rogerson Reddan is pleased to announce the appointment of John Hughes as Managing Director. John's appointment follows the retirement of founding partner and Managing Director Seamus Reddan.

In his new role, John will focus on building upon Rogerson Reddan's well-established reputation for client service and excellence, while expanding the services offered by Rogerson Reddan.

A CHANCE TO ADVANCE THE PROFESSION

BECOMING AN APC COUNSELLOR, SUPERVISOR OR ASSESSOR IS A GREAT WAY TO LEARN NEW SKILLS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROFESSION.

Many SCSi members generously volunteer their time, commitment and expertise towards the process of supporting candidates in becoming Chartered members of the SCSi. The roles of counsellor, supervisor and assessor are of vital importance in the process, as these volunteers act as gatekeepers, ensuring that candidates are supported in upholding the high professional standards that are essential for the future of the profession.

Vital roles

The supervisor and counsellor have a dual role of advising and supporting candidates in their development, as well as assessing their competence. They must ensure that the candidate gains the required breadth and depth of experience and training. A supervisor should ideally have day-to-day contact with the candidate and know their work well. The role of counsellor is more strategic, as it focuses on assisting the candidate to plan their training, monitoring their progress, and ensuring that they are adequately prepared for the final assessment interview. In certain circumstances, the roles of supervisor and counsellor can be combined and undertaken by one person, but ideally the roles are separate, with the supervisor and counsellor liaising regularly with the candidate and each other to support the candidate in preparing for the final assessment. Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) assessors play a vitally important role in ensuring that only those who fulfil ethical standards, and professional and technical competency requirements, become chartered professionals.

EDUCATION

James Lonergan
Director of Education
and CPD, SCSi



Demanding and rewarding

Involvement in the process can be demanding, particularly as it may require some time away from a busy work life. However, these are hugely rewarding roles that provide opportunities to support candidates at a key stage in their career and gain firsthand insights into the assessment process, which can be highly beneficial within surveying organisations. In addition, those who take part can claim CPD hours for participating in training with the SCSi as supervisors, counsellors or assessors, and for their role in the assessment process, as it is likely that assessors in particular will gain new skills and knowledge when reading a candidate's submission and preparing for an interview.

Personal and professional benefits

Professionalism and ethics are core to being a Chartered Surveyor, and involvement in the assessment process is a great way to maintain those standards and keep up to date on developments in the space. Volunteers also report great satisfaction in giving something back to the profession and it is a great way to demonstrate a passion for surveying. An additional benefit is the development of new skills, particularly communication and mentoring, which are highly transferable skills that are beneficial in any workplace. Given the clear benefits for individuals and their professional development, it is important that employers make space for staff to get involved as volunteers as there are clear benefits to businesses in terms of staff development.

As our profession continues to grow, with increasing numbers on third-level courses and record numbers registering for the APC, an increasing number of counsellors, supervisors and assessors are required to support the process. Regular training for all of these roles is provided by the SCSi.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact me at james@scsi.ie and I'd be delighted to discuss opportunities with you.

TAKING OWNERSHIP OF THE RENTAL SECTOR

ROSEMARY STEEN, DIRECTOR OF THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES BOARD, TALKS ABOUT WHAT LED HER TO THE ORGANISATION, ITS PROGRESS, AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.



Director of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) Rosemary Steen took on the role in September this year, and explains that the ultimate aim for the body is to deliver a rental sector that works for the people of Ireland: "We want to see a sector where rental rights and responsibilities are always respected and upheld, and we want to increase understanding of Ireland's rental market through RTB research and data".

The RTB is an independent public body that has a broad remit to regulate the sector, explains Rosemary: "We maintain a national register of tenancies, provide

a dispute resolution service for landlords and tenants, and ensure compliance with rental law. We also provide information to the public, landlords and tenants to ensure that tenancies run smoothly, and provide reliable data and insights to inform rental policy".

Bringing experience

Arts and crafts might seem very different from managing a country's rental sector, but in her previous role as CEO of the Design & Craft Council Ireland, Rosemary sees many similarities to what she does now: "Although in a very different sector, as a public body, the environment in which we operated bore many similarities to the RTB today".

INTERVIEW

Colm Quinn
Senior Journalist,
Think Media Ltd



WE WANT TO SEE A SECTOR WHERE RENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ARE ALWAYS RESPECTED AND UPHELD, AND WE WANT TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF IRELAND'S RENTAL MARKET THROUGH RTB RESEARCH AND DATA.

Rosemary has a track record of leading public and private sector organisations through transformation programmes. She originally studied Economics at Trinity College Dublin and worked previously in Eirgrid, which she says shares some similarities with the RTB: "Like the rental market, electricity is also a highly regulated sector and at the time I joined Eirgrid, significant challenges had come about due to the growth in demand and the public's reaction to grid expansion plans. I was very fortunate to have the experience of working with a very committed board of directors there, including the wonderful Bride Rosney, RIP. Bride instilled in me her view of public service, which was to step forward and support public bodies providing vital services when they face times of challenge".

To do list

Some of the RTB's immediate priorities include reducing dispute resolution timelines, ensuring that every tenancy that should be registered is registered, and increasing its efforts to educate landlords and tenants about their rental rights and responsibilities. Rosemary says there has been progress in these areas: "I am very optimistic about what we will achieve in the coming years. For example, in dispute resolution, we hired eight new staff this year and began to implement a disputes improvement programme. This included running an early intervention programme to resolve disputes before they progress to a formal hearing. Thanks to these steps, we are

beginning to see progress in reducing overall times for dispute resolution".

Rosemary would like landlords and tenants to know that the RTB is a fair and impartial regulator: "I would encourage landlords in particular to avail of the many resources and tools on our website to ensure that they are compliant with rental law. For example, the Rent Pressure Zone calculator is an excellent tool to check if a tenancy is located within an RPZ area and to determine the level of rent increase allowed under RPZ rules. We also provide many other templates that landlords can use, such as the notice of termination template, which can help landlords to ensure they serve notice as allowed by rental law and avoid dispute resolution cases with adverse findings".

Rosemary acknowledges that further work is needed to improve the RTB's online systems for registering tenancies and managing dispute resolution: "I would like to assure landlords and tenants that we are working to address these issues and significant investment in our systems is planned over the coming years".

Non-compliance

Rosemary says she is determined to use the RTB's full powers to investigate and sanction, or to prosecute, non-compliant landlords: "Again, we have already taken several steps to increase our compliance and enforcement activities in this area. In October we launched two compliance campaigns targeting landlords, where there is suspected non-compliance with Rent Pressure Zone rules,

and with the requirement to register a tenancy. We have also been working to build our capacity to identify and pursue unregistered landlords through new data-sharing arrangements with Revenue and other Government departments".

The RTB has already shared some ideas that would help to enhance its capacity to ensure compliance with rental law, says Rosemary: "When I appeared before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage in October this year, I am on the record as stating that there are some additional powers we would like to improve our capacity to pursue unregistered landlords. One example is an amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act to give us powers to inspect a property where there is a suspected unregistered tenancy. The current legislation only permits us to inspect a property where there is an application for registration, or after an investigation has already been commenced. This suggested amendment would significantly strengthen our ability to detect unregistered tenancies that have not already been reported to us".

The RTB is currently running a campaign to drive compliance with Rent Pressure Zone rules and is writing to landlords where there is an increase of more than 2% above the last rent registered: "While a rent increase of more than 2% does not necessarily mean that a landlord is not compliant with RPZ rules, we are asking landlords and estate agents who receive the email to check that

the registered rent is accurate and set correctly. Where they identify that rent has been set incorrectly, they should refund any overpaid rent to their tenant and update their tenancy registration. We would be very grateful for the assistance of SCSi members in supporting their clients through this process to check and correct their rent where necessary”.

As the housing crisis has worn on, the RTB has seen an increase in applications for its dispute resolution process. Between 2021 and 2023, there was a 75% increase in demand for this service: “We are overcoming this challenge of increased demand for the dispute resolution service through additional resources, finding new efficiencies in our processes and trialling new innovations such as our disputes early intervention programme”.

On the issue of whether the body has the necessary funding and tools to do its job, Rosemary says the RTB sits under the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and that: “When it comes to funding, the Department responded to the increased demand for our dispute resolution services by allocating extra staffing levels for this year, and in Budget 2025 we were also pleased to see an increase of 8% in our funding allocation”.

When it comes to what the RTB does well, Rosemary says: “I think that the Residential Tenancies Board has established itself as a well-regarded regulator of Ireland’s rental market in its short 20-year history. We have a highly professional team who are dedicated to public service, and while there are always challenges in a complex sector like housing, there are many things that we do well”. In its recent report, the Housing Commission described the RTB as a “unique and positive feature of the rental market in Ireland” and Rosemary says: “I certainly think this is true. Our quasi-judicial model offers a more accessible, less formal and quicker way to resolve disputes than through the courts”.

A base for data

Another aspect of the RTB’s work that Rosemary is keen to highlight is the data that it produces: “We have also worked very hard over the last few years to provide more accurate and in-depth information on Ireland’s rental sector than was previously available. The requirement to register a tenancy annually has been a game

WE ARE OVERCOMING THIS CHALLENGE OF INCREASED DEMAND FOR THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICE THROUGH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, FINDING NEW EFFICIENCIES IN OUR PROCESSES AND TRIALLING NEW INNOVATIONS SUCH AS OUR DISPUTES EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME.

changer here, helping us to remove all duplicate and inactive tenancies from the register”.

The RTB launched a profile of the register data series, which Rosemary says provides interesting and important insights for the public and policymakers: “The new data series also offered valuable information for policymakers on the changing face of Ireland’s rental market. For example, it showed that landlords with 100+ tenancies now account for 22.5% of all private tenancies registered in Dublin, compared with 2.5% outside Dublin. Insights like these are vital to help policy makers make informed decisions to create an affordable and attractive rental sector for landlords and tenants”. Rosemary says the RTB values the engagement it has with estate agents and property managers, both individually and through the SCSi: “We have always found that the SCSi’s members can provide valuable feedback on what is working well in our processes around registration and dispute resolution, and very practical recommendations and advice on issues that we need to address”.

A strong support network

Rosemary is an animal lover: “Outside of work, you are most likely to find me out walking my two Tibetan terriers, Tishi and Tashi, and supporting my family. I try really hard to walk everywhere and am delighted that most days I can now walk to the RTB from home. I am blessed to have a great support network and love an early bird dinner with a friend or group of friends. I am a fan of theatre and musicals, and you will often find me with a large pair of headphones enjoying artists like Adele. I am a committed Francophile, love artists like Monet and Renoir, and once every few months will enjoy a day in Paris as I spent time there as an au pair and love the city”.

Rosemary has also been involved on the Board of the Middletown Centre for Autism for several years, including as Chair: “The centre is a cross-border project that works to promote excellence throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland in the education of autistic children and young people, a topic that I am very passionate about. While all my past roles have involved high levels of stakeholder engagement, I have learned so much from working in a cross-border context with this project. These are lessons which certainly stand to me as Director of the RTB, where engaging with diverse stakeholders from landlords and tenants to property professionals, policy makers and politicians is a big part of my role”.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

THE SCSI'S NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024 BROUGHT INNOVATORS
AND THOUGHT LEADERS TO CROKE PARK.



Back row (from left): Michael McCarthy, MMC Quantity Surveyors; Tony Mulhall, RICS; Claire Brock, Conference moderator; James Anwyl, BCP Capital; Kevin Hollingsworth, SCSi President; Shirley Coulter, SCSi CEO; Rosemary Hennigan, Tuath Housing; Kevin Brady, APNA; and, Niall Cussen, Office of the Planning Regulator. Front row (from left): Rachel Hoolahan, Orms; Emer Byrne, TU Dublin; Lissa Rocca, Força Property Advisory; and, Gwen Wilson, SCSi Director of Regulation.

The SCSi National Conference 2024 took place in Croke Park on November 20. The packed venue heard expert speakers and panel discussions on a range of topics from economic forecasts and the circular economy to planning legislation and skills within the profession. SCSi President Kevin Hollingsworth opened proceedings, welcoming attendees and speaking of the SCSi's commitment to advocacy on behalf of the profession and in the public interest. He then handed over to conference moderator Claire Brock of Virgin Media.

FEATURE

Ann-Marie Hardiman
Managing Editor,
Think Media Ltd
Colm Quinn
Senior Journalist,
Think Media Ltd



Political currents

The first session of the morning looked at prevailing political trends at home and abroad, and how they might influence economic development. Gary Murphy, Professor of Politics at DCU, stopped short of offering any general election predictions, but offered some insights into the changing Irish political landscape. He spoke of electoral volatility, the trend towards lower turnouts, and the drop in support for traditional political parties (with a consequent rise in support for independents).

Dr Loretta O'Sullivan of EY Ireland outlined research into local and global economic trends. The outlook for Ireland is one of "measured optimism"; however, global factors such



SCSi President Kevin Hollingsworth welcomed members to the Conference.



Claire Brock of Virgin Media was the very able moderator on the day.

as AI, climate change and geopolitical unrest are contributing to uncertainty. For Ireland in particular, the impact of possible economic policy changes arising from the election of Donald Trump are potentially very significant. She said that Ireland needs to improve skill levels, invest in infrastructure, and engage in sound fiscal management to protect against potential economic shocks.

Kieran McQuinn of the ESRI summarised research on housing affordability and structural demand. The ESRI uses a range of metrics such as projected population growth, household numbers and obsolescence to measure structural housing demand. However, these can be volatile and difficult to measure, and resulted in 12 different scenarios. He said that the average finding from these scenarios is a demand for 44,000 new housing units per year until 2030, falling to 40,000 per year from 2030 to 2050.

Jim Baneham of The Housing Agency outlined the Agency's role in a number of housing initiatives. The Croí Conaithe (Cities) scheme encourages developers to build apartments for owner-occupiers. To date, contracts have been signed for 640 units across five schemes in Dublin and Cork, with 2,000 more currently under review. The cost rental scheme has delivered 1,297 dwellings to date, mainly in partnership with approved housing bodies. The Defective Concrete Blocks Redress Scheme has received over 1,000 applications, and the apartment remediation scheme is accepting applications currently for an interim scheme for fire safety works.

The speakers were joined by Claire Solon of Greystar and Kevin Hollingsworth for a panel discussion.

Embracing the circular economy

Two speakers led the second session of the morning, with fascinating insights into ESG reporting and sustainable development.

Katie Heston of Goodbody Clearstream spoke on the EU Green Deal, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), and in particular the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and its implications for companies that fall within its remit. She outlined a sample nine-step transition journey from measuring carbon footprint, through planning a series of targets, and finally implementation.



Gary Murphy of DCU had fascinating political insights to offer.

Rachel Hoolahan of Orms gave a fascinating account of projects the company is working on in central London, where innovative thinking is leading to new approaches to working with existing buildings. She said Orms believes that good design is inherently sustainable, but sustainability must be incorporated into every element of a project. This approach has led to new policies regarding reuse of materials, and to the development of materials passports.

Emer Byrne of TU Dublin and Michael McCarthy of MMC Quantity Surveyors then joined the panel discussion.

Perspectives on planning

Recently elected Mayor of Limerick John Moran began the next session with his plans for the evolution of the city and county over the next five years. His ambitions involve the integration of technology, sustainability and resilient planning to create a 'FutureVision' for Limerick, ranging from regeneration of local rail lines to the development of the Shannon Estuary Growth Triangle into an industrial heartland harnessing offshore wind power for both domestic use and export.

Blaine Cregan of John Spain and Associates gave a summary of the Planning and Development Act 2024. One of the largest pieces of



Dr Loretta O'Sullivan of EY Ireland spoke on economic forecasting in the wake of the US elections.



John Moran, Mayor of Limerick, outlines his plans for the city and county over the next five years and beyond.

legislation in the history of the State, the Act aims to consolidate existing planning law and provide more certainty in the planning process. Commencement of the Act will be phased, with transitional arrangements and secondary legislation currently being finalised. Key provisions include changes to application processes and timelines, and replacement of local area plans with a series of development zones.

Tony Mulhall of RICS offered some thoughts on the complexity of delivering sustainable development in a market economy, using recent developments and issues in the UK. Sustainable development is vital, but in our liberal democracies there is a tension between the business case and political/social requirements. Surveyors are all too aware of the challenges of balancing these issues, while controlling costs, ensuring standards, and enhancing value.

Niall Cussen from the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) talked about his organisation's critical role in the implementation of planning reform, ensuring that confidence in the system is maintained, particularly in the wake of the major reforms promised by the Planning and Development Act.

For the panel discussion, the speakers were joined by Lisa Rocca of Força Property Advisory.

Launch of Rebuild Calculator

The SCSi's Rebuild Calculator allows the public to check how much they should insure their house for. The calculator is built using data from a survey of SCSi members on rebuild costs around the country, and Kevin Brady of APNA launched the latest update at the Conference. Kevin explained that the key point is to be adequately insured, as underinsurance can make an already devastating situation even worse.

People and skills driving innovation

The final session of the Conference was a panel discussion on people and skills driving innovation. The panel members were Rosemary Hennigan of Tuath Housing, Niamh Comber of DNG, Gwen Wilson of the SCSi, James Anwyl of BCP Capital, and Shane Fleming of FlemingRE.

James said that the country and industry needs to address embodied carbon. By 2028, embodied carbon will have to be declared and by 2030



Katie Heston of Goodbody Clearstream spoke on ESG reporting in the construction industry.

there will be embodied carbon limits. Investors will demand that Irish buildings are built to ESG standards, and James said that investment won't come if we don't build sustainably.

Rosemary spoke about two Tuath Housing projects that converted commercial buildings into residential units. Although this type of project is sometimes met with scepticism, it can be done and done well. She said there is work to do to ensure the buildings feel like homes and not like offices.

Niamh said relationships are hugely important for DNG and that you need to get to know people because that is how you build trust. She also talked about getting young people into the profession through engagement, such as giving them a taste of the industry during Transition Year.

Shane spoke about the future of work and said that having broad experience is going to become more important, and will give you an edge over AI. He also believes that problem-solving skills will become more important.

Gwen spoke about building skills in a remote environment, and said that employers are still grappling with retention. There is a big issue where employers are investing in someone and then they leave. She said soft skills are more important than ever, but said there is nothing soft about them.

A YEAR OF EXCELLENCE

At this year's Conference, the second SCSi Excellence Awards honoured nominees and winners from across the surveying disciplines. Thanks are due to this year's distinguished panel of judges – Claire Solon, Tom Dunne, Lena Clarke, David Humphreys, Sarah

Winters, TJ Cronin, Susan McGinnell, Avril Behan, and Gillian Tyrrell, who had the difficult job of choosing the very worthy recipients.

Congratulations to the nominees and winners, all of whom represent the highest standards in surveying.

- President's Award for Outstanding contribution to the SCSi and Surveying Profession – **Kevin Brady**
- Undergraduate Dissertation Award – **Amy Prendergast**
- Postgraduate Dissertation Award – **Holly Sheahan**
- Sustainable Champion Award – **Emer Byrne**
- Emerging Leader Award – **Darragh O'Shea** (Judges' commendation: **Daniel Gunning**)
- Elevate Award – **Mary Flynn** (Judges' commendation: **Niamh Comber**)



Winner of the President's Award for Outstanding Contribution to the SCSi and Surveying Profession, Kevin Brady.



Emerging Leader Award winner Darragh O'Shea with SCSi President Kevin Hollingsworth.



Sustainable Champion Award winner Emer Byrne.



Elevate Award winner Mary Flynn with SCSi President Kevin Hollingsworth.



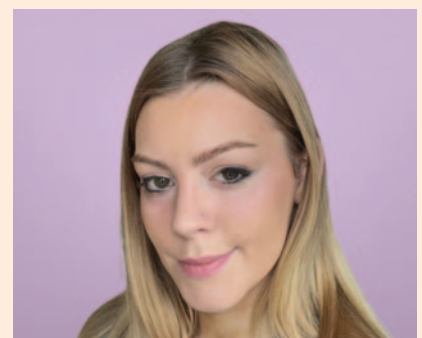
Postgraduate Dissertation Award winner Holly Sheahan.



Emerging Leader Award judges' commendation recipient Daniel Gunning with SCSi President Kevin Hollingsworth.



Elevate Award judges' commendation recipient Niamh Comber with SCSi President Kevin Hollingsworth.



Undergraduate Dissertation Award winner Amy Prendergast.

PROTECTION FROM SINKING

THE SCSi'S REAL COST OF APARTMENT BLOCK MAINTENANCE: EXAMINATION OF SINKING FUNDS REPORT SHOWS THAT MANY OF THESE FUNDS AROUND THE COUNTRY ARE INADEQUATE TO COVER THE COST OF ESSENTIAL WORKS.

Roofs, lifts and other components of a multi-unit development (MUD) will have to be replaced sooner or later. A sinking fund is essential to financing the repairs and replacements that are certain to arise in a MUD. The SCSi recently launched its Real Cost of Apartment Block Maintenance: Examination of Sinking Funds report. The report is essential reading and shows the inadequacy of many sinking funds in Ireland. Data was gathered from Chartered Property and Facilities Management Surveyors and members of the Apartment Owners' Network (AON) – representing approximately 38,000 units and 495 MUDs. Just 29% of Chartered Property and Facilities Management Surveyors felt that over half of the MUDs they manage have adequate sinking funds in place. A majority (53%) felt that 30% or fewer of their MUDs had an adequate sinking fund, and 12% felt that none of their properties had an adequate sinking fund. The report states that: "This low percentage indicates a widespread issue of underfunding, potentially leading to significant financial risks for property owners and owners' management companies (OMCs)".

FEATURE

Aoife O'Sullivan
Senior Site Property Manager
Land Development Agency

JUST 29% OF CHARTERED PROPERTY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SURVEYORS FELT THAT OVER HALF OF THE MUDS THEY MANAGE HAVE ADEQUATE SINKING FUNDS IN PLACE.



Survey respondents also revealed the reasons that many OMCs do not have adequate sinking funds in place. One of the major reasons is that there is a lack of understanding among unit owners regarding the funding required for repairs, maintenance, and renewing building components. There is also an issue where property owners do not want to pay higher fees, and there is also improper management/use of sinking funds by OMCs.

In terms of how much unit owners contribute to sinking funds, the survey found this was around €200-300 per year (see **Table 7** from the report reproduced on page 21).

While it is a legal requirement for MUDs to place sinking fund contributions into a separate bank account, the survey found 13% of OMCs are not doing this.

Building investment fund reports

Building investment fund (BIF) reports were described by Clúid Housing as a "crucial tool" for OMCs to understand the long-term financing requirements of a MUD. The report findings suggest that there is a low uptake of BIF reports among OMCs. The proportion of OMCs completing BIF reports, based on the responses to the survey, was between 13% and 31%. This

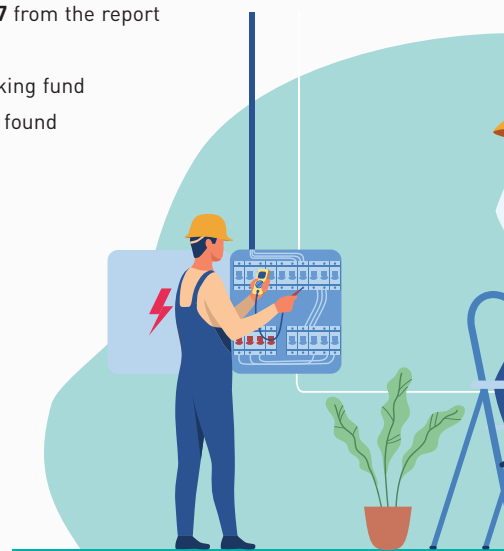


Table 7: Comparison between sinking fund provisions and costs based on BIF reports.

Data source	1-49 units	50-99 units	100-199 units	+ 200 units
Chartered Property and Facilities Management Surveyors' responses (per unit)	€237 per year	€206 per year	€261 per year	€297 per year
Average cost data from BIF reports of similar unit size (per unit)	€2,042 per year	€1,637 per year	€2,459 per year	€2,053 per year
Shortfall of sinking funds per unit	-€1,805	-€1,431	-€2,198	-€1,756

Source: SCSi Property and Facilities Management member survey. SCSi Chartered Building Surveyors data from cost template.

lack of uptake of BIFs may show that owners and OMCs do not understand the scale of funding required for long-term maintenance and renewal of common areas.

Key reasons for the lack of uptake of BIF reports include: a lack of knowledge around who would be qualified to complete these reports; that the OMC would not have sufficient funding to complete the report; and, that some believed that unit owners would not accept the higher fees proposed by the BIF report.

The report features several case studies from MUDs around Ireland and states: "When compared to the approximate costs of maintenance and renewal provided by the case studies, the cost per unit (per year) was estimated at between €1,600 and €2,500. This significant shortfall, based on the examples provided in this report, implies serious financial shortfalls for many MUDs into the future".

The need for adequate sinking funds is only going to become more apparent as further MUDs are constructed to help alleviate the housing crisis, and the report states: "Apartment developments present an opportunity for rapid construction growth by promoting a more compact form of development. According to the 2022 Census data, apartments currently account for approximately 13% of all occupied dwellings in Ireland, with 38% of occupied households in the Dublin City Council area being apartments".

Sinking funds matter more as apartment stock ages, and Ireland now has a significant portion of stock built in the latter half of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st, according to the report: "The age profile of these apartments is important for understanding the provisions necessary to maintain the common areas. On a national level, there are approximately 173,000 purpose-built flats that were built between 1960 and 2022. Of these, 60.5% are in Dublin. Most purpose-built apartments were built between 1991 and 2000 (17%), and between 2001 and 2010 (46%)".

The report was compiled through surveys of Chartered Property and Facilities Management Surveyor members. In total, these represent over 443 MUDs, with approximately 31,000 individual units: "Survey questions involved asking Chartered Property and Facilities Management Surveyor members their opinions on various themes associated with the MUDs they manage, including sentiment around sinking funds and BIF reports. To provide additional evidence regarding these sentiments, members of the Apartment Owners' Network (AON) were also surveyed. AON respondents represented approximately 52 MUDs with approximately 7,000 individual units".

Implications

This update of the SCSi's 2018 report *Sinking Funds in Apartments – Meeting the Challenge*, is timely and reflects the experience of many management agents and SCSi members. For many OMCs, the focus is on short-term funding, with the survey findings pointing to a

general reluctance by owners to contribute more now. While it may feel like the right decision in the short term to keep sinking fund contributions to a minimum, the report clearly highlights the deficiencies and risk in this approach. The long-term implications of the current funding approach not only risk impacting an OMC's ability to undertake work in the future, but also exposes members to future levies and may negatively impact property values within individual MUDs.

The findings certainly support the case for reform, particularly in relation to recommended sinking fund contributions and mechanisms for recovery of unpaid service charges. Outside of the legislative structure, BIF reports provide the roadmap for long-term planning and funding. It is key that these are regularly reviewed in a user-friendly standardised format, and critically used by OMCs as planning tools. Generating greater awareness around the importance of BIFs will take time and effort, with this report recommending statutory education and support for OMC Directors.

This report comes at a critical moment, with a sizeable proportion of existing apartment blocks beginning to reach stages in their life cycles when capital funding is necessary to undertake refurbishments/renewals. The delivery of MUDs is also essential to the development of a sustainable and affordable housing market. This updated research provides an opportunity to reflect on the experience to date in respect of sinking fund practices among OMCs, and to apply the learnings and recommendations to better support OMCs in planning for future funding requirements.

The full report can be found on the SCSi website at: <https://scsi.ie/real-cost-of-apartment-block-maintenance-examination-of-sinking-funds/>.



A CONFERENCE OF VALUE

AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE GATHERED IN TU DUBLIN ON OCTOBER 29 AND 30 FOR THE 2024 CONFERENCE OF VALUATION AGENCIES.

The Conference of Valuation Agencies (CoVA 2024) is a bi-annual conference that enables representatives of valuation agencies from around the world to come together to discuss current issues and share best practice. CoVA 2024 was facilitated by the International Property Tax Institute (IPTI) and included valuation and technology experts from Canada, Cayman, China, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Singapore, South Africa, The Netherlands, the UK and the USA.

Online CoVA events were inaugurated by the IPTI during the Covid-19 lockdown, but there was a clear demand for them to be held as in-person events, so the first post-Covid in-person conference was held in Oxford, England, in December 2022. That was regarded as a success, so the next CoVA was held in Dublin.

The IPTI is very grateful to Colm Lavery (Chief Operating Officer, *Tailte Éireann*) for his support in preparing for, and delivering, the conference. It was also pleasing to see *Tailte Éireann*'s former Chief Valuer, Declan Lavelle, at the conference. Although recently retired, Declan attended as the IPTI's guest. Declan is well known in professional valuation circles in Ireland and beyond, and it was a pleasure to have him at the event, and at the conference dinner.

The IPTI is also very grateful to TU Dublin, which partnered with the Institute to stage the Conference. The facilities at the university were first class and enhanced the quality of the event. In addition to the conference, there were two networking receptions and a main conference dinner, which allowed participants to get to know each other and share ideas on an informal basis.

A strong programme

In addition to presentations on a variety of topics of general interest to valuation agencies – including the International Valuation Standards, the valuation of complex properties,

council tax valuations in the UK, commercial property rating in Ireland, and dealing with property tax appeals in The Netherlands – there was considerable emphasis at the conference on the use of modern technology to support valuations. This included the use of automated valuation models (AVMs), artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning (ML). Reference was made to an IPTI White Paper on the use of AI/ML in mass appraisal for property tax purposes. That paper is available on the IPTI's website – www.ipti.org.

CoVA 2024 also focussed on the outcome of an international collaboration project that considered the challenging issue of 'Futureproofing the Valuation Workforce'. This project was initiated following CoVA 2022 and involved a steering group comprising Kathy Gillis (CEO, Property Services Valuation Corporation, Nova Scotia, Canada), Greg Martino (Vice President and Chief Valuation and Standards Officer, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, Ontario, Canada) and Alan Colston (Chief Valuer, Valuation Office Agency, UK). This project, facilitated by the IPTI, involved a total of six focus groups, each of which looked at a particular aspect of the challenge, including attracting, selecting, recruiting, developing and retaining staff for valuation agencies.

The 12 members of the focus groups – all from valuation agencies around the globe – carried out research and provided reports containing their findings and recommendations in respect of their particular area of study. The valuation agencies directly involved in the project included:

- Property Valuation Services Corporation, Canada;
- Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, Canada;
- Valuation Office Agency, UK;
- Rating Valuation Department, Hong Kong, China;
- Valuer General, Queensland, Australia;
- City of Cape Town, South Africa;
- National Land Agency, Jamaica;
- Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, Singapore; and,
- Valuer General, New Zealand.

The main findings of the project were that, across the globe, valuation agencies are facing ever-changing political, economic, social, technological, and environmental demands. To get ahead of the curve and reduce business risk, many are focused on futureproofing their workforce – creating agile, innovative, and resilient employees with the skills to navigate the future.

Most of the focus group members attended CoVA 2024 and made presentations

FEATURE

Paul Sanderson
JP LLB (Hons) FRICS FIRR V
President
International Property Tax Institute





TU Dublin welcomed an international audience in October for the Conference of Valuation Agencies 2024.

summarising their work, their conclusions and their recommendations. There was lots of lively audience participation in relation to the key points they covered. Dr Frank Harrington, Head of Real Estate at TU Dublin, joined one of these focus group sessions to share his insights on the topic from the academic perspective.

The focus group reports were reviewed by the project's steering group and approved for publication in an IPTI White Paper. Anyone who

would like to see that White Paper, and the synopsis of it, can find these documents on the IPTI's website.

In conclusion, CoVA 2024 provided a great environment in which participants could learn about the latest developments in property valuation – particularly the way in which modern

technology is being used to support the valuation process – along with active involvement in discussions on the steps valuation agencies can take to improve all aspects of the way they recruit, develop and retain staff. It was clear that attendees found the conference informative, interesting and enjoyable.

About the International Property Tax Institute

The International Property Tax Institute (IPTI) is widely recognised as the world's leading organisation on property tax policy and practice.

The IPTI's mission is to provide impartial, objective, expert advice in the area of property tax systems and promote the concept that these systems should be fair and equitable, and meet the needs of all stakeholders, e.g., governments, taxpayers, practitioners and academics. In addition, the IPTI seeks to ensure that property tax systems contribute to the provision of high-quality services for the benefit of communities. The IPTI also specialises in:

- property valuation processes, including data collection, mapping and data management, mass appraisal valuation for residential and non-residential properties, and quality control processes and procedures;
- property tax collection and enforcement;
- appeal systems;
- technology and process integration and implementation, including data management, data analysis and reporting systems;
- electronic and online learning; and,
- sharing best practice.

More information about the IPTI can be found on www.ipti.org.



SEEING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

POOR LAND MOBILITY IN IRELAND HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS
FOR OUR FORESTRY TARGETS.



In 2011, I wrote about land mobility in Ireland for the *Surveyors Journal*, noting that approximately 1% of land was transacted each year, and that this sector was effectively landlocked, with limited mobility. Over the intervening years, this situation has only worsened, with latest statistics from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) reporting that only 0.5% of land was transacted annually. This reduced mobility has serious implications, one of which I aim to explore in this article.

Forestry challenges

Earlier this year, Dr Paul Kelly, Patrick Shields, and I (all from TU Dublin) undertook a research report for Coillte, examining the challenges in meeting forestry targets and exploring the land market for forestry in

TO MEET IRELAND'S 2050 TARGET,
WE NEED TO PLANT APPROXIMATELY
16,000 HECTARES OF FOREST
PER ANNUM.

Ireland. Within this report, we showed that to meet Ireland's 2050 target, we need to plant approximately 16,000 hectares of forest per annum. Yet, in 2023, we only planted around 2,000 hectares. Worse still, projections for 2024 suggest even lower figures. We are far from meeting our targets, and the implications are significant.

FEATURE

Dr Frank Harrington
BSc MSc MA DBEnv
School of Surveying
and Construction Innovation
TU Dublin





FORESTS ACT AS CARBON SINKS, HELPING TO OFFSET EMISSIONS FROM OTHER SECTORS LIKE AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY. IF WE FAIL TO EXPAND FORESTRY, IRELAND FACES SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL LIABILITIES.

Increasing our forestry is crucial, not only for biodiversity but also for carbon sequestration. Forests act as carbon sinks, helping to offset emissions from other sectors like agriculture and industry. If we fail to expand forestry, Ireland faces significant potential liabilities. The State may be forced to purchase carbon credits to offset emissions shortfalls, a cost projected to reach billions of Euro at current market rates. This fiscal burden threatens to compound existing economic pressures if emissions targets are not met through domestic measures like afforestation.

One of our key findings in the report was that not enough land is coming onto the market for bodies like Coillte, or others aiming to invest in forestry, to purchase. With only 0.5% of land transacting annually – significantly lower than our European counterparts – opportunities for afforestation are scarce. To put this in context, Ireland has about 4.5 million hectares of agricultural land farmed in the State. In 2023, there was a total of 24,420 hectares of land sold, and not all of this would be suited to or available for forestry.

Forestry, as one of the lower-value land uses, is typically planted on marginal or less productive land. Prime agricultural land is generally dedicated to higher-value uses like dairy or tillage farming. Thus, when even a small amount of land comes to market, organisations like Coillte (and any others seeking to acquire land for forestry) often find themselves outbid by dairy, tillage, or even recreational farmers – who sometimes enter the market and bid above commercial rates for personal use.

Increasing land prices

For non-rural practitioners, it's important to note that when agricultural land goes to market it follows a typical bidding system as would happen with other land uses or properties. In this system, higher-value agricultural uses like dairy and tillage generally outcompete lower-value uses like forestry. Recreational farmers, often with the financial flexibility to pay premium prices, add another layer of competition,

driving up prices. The Teagasc/SCSI Agricultural Land Market Review and Outlook 2024 reported an 11% increase in land prices on the previous year, with a further 6% projected for this year, driven in part by low supply, and thus limiting opportunities for afforestation.

A possible solution

So, where does that leave us? Out of the small pool of land transactions, forestry remains one of the least competitive bidders. If part of the solution relies on land coming to the market, it is unlikely we can meet our targets if the market dynamics remain unchanged. One of the options to achieve these targets, as part of a suite of measures, is to address the barriers to land mobility to increase supply.

Our research highlighted that one of the most apparent barriers is the disparity in taxation. While intergenerational transfers of agricultural land receive favourable treatment, with tax rates far lower than the standard 1% stamp duty, the transaction tax for other land sales sits at a punitive 7.5%. This means that not only do we have a standard tax inefficiency, but we are actively discouraging landowners from putting their land on the market by incentivising intergenerational transfers. This tax disparity is not only a barrier to meeting forestry targets, but is also an obstacle to introducing young farmers, promoting market efficiencies, and enabling innovative farming techniques that could help meet broader climate goals.

Reducing transaction taxes and aligning them more closely with those of intergenerational transfers could remove significant barriers to land mobility, enabling Ireland to progress towards its forestry and climate targets. The SCSI's Rural Practice Committee is actively examining these challenges and continues to make representations on behalf of its members.

By improving land mobility, we can create a more dynamic and responsive agricultural sector that supports economic efficiency, environmental sustainability, and the next generation of Irish farmers.

PLANNING FOR BETTER

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2024 HAS NOW BEEN SIGNED INTO LAW, AND IMPLEMENTATION IS UNDERWAY.

Following an extensive process that has taken over three years, the landmark Planning and Development Bill 2023 was signed into law by the President of Ireland on October 17, 2024. The new legislation is the culmination of a comprehensive legal review of the Planning and Development Act 2000, which was initiated by Government in July 2021. The aim was to review every aspect of planning legislation and to amend, where needed, to improve clarity, consistency and confidence in the Irish planning system. The Bill was the third largest piece of legislation enacted in the State's history and has been the subject of over 175 hours of debate across both Houses of the Oireachtas since it was first published in January 2023.

The new Planning and Development Act 2024 will now be implemented on a phased basis by the Government, with the aim of facilitating a smooth transition across the planning system and to minimise disruption to both ongoing and new planning applications. Key stakeholders such as local authorities, An Bord Pleanála, the Office of the Planning Regulator, infrastructure providers, and the professional planning institutes are being consulted on these transition proposals, with further details to be released in due course. It is anticipated that transitional arrangements could be in place for up to two years before the new Act can be fully commenced.

Key elements of the Act

The changes to planning legislation under the new Act are considerable. Some key elements are summarised below:

- **Restructuring of An Bord Pleanála:** The body will be renamed An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission), and it will undergo significant restructuring with the aim of enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness, and an increased focus on transparency. Improving resources within the Commission is also a core objective.
- **Timelines:** New statutory timelines for Commission decisions are being introduced, with greater accountability for delays. The Commission generally has 18 weeks to decide on applications or appeals, extended to 26 weeks if an environmental impact assessment (EIA) or appropriate assessment is needed. It must notify when a decision is expected and explain any delays. Continued

delays may require fee reimbursement and reporting to the Minister for Housing and the Office of the Planning Regulator.

- **Judicial review reforms:** Reforms allow the courts to direct amendments to planning documents where appropriate, instead of quashing entire decisions, and to place a stay on judicial review proceedings until this has been carried out. New eligibility criteria for environmental organisations and residents' associations to initiate judicial review proceedings have also been introduced. Furthermore, the ability to suspend the duration of a permission while subject to judicial review proceedings is also facilitated under the new Act.

FEATURE

Mark McKernan MSCSI MRICS
Divisional Director, Development
& Strategic Advisory
Cushman & Wakefield



- **Submissions and appeals:** The new Act includes measures to deter misuse of the planning process, with the aim of preventing spurious planning submissions and appeals. Additionally, the legislation bans the practice of requesting payment in exchange for not opposing a development.
- **Development plans and area plans:** The new Act increases the lifetime of local authority development plans from six to ten years. The Act also requires that development plans must state how national and regional objectives regarding population and housing are being implemented in local development plans. Local area plans will be replaced by three types of focused area plans: urban area plans, priority area plans, and co-ordinated area plans.
- **Urban development zones:** Strategic development zones are replaced by urban development zones, which are designated areas with significant potential for development, particularly for housing and other key infrastructure. The aim is to facilitate a more plan-led approach to development, increasing certainty at the master planning stage.

National Planning Framework and SCSi input

In addition to the introduction of the new Act, the revision of the National Planning Framework

THE NEW LEGISLATION IS THE CULMINATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL REVIEW OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, WHICH WAS INITIATED BY GOVERNMENT IN JULY 2021.

(NPF) continues, with the consultation process on the draft first revision having been completed in September this year. Since then, the Government has released updated housing targets that envisage 303,000 residential units, or an average of 50,500 units per annum, being delivered between 2025 and 2030. These targets will be scaled upwards from a base of 41,000 units in 2025 to 60,000 units in 2030.

In November, the Government released the 'Updated Draft Revised National Planning Framework', which incorporates the draft schedule of amendments arising from the public consultation process. The Government will in due course be required to approve a final revised NPF following the conclusion of the environmental assessments; this is expected to take place in the new year after the new Government is formed.

The SCSi has been involved with the review process on the NPF through representation on the Planning Advisory Forum, which met on several occasions over the past 18 months. The SCSi also prepared a submission on behalf of members during the consultation process this summer, which highlighted several key issues, linked to planning, which are impacting on development.

Points of note in the SCSi's submission included a call for the revised housing delivery targets to be incorporated within regional spatial strategies and county development plans as soon as possible, and that future revisions to development plans continue to

carry out the mapping of zoned and serviced land to inform current and revised housing output targets across various regions. The full submission can be viewed on the SCSi website.

Conclusion

The SCSi welcomes the publication of the new Act, which aims to address many of the key challenges evident within the Irish planning system. However, the successful implementation of the Act in the short term will require positive collaboration with the key stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition from the previous system. Any issues identified will need to be effectively and efficiently managed to ensure that the key objectives, including the higher housing targets, can be met.

Adequate resourcing within public sector planning bodies is another critical requirement for successful implementation. In this regard, the SCSi welcomes the publication of the Ministerial Action Plan on Planning Resources October 2024, which sets out a roadmap comprised of 14 key actions to increase resources within the planning sector over the coming years. A steering group has also been established to oversee implementation of the plan, with designated funding secured in Budget 2025, which are all positive initial steps. Finally, the publication of the revised NPF will be another key milestone in overall planning reform, and we look forward to continuing our role on the Planning Advisory Forum until the final NPF is issued in the new year.



TO DEMOLISH OR NOT TO DEMOLISH – THAT IS THE QUESTION!

THE EARTH RISING FESTIVAL IN DUBLIN WAS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS AROUND CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WASTE.

In September 2024, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) hosted the Earth Rising Festival, where the central courtyard was the location for an imposing installation illustrating the amount of construction waste produced per person in Ireland over their lifetime.

What is the link between the installation and the topic of demolition?

The idea behind the installation was to start the conversation between the public and stakeholders in the construction industry around how to consider ways to reduce waste generated from demolition and construction activities.

The 3D installation of a cube supported by the frame below represents the amount of waste generated per person by the construction industry in Ireland over each person's lifetime. Every element of this installation was chosen for its circularity – the mesh and scaffolding can be re-used, as can the concrete blocks supporting the entire structure. This was a well-considered piece of art telling a story.

FEATURE

Emer Byrne
MSc MSCSI MRICS
Technological University
Dublin



How did this project come about?

The project was initiated through Creative Ireland's Creative Climate Action Fund, funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media. This led to Demolition Takedown exploring the theme of waste in the construction sector. The process had three phases. The initial two phases were interviews and surveys with the construction industry and a collaborative education case study with the TU Dublin Architecture and Surveying students (See the *Surveyors Journal* August 2024, pp.24-25).

This third phase of the project needed to explore attitudes among the public through engaging with them on a project that sparked conversation.

Who were the stakeholders and partners?

Apart from the funds mentioned above who initiated the project, it became more relevant to include others in this project. Additional funding was also required to deliver a larger-scale project.

The partners to this public engagement opportunity were the SCSi; the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI); IPUT Real Estate Dublin; IMMA (host to the installation); Irish Architectural Foundation (IAF); and, the N-TUTORR education fund for third-level student learning in TU Dublin. The support and partnership from this collaboration enabled the final phase to be delivered.



What form of engagement took place at IMMA during the Festival?

This festival, which has grown over the last three years, attracted over 15,000 visitors across three days, starting on Culture Night on September 20. Students from TU Dublin, supported through the N-TUTORR educational fund, acted as invigilators, gathering information from the general public, asking questions interrogating the public's knowledge and awareness around construction waste and demolition in Ireland.

The key findings identified a need for greater knowledge and awareness around this topic. This could be achieved through sharing statistics and research to show the public the timeline/journey of a building from cradle to grave, and the carbon cost of this journey.

Where does this project fit in the context of a day in the life of a surveyor?

Our role as surveyors is to look at facts, and to report to and advise our clients on the optimum outcome for their built environment assets. Our role in the sector is to support good decision-making. To enhance this process, collaboration with other professionals in the built environment sector is becoming more relevant. Other professionals include: architects, for example around optimising design; planners, e.g., in optimising site potential; and, engineers to optimise the energy and other components of the asset. The theme of the project at IMMA was to highlight the issue of demolition and construction waste. Surveyors (building, planning and development, valuation, agency, quantity surveyors, etc.) play a role in examining



Installation at IMMA for the Earth Rising Festival 2024 – construction waste per person in Ireland over their lifetime. (Photo credit: Brian Cregan.)

the potential for the adaptive re-use of an asset. This exploration can be a route towards reducing possible waste through demolition and thereby extending the life of the existing asset.

Are there other questions to ask so that the outcome is a well-considered, balanced decision around demolition or retrofit? So many of our assets are already in existence – why not play around with the possibility of extending the life of some of these existing assets?

Does this project overlap with the circular economy objectives under the European Green Deal?

The European Commission adopted the new circular economy action plan (CEAP) in March 2020. It is one of the main building blocks of the European Green Deal, Europe's new agenda for sustainable growth.

Under this action plan there is a section that addresses 'Construction and Buildings'. It alludes to the fact that the built environment has a significant impact on many sectors of the economy, on local jobs and quality of life. The construction sector is responsible for over 35% of the EU's total waste generation (Eurostat, 2016).

To exploit the potential for increasing material efficiency and reducing climate impacts, the Commission aimed to ensure coherence across relevant policy areas, such as management of construction and demolition waste. Circularity principles are promoted throughout the lifecycle of buildings through the following proposals:

- (i) promoting measures to improve the durability and adaptability of built assets in line with the circular economy principles for building designs and developing digital logbooks for buildings;
- (ii) considering a revision of material recovery targets set in EU legislation for construction and demolition waste and its material-specific fractions;
- (iii) promoting initiatives to reduce soil sealing, rehabilitate abandoned or contaminated brownfields, and increase the safe, sustainable and circular use of excavated soils; and,
- (iv) exploring the 'Renovation Wave' initiative announced in the European Green Deal to be implemented in line with circular economy (CE) principles, notably optimised lifecycle performance, and longer life expectancy of built assets. As part of the revision of the recovery targets for construction and demolition waste, the Commission will pay special attention to insulation materials, which generate a growing waste stream.

To demolish or not to demolish?

Ultimately, the decision-making must go back to the client. It is the responsibility of the surveying professional to be as up to date and informed as possible to enable us to report, advise and ultimately support good decision-making.



FINDING A PATH TO REMEDIATION

THE LEGACY DEFECTS PATHFINDER SCHEME HAS PRODUCED A NUMBER OF INSIGHTS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL REMEDIATION OF APARTMENTS.

The pathfinder scheme for the Interim Remediation Scheme for Fire Safety Defects in Apartments and Duplexes has been developed to address critical fire safety and structural issues in buildings across Ireland that were built between 1991 and 2013. Through engagement with various stakeholders and hands-on experiences with designated pathfinder projects, key insights and recommendations have emerged to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the remediation process. This article summarises the key learnings and 12 critical recommendations that have been identified through the pathfinder scheme.

Background

The Legacy Defects Remediation Scheme represents the Government's commitment to remedy fire, water and structural safety issues in apartment complexes and duplexes. Pathfinder projects for the fire remediation aspect serve as a testing ground to refine processes, identify challenges, and create templates that standardise approaches for competent professionals (CPs), local authority fire services (LAFS), and the Housing Agency. Omega Surveying Services Ltd, as a Chartered Project Management Surveying and Chartered Building Surveying firm, has actively participated in the pathfinder projects, contributing to essential findings for the interim scheme's success.

Key learnings

Through engagement with the LAFS and the Housing Agency, multiple issues have surfaced regarding initial submissions and document standards. While some requirements were clarified through the

pathfinder process, other elements remain under discussion and we await further clarification. Below are the 12 primary recommendations derived from this ongoing collaboration.

12 key learnings

1. As-built drawings

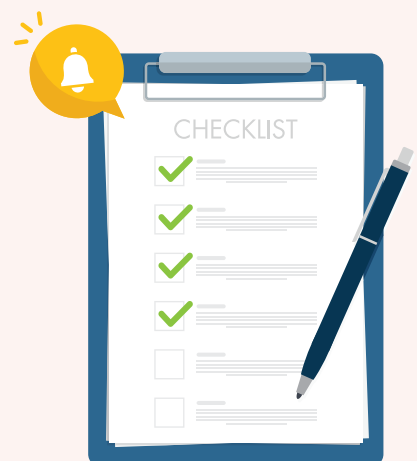
As-built drawings should be submitted. If drawings are available, any minor deviations from what was constructed on site should be identified and illustrated on the drawings. Amendments to the drawings should be clear and attributable to the CP amending. Where as-built drawings are unavailable, providing basic plans will be necessary, while elevation and section drawings may also be required, leading to higher upfront costs for owners' management companies (OMCs).

2. Submission of fire safety assessments

Initial submissions to the scheme did not require fire safety assessments (FSAs), but the LAFS now require them to conduct a comprehensive gap analysis against the fire safety risk assessment (FSRA). This enables the LAFS to assess submissions holistically, considering both interim measures and long-term remedial plans.

3. Amendments to templates

The Housing Agency is revising templates for the FSRA and



FEATURE

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remedial work plan. These updated templates, which are yet to be finalised, are expected to standardise document formats, and improve clarity and consistency across all submissions.

4. Protected entrance hallways

Protected entrance hallways (PEHs) serving individual units should be assessed individually. While upgrading PEHs to current fire safety standards might be cost prohibitive, some on ground floor and first floor levels may be excluded from required works if they are compliant with BS5588 and Technical Guidance Document B standards (acceptable as Tier 2 variations). However, certain authorities have mandated PEH upgrades, indicating some regional variations in application.

5. Prohibition of bespoke details

No customised solutions (bespoke details) are permitted in remediation submissions. Only systems with proven, tested designs will be accepted to ensure universal compliance. From experience, this may be difficult to implement in all locations due to various restrictions, and in some instances further engagement with the LAFS and Housing Agency may be warranted.

6. Detailed descriptions in remedial work plans

All proposed works within the remedial work plan must include clear, itemised descriptions

covering interim measures and remaining works. This is essential for gap analysis by the LAFS, ensuring comprehensive coverage across all project phases.

7. Opening up in all buildings

To confirm the consistency of construction methods and identify potential safety concerns, LAFS now require 'opening up' inspections in each distinct building within a development. Consultants must document findings for each block, acknowledging that sufficient investigations have been carried out.

8. Marked-up drawings

Consultants must provide marked-up drawings that indicate where openings and inspections have taken place. These markings should correspond with findings in the report to ensure transparency and traceability. Drawings should be clear, labelled, and appended to the FSA report for accurate reference.

9. Verification of cavity closers around windows

Cavity closers around window openings in traditional masonry cavity wall construction can be deemed compliant under Diagram 17 of Technical Guidance Document B without additional fireproofing materials if the existing plasterboard reveals are robustly installed to mitigate risks of flame and smoke spread. This requires careful assessment by CPs on a case-by-case basis.

10. Exclusion of standalone car parks from scheme scope

Standalone car parks, particularly those without direct residential connections, are excluded from the scheme. Any associated safety upgrades, including fire detection systems and emergency lighting, remain the responsibility of the OMC.

11. Testing and extension of life safety systems

Systems such as landlord fire detection and alarm systems (FDAS) and emergency lighting must be inspected and tested to confirm compliance or non-compliance with original design standards. Full replacements of such

systems may not be included within the scheme depending on the severity of their non-compliance, and as many systems have exceeded their expected lifespan. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

12. Provision for maintenance funds

The scheme mandates that OMCs fund any maintenance-related issues identified during the interim works. For instance, if common area fire doors require repair or replacement due to wear and tear, OMCs must secure these funds independently to meet certification requirements upon completion of the remediation works.

Broader implications and future steps

The recommendations drawn from the pathfinder scheme highlight the importance of having robust documentation and a standardised approach in addressing legacy defects. The scheme anticipates that the template refinement and structured guidelines developed through the pathfinder projects will create a more streamlined process for full remediation in the future. As legislation progresses, it is hoped that these insights will not only improve safety standards across Ireland, but also optimise project costs and timeframes by eliminating inconsistencies.

It is also expected, but not confirmed, that OMCs will have to accept any grant offer from the Housing Agency via a vote at an EGM.

The pathfinder initiative is crucial in laying the groundwork for a safer and more resilient built environment. By implementing the above recommendations, CPs, LAFS, and the Housing Agency can foster a transparent and effective approach to legacy defect remediation, ultimately protecting residents and ensuring long-term safety in residential developments.

Final note

As the pathfinder scheme evolves, ongoing collaboration among stakeholders will be essential to address challenges and refine processes. Building surveying members must remain committed to contributing to the scheme's progress and ensuring the successful remediation of legacy defects across Ireland's residential landscape.



A NEW DEPARTURE IN COMMERCIAL DATA

THE SCSi HAS LAUNCHED A COMMERCIAL PROPERTY TRANSACTION REGISTER FOR MEMBERS.

The availability of real-time commercial property transaction information in Ireland can be relatively opaque, although digitisation has improved in the past decade. The Statutory Commercial Lease Register, which has been in existence since 2010, has improved the level of transparency for commercial rents. However, more can be done to supply real-time commercial transactional data to the market to assist with investment/disposal decisions and also to support those practising in this sector, such as Chartered Surveyors.

An SCSi solution

An SCSi committee was formed in 2022 to assess challenges facing Chartered Surveyors in getting access to reliable, detailed and up-to-date comparable data for valuations. Many meetings and discussions ensued and, with the generous support of a small pilot group of surveyors submitting monthly transactional data, the SCSi Commercial Property Transaction Register (CPTR) was created. Following SCSi Council approval in October and subsequent testing, the SCSi launched its member-exclusive digital register at our member CPD event on November 26. A recording of the CPD is available in the members' area of www.scsi.ie. The CPTR is a valuable new resource tailored to meet the evolving needs of Chartered Surveyors across the industry. Designed to foster transparency and provide access to critical market data, this register also promises to bolster the accuracy and depth of SCSi property market analysis in its various research reports, where the data can be analysed and aggregated to examine periodic trends and performance turning points.

This initiative was developed with the intent of enhancing the culture of data sharing and access within the SCSi membership. The CPTR provides



a detailed, data-rich platform, recording up-to-date transactional information on commercial properties across the country including office, retail, industrial, agricultural and development land, mixed-use, hotels, creche facilities, and more. This data repository will enable surveyors to access historical and current market information in their area, which is essential to professionals who provide a range of valuations and market insight advice to clients.

An evolving resource

One of the primary criteria for accessing this exclusive register is an active contribution from members. Members are required to provide transactional data on commercial properties they handle to gain access to the wider database. This reciprocal approach is intended to create a comprehensive and dynamic data pool, increasing the value of the resource for all participants while encouraging the sharing of essential industry information. As each member contributes, the collective benefit grows, resulting in a more accurate, real-time snapshot of Ireland's national, provincial and local commercial property landscape.

With this project, the SCSi also seeks to encourage a more collaborative culture among its members, reinforcing the importance of shared responsibility in maintaining a strong, transparent property sector for Chartered Surveyors operating within it. As more members contribute, the CPTR will evolve, becoming increasingly comprehensive and reflective of real-time market activity.

For more information on the Commercial Property Transaction Register, please visit www.scsi.ie/ctr/.

FEATURE

Edward McAuley
SCSi Practice
and Policy Director



A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

PHILIP BYRNE IS A GENERAL PRACTICE SURVEYOR BASED IN MAYNOOTH, CO. KILDARE, AN AREA OF WIDE ACTIVITY IN AGRICULTURE, STUD FARMS, RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

Philip Byrne of Coonan Property has worked in Co. Meath and Co. Kildare for the past 25 years and his broad range of practice has changed over this time: "It's less and less rural than it once was. In my own role, my main area is farmland, stud farms, development land, commercial property and country houses. But we also in general practice cover a bit of everything. I could be doing deals on farmland, development land, new homes, valuations, land rentals, or commercial shop units". Coonan Property has offices in Maynooth, Celbridge and Naas. Philip says there are fewer traditional farmers in the area and fewer part-time farmers. More land is being leased and there's more consolidation: "Of late we're seeing solar farms coming in. So it's changing all the time, plus a lot of the land which once was farmed has now been rezoned for housing, commercial development, or some other non-farming activity".

Day to day

An average working day for Philip begins early in the office: "The first thing is get through emails. Then I like to stay in the office up to 12.00pm or lunchtime. Really, in that time, I try

and do my phone calls to clients, meet with staff and colleagues, negotiate sales both on market and off market, complete my admin, approve brochures, valuation reports, letters to clients, meet clients, discuss various different campaigns, and scout for new business. I see what's out there, and try and bring in new business all the time. Then in the afternoon I would conduct public auctions, arrange appointments to inspect properties, meet clients, and do social media and online platforms".

Kildare is a famous breeding ground for champion racehorses, and stud farms are one aspect of Philip's work. The main buyers for this kind of land would be existing owners of large equine activities or individuals who want to invest in them. It's a select market, says Philip, but a good one: "We're lucky. The land is good quality. It's close to airports. It's close to where people like to live. There is access to good schools for families. There's access to plenty of racecourses, and plenty of other racing and breeding operations".

One of the main challenges of being a general practice surveyor is that you never know where the next sale is coming from: "You're continuously working at completing existing instructions and looking for new instructions. That's a big challenge. You need to show up with energy every day and perform accordingly".

While challenging, this is also a big plus says Philip, in that there's huge variety: "There's never a dull moment in it. There's good days

and bad days and that's the nature of it. But overall, the variation is something that I'm very interested in. I like to get out and about, I like to solve problems, I like to meet people. And I like to deal with people. This all requires integrity, trust and discretion".



Profile

Philip originally studied for a master's degree in agricultural science in UCD before completing a postgraduate course in surveying practice from the College of Estate Management at Reading University in the UK. He is a member of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Outside of work, he likes to spend time with his family. He is a dad to three teenagers, so spends a lot of time doing whatever they're interested in. His other interests include sport, keeping fit and golf.

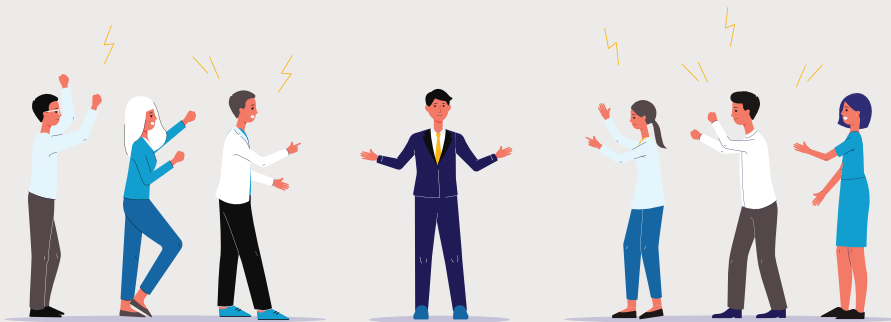
SURVEYOR PROFILE

Colm Quinn
Senior Journalist,
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A STANDING CONCILIATOR ... TO HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE?

PROJECT BOARDS AND STANDING CONCILIATORS ARE STANDARD ON PUBLIC PROJECTS,
BUT COULD THEY HAVE A VALUE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TOO?



Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes emerged to help keep parties out of the courtroom, and by doing so they reduced the period required to resolve disputes, reduced the costs typically associated with dispute resolution through recourse to the courts, and allowed for the determination of disputes by industry experts. Since the 1990s, standard forms of contract in use in Ireland typically include a contractual obligation to refer disputes to conciliation as a mandatory process to be applied in advance of what might ultimately require an arbitration or court hearing. Historically, conciliation has been a huge success in resolving disputes in Ireland, and it continues to be the ADR process of choice in the public sector and for many in the private sector.

Project boards and standing conciliators

In 2016, the 'project board' and 'standing conciliator' (SC) were introduced to certain public sector projects. Appointed upon the

commencement of the project, the SC is fully briefed on the Conditions of Contract and the scope of the works. Additionally, they are provided with regular access to the site and selected documentation to keep them apprised of the key issues on the project and the progress of the works. Thus, when called upon to conciliate in a dispute, not only are they appointed, they are briefed, are familiar with and should have the confidence of the parties, and are aware of the matter at hand.

The project board creates a regular forum for senior management and representatives of both parties to meet to help avoid and resolve disputes, and achieving these aims should be enhanced if the project board is chaired by the SC, who is an independent informed third party. This arrangement can be put in place at the discretion of the parties. Dispute avoidance can therefore be formally introduced into the relationship between the parties, allowing them to tap into the experience and knowledge of the SC at all stages of the project. While there is a cost associated with appointing an SC, this can be offset not only against the time and cost savings associated with dispute resolution, but also against the less tangible benefits of avoiding disputes and increasing collaboration between the parties.

A private role?

Given the above, the appointment of an SC focusing on dispute avoidance, and perhaps preferably as chair of the project board, should be one of the ADR process options considered in the private as well as the public sector.

If it is to be effective, it requires: a) the appointment of a suitably experienced and mutually respected SC; b) suitable appointees to the project board with the appropriate authority to make binding decisions; and c) genuine engagement by both parties with dispute avoidance and resolution initiatives instigated by the SC in their capacity as chair. Is there a more comprehensive ADR solution out there? Answers on a postcard please...

THE LAST WORD

Mark Wearen
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"The intention behind the introduction of the Standing Conciliator is to encourage proper engagement between the Parties to assist the Parties in the avoidance of disputes, to assist the Parties in avoidance of costly and lengthy formal dispute resolution procedures, and to assist the Parties to establish agreement upon issues before they crystallise into a dispute. If a dispute arises, the Standing Conciliator will act as a conciliator as set out in 2.7.2 of this guidance." *Capital Works Management Framework; Guidance Note; GN 3.1.1; Section 2.7*

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