



Planning Issues: Summer 2013

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President's Welcome

MARY CROWLEY MIPI

It is a great honour to have been elected as President of the IPI for the Council year 2013-2014. Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank our outgoing President, Joanna Kelly, who successfully delivered on both of her primary aims for her term as President in producing the Institute's first Corporate Plan and raising the public awareness of planning through primary school education initiatives and adult information seminars. In particular I would also like to acknowledge Joanna's work in maintaining a strong media profile and building on the legacy of all past presidents of the Institute.

I, along with Council and the IPI staff, are very much looking forward to the year ahead and with the continued support of you, the members, we will continue to raise the profile of the Institute and commence the delivery of the objectives of the Corporate Plan. As President I have a number of key objectives for the year ahead as follows:

(1) Implementing the Corporate Plan

My first objective is the implementation of the Institute's Corporate Plan which aims to ensure that the Institute is a strong, dynamic, responsive and outward looking professional body for planning and planners in Ireland. Over the course of the coming year it is intended

to advance many of the Plan's key objectives including the establishment of a Professional Standards Board to provide chartership status for our members and to promote planning as a profession in Ireland, reviewing the membership structure, formalising a compulsory CPD structure and developing a new website.

(2) Advancing the Institute's Research Output and Policy Influence

Last December in my capacity as Vice President I established the IPI Policy and Research Group and one of my main aims this year is to continue to influence and inform national planning and environmental policy and to increase the Institute's research output. This is in line with the objectives of the Corporate Plan and throughout the year we will be consulting with members and asking you to contribute your views and opinions to the work of the P&RG.

(3) Urban Forum

This year the chair of the Urban Forum has been passed to the Institute. As President I look forward to chairing this joint initiative of the Irish Landscape Institute, the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland, Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, Engineers Ireland and the Irish Planning Institute. This professional umbrella group provides an important platform for strategic thinking and discussion on a variety of issues of interest to the members of the professional Institutes that work in the built environment. In the coming months the Forum intends to run a number of colloquia together with a number of other events. The forum can be found on LinkedIn so please join us where you will find details of previous colloquia and the Forum's manifesto. The work programme, for the forthcoming year will issue to all members in the coming weeks. If you have any suggestions or queries please contact either myself or Aoife Doyle, Urban Forum Administrator, at urbanforum@ipi.ie.

In a change to previous years I have also assumed the role of Branch Co-ordinator for 2013/2014 and in September I will be inviting representatives from each of the Branches to the first of what I hope will be biannual IPI National Branch meetings. Throughout the coming year I hope to attend both branch and YPN events and also visit the three accredited planning schools. I am very much looking forward to meeting you throughout the year at these events.

At present we are busy organising the main events for the forthcoming year such as the Autumn Planning Conference, National Planning Awards, National Planning Conference, overseas Field Trip, the CPD Programme for 2013/2014 and the next publication of *Pleanáil*. Details on these events will be available shortly but, in the interim, the Institute will issue "save the date" notices so you can mark events in your diary.

Finally I along with full Council and the IPI staff, IPI Executive Director Seán O'Leary, Stephen Walsh and James White, thank you for your support and look forward to meeting you at various events throughout the year. Of course, if you have questions or wish to bring matters of concern to the attention of either myself or Council please feel free to email me at m.crowley@ipi.ie or contact the IPI office.



IPI Annual General Meeting 2013

The Annual General Meeting of the Institute was held in the Guinness Storehouse, Arthur Guinness Business Centre, St. James's Gate, Dublin 8 on Saturday, 25th May 2013.

The AGM was well attended and immediately following the meeting, there was a CPD Talk on the future development of Diageo's operations on the site as well as a discussion on the manner in which the site can contribute to its environs and the city of Dublin generally. The talk was followed by a tour of the Guinness Storehouse.

In summing up the year's activities, outgoing President Joanna Kelly said; "There has been much work done over the past year that it is not possible to mention each and every action or event. However, I would like to acknowledge the energy and commitment that members have shown over the last number of years that has culminated in the establishment of various initiatives and forums.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our interns, James White and Stephen Walsh, who have undertaken a number of projects throughout the year such as the Corporate Diary and the review of the Planning Census.

As the profile of the Institute continues to grow so too does the time required from members and in particularly Council members to ensure that things get done and are managed in an efficient and effective manner. The time and

commitment, particularly from the Officers this year was second to none and I am very grateful to them. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Council Members, in particular the Officers, the Branch Committees, members of the Young Planners Network and each of you as members for the support you have shown me as President over the past twelve months".

Two main motions were passed at the AGM. The first related to the Institute's adoption of Compulsory Continuous Professional Development (CPD). CPD will be rolled out from October 2013 in order to facilitate the growth and development of the profession's skill set and adaptability.

Members will be required to complete 20 hours of CPD organised by the Institute or an endorsed external body. The introduction of CPD will be instrumental in the development of the Institute's membership categories as per the reforms outlined in the Institute's Corporate Plan.

The second motion related to the reduction of time that a member may be in arrears before they may be removed from the membership register of the Institute.

Officers of Council

Mary Crowley- President
Amy Hastings-Vice President
Darragh McGonigle- Hon Treasurer
Mary Hughes- Hon Secretary
Henk van der Kamp-PRO
Joanna Kelly-Education Officer
Gerry Sheeran- Convener, T&E Committee
Deirdre Fallon- Membership Secretary

Angela Brereton, Tom Phillips and Alison Harvey have joined the Council.



Gerry Walker- An Appreciation

HENK VAN DER KAMP FIPI

The Institute was saddened to learn that Gerry Walker, an honorary member and past president of the Irish Planning Institute and former Head of Planning at An Foras Forbartha and Head of School of Planning and Architecture DIT died suddenly at his home at Blessington Co. Wicklow on 23rd of May 2013. A motion acknowledging Gerry's contribution to the planning profession and the Institute was moved at the Annual General Meeting on the 25th of May. An expression of sympathy on behalf of the Institute and its members appeared in the Irish Times on the 27th of May 2013. Here, Henk van der Kamp discusses Gerry's contribution to a generation of planners and planning practice in Ireland.

Gerald A Walker graduated from UCC as a geographer and later obtained a Master of Regional Planning from University of North Carolina in 1969. Since its introduction in 1964, Gerry was involved in implementing the new planning system in Ireland. He was involved in studies such as the first development plan for Galway City, 'Regional Studies in Ireland', also known as the 'Buchanan report' and he was a member of staff in An Foras Forbartha, the National Institute for Physical Planning and Construction Research, from when it was established in 1964 with the assistance of the United Nations Special Fund. He became head of its planning division in 1981.

Apart from his early reports on urban renewal and regional planning, he published the results of some major practical studies such as the search for optimal coastal locations for oil refineries and the Shannon Estuary Industrial Location Study. Before the European EIA Directive was adopted in 1985, he studied the topic and advocated at the time for the introduction of a 'national panel' that would review scope and content of EISs and the possible role of AFF in that regard. Instead, the Directive was

implemented by leaving it to applicants to submit environmental impact statements through the planning system. He was much liked and respected by the research staff in the planning division. In the 1980s he was responsible for the introduction of a very interesting research initiative: Ireland in the Year 2000, the origins of which were described later by him as 'like all good ideas this was started over a cup of coffee'.

In those times the promise of the millennium and the year 2000 had a magical ring associated with it. Mobile phones, internet or cheap air travel did not exist nor did the promise of a Celtic tiger economic performance with associated population growth and housing needs. Nonetheless, there was an awareness within the Foras of the need for planning of the country that at that time was relatively undeveloped and in need of much physical infrastructure. The Ireland in the year 2000 series consisted of two day seminars on a particular topic where a small group of experts were invited to prepare a discussion document on the trends in their area of expertise. These papers were then presented and discussed in depth by the entire group 'in camera' at a two or three day residential colloquium. The series of events took place between the years 1980 and 1985 and resulted in seven publications. He was also active from the start in the development of the Irish Planning Institute and he became its president in 1981-1982. He was later made honorary member.

Following the decision by the Government to abolish the Foras in 1987, he became vice-principal of Dublin Institute of Technology. In that capacity he played a key role in the change over from a technical college to an Institute of Technology with full degree awarding powers following the adoption of the DIT Act 1992. From the start of that move, he regularly spoke of his wish to start an undergraduate planning course; the first in the country. That became reality in 2000 and the first students were enrolled in the summer of

that year. But his contribution to DIT was much greater than just in the planning area. He introduced two masters programmes that still run today, based on an EU funded initiative at a time when masters programmes were rare in DIT and non-existent in the faculty of the built environment. He also introduced environmental education through the Knocksink education centre which achieved a number of awards and he was actively involved in a number of European research projects. He never hid his criticisms of management where he disagreed with decisions made or directions chosen. This was not always appreciated but always respected.

Within the Foras he had explicit views on the priorities of research topics while in DIT he was skeptical of the early sketch proposals (described by some as a 'masterplan') for a low density campus development for DIT in Grangegorman and he was pleased that ultimately a totally different direction was taken. He was able to see that masterplan on the wall in Bolton Street when he accepted an invitation to attend the visit by President Higgins on the occasion of the centenary of the college. It was appropriate that he was able to visit DIT on that occasion, speaking with his former colleagues and visibly enjoying the status that the planning school had achieved which he had started. Reflecting on Gerry's contributions it must be said that above anything else, he is most remembered as a nice man and a good man who has left a legacy and influence on many people that goes far beyond the achievements described here.

IPI Branch Reports

During 2012, the network of IPI Branches contributed to a busy schedule of CPD Events, social evenings and field trips for IPI members, with some limited places for non-IPI members. The continual development and support of the branch network by the Institute and its members is fundamental to the growth and development of the Institute as a whole and for the provision of Continuous Professional Development Events for IPI members around the country.

Cork Branch Report

AGM

The Cork Branch AGM was held on 3rd of May 2012. The IPI Handbook requires that an AGM is held in March /April of every year.

Chairperson: Wessel Vosloo
Secretary: Shane Scollard
Treasurer: Tricia O'Sullivan

The committee members of this branch are: Evelyn Sikora, Sarah O'Mahony, Paul Hyde, Orla Casey, and Orla O'Callaghan.

Branch Activities

The Cork Branch has been very active since their last AGM. The branch committee continue to hold meetings once a month, with all round good attendance. A roving venue for meetings is practiced with meetings held in UCC, River Lee Hotel and private sector member's offices. The branch committee are very grateful to all these organisations for accommodating these meetings.

Greater Dublin Area Branch Report

The GDA Branch was active during 2012 within a smaller catchment area comprising the four Dublin authority areas, and Cos. Kildare and Wicklow

following the establishment of the North East Branch, which now serves Co. Meath.

The Branch held 4 events during 2012 as follows:

7th Feb: City & County Roadshow #1: Collaboration and Diversification: Dublin City Council (CPD)

19 May Tour of Criminal Courts Complex (Field Trip)

29 Sept Tour of Glasnevin Cemetery & Museum (Field Trip)

15 Nov: GDA/YPN Planning and Urban Design Responses to Disaster and Conflict (CPD Seminar)

All events were either free to IPI/Urban Forum members or incurred a small charge to cover costs.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this branch of the IPI then please contact Stephen O'Sullivan or Frederick O'Dwyer at dublinarea@ipi.ie

Midlands Branch Update

Chairperson: Terry McCague
Treasurer: Alaine Clarke

The highlight of the Midlands Branch year was the successful CPD that was held in Tullamore Court Hotel on 8th March 2012 in respect of recent amendments to quarry legislation and substitute consent applications. The CPD attracted local authority planners, consultants, hydrologists, quarry operators from all over the country. The presentations were excellent and extremely informative.

The Branch had a very successful social event with a 'tourist' twist with a tour of the recently renovated Tullamore Dew Distillery on 2nd November

2012, and a talk from guest speaker, Paddy Mathews, Failte Ireland. The tour was followed by a meal where we were delighted to be joined by Joanna Kelly, President of the Institute, among others.

The Branch organised a CPD which was held on the 23rd May in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone. The topic for this event was about town centre policy and wider implications of regional policy on town centre, with visit of Athlone Town Centre and associated residential. The half day event had the following speakers:

Niall Cussen (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government); Paul Keogh, architect regarding Design Manual; Ms Aoife Moore, Regional Planner; Gavin Daly, NIRSA Researcher regarding trends & implications.

Finally congratulations to Ger Fahy and Trevor Sadler on the birth of their daughter, Martha.

Mid-West Branch Report

The 2013 Mid-West Branch AGM was held on the 21st of March 2013, at the offices of Limerick County Council.

The officers of the IPI Mid-West Branch are:

Chairperson: Karen Burke
Vice Chair: Gerry Sheeran
Treasurer: Gary Rowan
Secretary: Brian McCarthy

Committee members: Mary Hughes, Maria Woods, Brian Beck, Caroline Balfe, Mary O'Malley, Caroline Madden, Lorna O'Carroll.

The committee formally met 5 times during the year, to organise IPI events and to discuss a range of IPI and planning issues in the MidWest

Region. The Mid-West Branch hosted 2 events in the year. In June 2012 the Mid-West Branch jointly hosted a CPD Event on myplan.ie with the Department of the Environment and the Mid-West Regional Authority. In November 2012, the Mid-West Branch organised and hosted a CPD event entitled "Agricultural Diversification: Planning Challenges and Solutions". This event was well attended. Of note the attendees included planners from outside the Mid-West Region and attendees from a wide range of sectors outside of the planning profession, including farming organisations - IFA, Macra na Feirme and Elected Members reflecting the importance and relevance of agriculture to planning and economic development in current times. It also highlighted the importance to the Branch of interaction and marketing CPD events with agencies and organisations e.g. 3rd Level Institutes outside of the planning profession, with the consequent potential for further enhancing the profile of the Mid-West IPI Branch and increased attendances at CPD events.

Subsequent to the successful Branch CPD event held in 2012 on the topic of Agricultural Diversification, the branch took up an invite from one of the speakers – David O'Donnell of greengas.ie to inspect his anaerobic digestion (AD) operation at his farm in Shanagolden, Co. Limerick. 12 professionals including representatives from local authority planning and environment sections and the private practise were shown around the AD plant which is a privately owned, financed and operated AD plant positioned adjacent to an established dairy and poultry farm using successful technologies established in other European countries. The AD Plant processes the dairy and poultry manure and slurry generated from the farm as well as other imported feedstuffs. The biogas produced in the anaerobic digestion process is used as

fuel in a CHP Engine. The resultant electricity produced is sold to the national grid and the heat generated recycled for heating use in both Plant and the nearby poultry enterprise. The processed digestate is used on local farm land as a high quality eco fertiliser. The process from agricultural input, processing to energy output was demonstrated in tandem with reference to the overlapping and at times conflicting procedural requirements imposed by various governmental and semi-state organisations including, various sections of the Department of Agricultural Food and Marine, the local authority Environment and Planning obligations.

This visit provided professionals with an informed understanding of a practical and feasible example of agricultural diversification and a renewable energy resource and stressed the importance of good communication between operators and local authorities and a need for greater consistency in legislative and regulatory provisions across all government departments.

North East Branch Report

The Northeast Branch committee for 2012 comprised of the following members:

Chair: Deirdre Fallon
Secretary: Colm McCoy
Treasurer: Sarah Lynch
Council Member: Joanna Kelly

Landscape Seminar February 2012

The first Northeast branch event of 2012 was a seminar on landscape, hosted in Louth County Council Office Buildings on 17th February 2012. The seminar included presentations from three experienced and diverse speakers including ILI president Maryann Harris. Maryann examined the issue of landscape policy and its implications for planning. The presentation covered

landscape policy and its pathway from EU level to current local issues, taking into consideration up-to-date legislative changes and outlining challenges for the planning system and planners.

"The role of cultural heritage and economic diversification Field Trip" Slane Castle 6th of June 2012

This North East Branch Event took place within the historic demesne of Slane Castle and examined the economic value of cultural heritage. Following introductions, Alex Mountcharles gave an informative presentation about the historic context and business activities at Slane Castle. Alex commented on the historic environment as an opportune area for business and jobs, with about 40,000 people employed in this sector full time nationally.

The relationship between Slane Castle and the village is seen by Alex as being close, however a bigger challenge relates to better coordination and links with the Bru Na Boinne site. Projects such as Boyne Valley Destination and the Boyne Valley Drive may provide opportunities for branding and creating a co-ordinated tourism product. The business model at Slane Castle is also diversifying into Whiskey Distillation on site. The emphasis on reuse of existing buildings and very little new build came across very strongly as part of the intended project together with the green credentials of technologies and planned processes e.g. growing many of the necessary raw ingredients within the demesne and planned reuse of spent grain as cattle feed. Following the presentation, the group was given a tour of the grounds, showing the buildings and parts of the estate which were earmarked to facilitate the various facets of the distillery and wider tourist experience associated with the planned enterprise.

North East Branch Law Seminar

The North East Branch held a law seminar on the 20th of February at the offices of Meath County Council. The speakers at this event were pre-eminent planning law experts, Berna Grist and Michael O'Donnell. The event covered recent and upcoming changes to planning legislation and was well attended.

Northern Branch Report

Chairperson: Paul McTernan
Secretary: Anthony Quinn
Treasurer: John Linden

Committee Members

On the 1st of June 2012 the Northern Branch of the IPI organised a walk and talk, hard-hat preview of the new World Heritage Visitor Centre at the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim. A bus was organised from Belfast and approximately two dozen people attended, including 2 architects from Spain. The Project Director kindly briefed the IPI party on the rationale behind the highly innovative design (by Heneghan Peng Architects).

The Northern Branch participated in the inaugural conference of the Irish Sea Maritime Forum, which was part organised by the Treasurer of the Northern Branch (John Linden). This conference was fittingly held in the newly opened Titanic signature building, which is the flagship development for the regeneration of Belfast's docks area. On behalf of the Institute, the Secretary of the Northern Branch (Tony Quinn) made a presentation entitled 'The sea - an important new arena for spatial planning'. The opening address was given by the Environment Minister (Alex Attwood MP). The conference sought to highlight how the traditional role and function of terrestrial planning can be applied, to a greater or lesser extent, to

marine planning.

On the 1st of February 2013, the Northern Branch of the IPI and its RTPI counterparts in Northern Ireland jointly hosted the first of three anticipated half day "Big Bang" conferences on the topical issue of the Review of Public Administration in NI. On the 1st of April 2015 most planning powers in NI are set to be devolved from the Department of the Environment to the District Councils. Coupled with this, the number of District Councils in NI is set to more than halve by the same target year of 2015 (reducing from the existing 26 to 11 Super councils). In light of this pressing timetable, The Irish Planning Institute (IPI) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) have joined forces to promote a conference series to oversee the implementation of these changes and to provide an opportunity for their members to inform and shape the process of delivery. Planners must influence the thinking of the Northern Ireland Executive, the relevant Government Departments and the new Councils on the workings of the new planning system so that we can get the very best professional planning system possible.

The Northern Branch also played a key role in laying the groundwork for the Institute's National Planning Conference in Belfast which took place on the 25th and 26th of April. The success of this event owes a great deal to the efforts of this branch.

Private Practice Branch Report

Branch Committee

The Branch Committee at the end of 2012 were:

Chairperson: Tom Phillips
Secretary: Stephen Little
Treasurer: Trevor Sadler

General Committee Members: John O'Malley, Ray Ryan, David Mulcahy, John Shanahan, Ed Barrett, Tony Bamford.

Committee Meetings

The Committee met on 10th May, 5th September, 31st of October, 9th November, 27th of November, and 19th of February.

Law Lecture

Mr. Niall Handy, BL, was invited by the Branch in November 2012 to give a lecture prior to the IPI Annual Dinner in the Clarence Hotel. The lecture addressed new legislation introduced during 2012 and judgments of the courts in planning law cases during 2012. This proved to be a very popular lecture and was well attended.

Myplan.ie

Mr. Bruce McCormack from the DoECLG was invited by the Branch to give a talk and demonstration in October about Myplan.ie in the Gibson Hotel. The feedback from those who attended the talk was very positive.

Development Contributions

The Branch invited Mr. Niall Cussen to give a talk about the draft EIS Guidelines and the draft Development Contribution Guidelines. This was a very successful event and was well attended. In the question time after the talk there was a lively discussion in relation to Development Contribution Guidelines with Mr. Cussen acknowledging the information that he received from the discussion.

Western Branch Report 2012

The Committee elected for the western branch for the year 2013/14 are:

Chairperson: Gus McCarthy
Secretary: Jimmy Green
Treasurer: Frank Flanagan
Membership Officer: Michelle Beirne

Committee members: Catherine McConnell, Helen Coleman, Alan

Kelly, Mark Whittaker, Stephen Dowds, Tanya Stanaway, Peter Nelson, Patricia Calleary, Colm McLoughlin.

The AGM on the 7th February 2013 was the only meeting held this term, which was combined with IPI Corporate Plan Workshop Roadshow. The branch organised a field trip to the Corrib Gas facility in Mayo on the 4th of April 2013.

YPN

Space Invaders Planning Competition

The IPI Young Planners Network and RTPi Ireland have joined forces and come up an event to showcase the skills and talents young planners and recent graduates possess. From this the idea of a planning competition was decided upon and Space Invaders was created.



The main aim of the event is to raise the profile of young planners in the country and show that young planners are creative and innovative. Space Invaders is the first ever all-Ireland planning competition for planning students and recent graduates. Invited to partake in the competition are Dublin Institute of Technology, Queens University Belfast, Ulster University, University College Cork and University College Dublin.

Each university is requested to form teams of two to four people to create a design solution for a site located at Thomas Street in Dublin 8. The teams can be formed by both current planning students and recent alumni (graduated in 2011 or after). The teams have to create a design solution for the site and will present it on Friday, 15th November 2013 to an eclectic jury, who will deliver their verdict and declare the grand winner of Space Invaders 2013.

The winning group will receive a cash prize at a showcase event at an reception in Civic Offices Wood Quay on 15th November 2013.

The competition is due to be launched in the coming weeks with further information on registration and requirements being issued to relevant parties.

YPN Rainbow Run



On the 28th of July a group of young planners took part in the Rainbow Run 2013 which took place in Dun Laoghaire. The run which was in aid of ARCC Cancer Support Centre, which offers psychological and emotional support to people living with cancer. Several hundred people took part along with the an impressive contingent of planners! Visit ypn.ie for details of the next YPN event.

CPD Series 'Things They Don't Teach You in Planning School'

Throughout 2012/2013 the YPN continued its successful CPD series 'Things They Don't Teach You in Planning School' and held a number of talks with speakers including Philip Jones, Des Cox and Chris

McGarry. All of these events were well attended and provided for interesting discussion among young planners and practising professionals on current planning issues. The YPN would like to thank all speakers at recent events and its members for their continued participation and support.



IPI National Conference 2013: Belfast

“An all-island spatial strategy may be a ‘no-go zone’ for some — however, I believe it is the best future for us all. In the absence of this, we have duplication, less cohesion, less impact, more cost,” Mr Alex Attwood MLA, Minister for the Environment

On the 25th & 26th of April, the IPI held its Annual Planning Conference in Belfast City Hall. Over two hundred planners attended the conference, which dealt with a number of themes relating to cross border strategic planning, planning reform and planning for energy. The conference title was “Achieving Competitiveness & Promoting Innovation – The Future Role of Planning”.

In her opening address, President Joanna Kelly called for a less bureaucratic and more democratic approach to planning. This requires an all-island strategy and greater public confidence in local democracy in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Calling for an all-island Landscape Strategy and an all-island Spatial Strategy, Joanna Kelly said “There are increasing pressures for transboundary developments such as fracking projects and windfarms. The need for collaboration and co-operation from governments, north and south on the implications of such projects on our landscape is crucial. All national and regional policy documents throughout the island of

Ireland should be strategically aligned so that the public policies are consistent.”

The economic and social opportunities presented by greater all-island planning collaboration were acknowledged by Minister for Planning and Housing Jan O’Sullivan TD and Environment Minister Alex Attwood MLA. Addressing the conference, Minister Attwood commented “I am delighted to welcome the first Irish Planning conference to be held in Belfast. An all-island spatial strategy may be a ‘no-go zone’ for some - however I believe it is the best future for us all. We can prosper and grow with an all-island approach to health, roads, water and waste. In the absence of this we have duplication, less cohesion, less impact, more cost.” Commenting on the potential of all-island planning Minister O’Sullivan said, “I believe that we have much to learn from each other and that increasing collaboration across administrative and political boundaries will ensure the planning process gives certainty to both communities and investors, whether in the North or in the South and in relation to defining future development priorities and possibilities.” Arguing that restoring public confidence and trust in local government and the planning system requires greater public participation, Joanna Kelly said “The best way to achieve accountability and transparency in our planning systems is

to ensure effective public participation. I believe the key to ensuring public engagement and participation is education. The public must understand how their local government and planning system works. We need to ensure that everyone understands the principles of good planning and why certain decisions are made.”

The President’s emphasis on the importance of education and participation was reinforced by both Ministers. Discussing planning reform in Northern Ireland which will see planning functions devolved to local Councils, Minister Attwood said “We have to learn from best practice and avoid the worst practice of planning devolved to local councils in Scotland and Ireland. Local plans done well can liberate local areas. We can see that in other places. We can replicate this here if we get the transfer of planning done right. This is the prize. We can secure it.” This was echoed by Minister O’Sullivan, “There is strong synergy between the needs to have an effective planning system and overcoming our economic challenges. There is a determined consensus in the view that what happened the past can never occur again, but our vision for planning must go beyond that. By placing the values of community, sustainability and the common good at the heart

of our planning system we can fashion a mechanism that prepares for our country's economic recovery and delivers a thriving, sustainable Ireland for the decades ahead."

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Andreas Faludi, who spoke on the theme of "Cohesion Coherence Co-operation-European Spatial Planning Coming of Age". The presentation, from a world renown planning theorist offer some thought provoking insights into transnational concepts of co-operation which may also have lessons for authorities on both sides of the border in Ireland as they co-operate going forward.

The Conference's Gala Dinner took place on the evening of the first day. The dinner was addressed by President Joanna Kelly and Michael Gregory Lloyd of the University of Ulster. Entertainment was provided by Tim McGarry, a comedian and native of Belfast.

On the second day of the Irish Planning Institute's Annual Conference in Belfast delegates learned about a number of successful examples of urban regeneration in the city. Projects such as the Titanic Quarter, Victoria Square, Belfast's Laganside, Waterfront and Gasworks will be highlighted in an address by Peter McNaney, Chief Executive of Belfast City Council who concluded "that to understand the future, one must first come to terms with the past".

A number of field trips also took place during the afternoon of the 26th. The three destinations of these trips were, the Titanic Quarter, Belfast City Centre and the Peacelines. The purpose of these trips was to afford the conference attendees to engage with the themes and examples used by the speakers

in the conference in a "real world" setting. A number of exhibitors also attended the event. These were Ordnance Survey Ireland, RealSim and Online Planning Publications. The planning schools accredited by the Institute, UCC, UCD and DIT also exhibited examples of their work completed over the course of the year.

In closing the event, Joanna Kelly stated that, "The ongoing economic development of Belfast, which forms the second largest population centre on the island, underlines the potential role of the city in an all-island spatial planning framework and demonstrates the success of the city in recent years as a key engine of growth. The potential of developing synergies between Dublin and Belfast as the two main urban centres on the island deserves to be considered. With the improved transport connections between Dublin and Belfast in particular, the mutual benefits of such a strategy were clearly illustrated during the conference".

The conference presentations are available from the members section of the IPI website and photos of the conference are available on Flickr.



Spatial Planning and Energy for Communities in All Landscapes (SPECIAL) Project

In March 2013 the IPI commenced its involvement in the SPECIAL project, an Intelligent Energy Europe project which seeks to promote the linkages between sound spatial planning and the development of energy resources and infrastructure. Forward-looking spatial planning can significantly accelerate the deployment of local energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions to enable local and regional authorities throughout Europe deliver the EU 20/20/20 targets. To assist in this process, the SPECIAL project will foster the exchange of experiences and competence building amongst national and regional town planning associations and organisations with the aim to demonstrate the integration of sustainable energy aspects into spatial planning strategies at local and regional levels. The project will stimulate the improved energy related competence of town planners working within public authorities leading to good practice examples of integrated spatial planning strategies for low carbon towns and regions.

To achieve this objective, the SPECIAL partners will work together through training programmes, exchanging good practices, undertaking study visits, coaching and workshops, not only to improve the competence of their own planning organisations but to ‘multiply’ this competence and knowledge through existing networks to the target audience of town planners developing and delivering sustainable energy planning strategies at the local and regional municipality level. The ‘multiplier networks’ have been identified by each partner as the key delivery organisations to access, train and influence town planners at the local level; They will be actively engaged with the development and piloting of the content and context of training programmes, based on the challenges and barriers faced by their constituent audiences. In addition, as key actors in SPECIAL, the ‘multiplier networks’ will have their own capacity improved to deliver spatial and energy planning competence building and training in the long term. The actual benefit to the target audience of town planners is that through the SPECIAL pilots, they will deliver good practice examples of integrating energy aspects into spatial planning strategies.

Six national and two regional town planning associations and organisations from eight European member states will by the end of the project will have increased competence to demonstrate the integration of sustainable energy aspects into spatial planning strategies at the local and regional level. The other organisations involved in this project are the; Town and Country Planning Association, Swedish Society for Town and Country Planning, Hungarian Urban Knowledge Centre, National Centre for Town Planning Studies, Organization for the Master Plan and Environmental Protection of Thessaloniki, German Institute of Urban Affairs and the Provincial Government of Styria, Department for spatial planning law.

Multiplying and disseminating the learning outcomes and knowledge of the project, SPECIAL will have developed the capacity of 35 further organisations and networks to deliver competence building and training on the integration of spatial planning with energy planning to 2,073 ‘town planners’ in Europe, drawn from 735 municipalities by the time of its completion in 2016. 515 European municipalities will have clear pathways on embedding energy policies into spatial planning strategies with 386 municipalities delivering good practice examples of integrated spatial planning strategies for low carbon towns and regions. SPECIAL will leave a legacy of 40 energy competence building and training programmes supported by long lasting mechanisms and networks that will build the competence of a further 15,980 ‘town planners’ drawn from 3,780 European municipalities. SPECIAL will document the project processes and resources and produce guidance for other national and regional town planning associations and organisations (and related professional bodies) in Europe to replicate the project’s approach. The IPI is proud to involved in this project as it affords the opportunity to showcase the best practices of the Irish planning system to a European audience.

Stephen Walsh has joined the Institute to work on this project. Stephen is a graduate of the Master Programme in Planning and Sustainable Development (MPlan) in UCC and a Graduate member of the Institute.



JOANNA KELLY MIPI

During the past year the Institute has focused on advocating the importance of educating the public and children on how the planning system works and how they can influence the development plan process. The Institute held public seminars in Dublin that focused on “demystifying the planning system” and in May 2013 the Institute ran a pilot children’s education scheme ‘Model Box City’ which took place in Scoile Bhríde, Blanchardstown.

This Initiative consisted of two stages. First, the students were briefed by IPI Council members about planning and urban design and they were asked to speak about what they felt were the advantages and challenges in their area and they displayed this information on ‘mind maps’. Fourth Class students spoke about what they liked and did not like about the areas they lived in. The student’s responses were very interesting and demonstrated the awareness that the younger generation have of their environment even at such a young age.

Following this the students built their model cities displaying great enthusiasm in developing their own cities and using innovative techniques in designing structures! Students benefited from learning why buildings should be located in certain areas with facilities close by. The pilot project was viewed with great positivity by the teachers and staff at the school. It is intended that the work of the children would be presented to their local planning department and this will hopefully encourage planners to engage in a more meaningful way when consulting the public on the preparation and drafting of development plans.

This scheme will be extended in 2013 thanks to a successful grant application to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Institute will be hosting a number of adult planning seminars along with the children educational scheme on a regional basis commencing in early September.

AMY HASTINGS MIPI

Late last year the IPI formed a Policy and Research Group with the goal of enhancing the Institute’s research capacity and that of the profession as a whole through independent and joint research, this is to reinforce and inform, policy submissions and the Chartership and CPD programmes

The group is currently engaged in a research project on the development of guidance for planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála on the methodologies and processes used in undertaking visual impact assessment.

The visual character of development is usually a central issue in the approval process. The appropriateness of the visual scale, appearance and character of a proposed development to its setting is always a central concern. In many cases, visual character would be the dominant issue. Project teams and specialist consultants employ a variety of methods in undertaking visual impact assessment, including visibility analysis, modelling of the zone of visual influence, photomontages (including line diagrams and wire frame models), animations and fly-throughs, balloon tests, etc.

There is currently no Irish guidance available to planners on the appropriateness of the methodology employed to the particular circumstances of the application. The appraisal of a visual impact assessment can be further complicated in circumstances where a Planning Authority, an Applicant and a Third Party have each carried out their own (conflicting) visual assessment using different methodologies. The purpose of this research project is to provide guidance on issues of visibility, visual character and visual impact in the context of assessing a visual impact assessment under the planning and development approval processes in Ireland.

The Institute invites you to send your views on this topic so that they can be

considered by the Working Group undertaking this research. To focus the consultation, the Policy and Research Group has prepared an Issues Paper, setting out a number of key questions. Members may find that not all questions are relevant to their practice or may wish to make comments on issues not raised in the Issues Paper. Any and all comments would be greatly appreciated. Please return any submission for the attention of Amy Hastings at e-mail address a.hastings@ipi.ie not later than Friday, 13th September 2013.

Corporate Plan

The Institute recently launched its first Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan provides a systematic approach to achieving the overall objectives of the Institute for the next five years. In doing so we can ensure that the Institute is a strong, dynamic, responsive and outward looking professional body for planning and planners in Ireland which advocates the importance of the planning profession in building sustainable communities.

The Plan been developed with members views and insights through surveys, submissions on the Issues Paper and draft Plan, consultation workshops and at the AGM.

The Plan sets out six Strategic Objectives for our Institute:

- 1: Develop Our Organisation
- 2: Grow Services and Benefits
- 3: Increase Regional, National and International Presence
- 4: Improve Financial Sustainability
- 5: Capacity Building
- 6: Advance Planning and the Profession

The Corporate Plan was circulated to members by email and is available online through the IPI website.

ANGELA BRERETON MIPI

This (COCE 2013) conference was held in the University of Uppsala, in Sweden. It was not specifically a planning based conference and while I attended the field trip and some of the events as a fee paying guest, I did not attend the conference as a delegate, but have had regard to some of the more planning related features presented in the papers to the conference in this article below. In brief this international conference was of interest to the planning profession in that it was concerned with environmental communications and participatory conundrums in natural resource management and had regard to an awareness of the need for sustainable land use planning. It was also concerned about the role of new media as a social mechanism in bringing about change at environmental levels. I attended the field trip as a guest of Pat Brereton, who presented a paper to the conference: Scoping Audience Studies in Eco-cinema Research.

Presenters were encouraged to consider how environmental communication can contribute to the Rio (1992) mandated for 'participation of all concerned citizens at the relevant level'. It was noted that environmental challenges are complex and concerns articulate a generally agreed awareness of the fragility of nature, habitats, ecosystems and life systems under threat from human activities. There was awareness that environmental communication processes have different expressions and should not be concentrated around an educated elite, but form a multiple of perspectives. It was acknowledged that when citizens participate in risk assessment and decision-making for environmental and other issues that affect members of the public, more robust decisions can be made. Public participation is not only more democratic, but it also enables members of the public to contribute valuable expertise in the decision making process. It is an ambition to repair people's detachment from policy-making and increase the potential for community participatory processes. It was considered that authentic engagement with nature instills the values required for social change. There was regard to the difficulty of achieving of environmental

remediation efforts that are technically correct, economically viable, politically acceptable and environmentally just. Mention was made of the importance of group communication and stakeholder engagement in a conservation action planning process. It was noted that a specific environmental issue allows for disagreement and conflict regarding values at stake and what regimes of environmental management and protection are arguably called for.

The field trip case study

This concerned the Lake Tamnaren Conservation Project. Lake Tamnaren is relatively large in area (c.38km²) and shallow (while there is some variation it is now 1metre mean depth) and is situated 120km north of Stockholm and north of Uppsala in a flat part of Sweden dominated by forests and farmlands. It is part of the ecological network of protected areas within the EU labelled 'Natura 2000'. It has its own specialised habitats and is particularly known for abundance of wildfowl. It used to be common in these areas to reduce the lake levels to minimise flooding of farmlands, that occurred particularly as a result of snow melts in winter (temperatures can go as low as -30C and there is a heavy snowfall in the area). The water level of the lake was intentionally lowered twice to provide more farmlands, the first time in 1870 by 1m and the second time in 1950-54 by another 0.5m.

Since this time the lake became famous for its wildfowl habitat. In the spring and autumn many migratory birds flocked to the lake, including the mute swan and a large colony lived there. There is also lush vegetation in the lake. In the spring of 1977 the water level rose by 0.3m resulting in dramatic changes in the community. The swans and much of the floating vegetation disappeared and the water had become more turbid partly due to increased phytoplankton density ('Ecology of Shallow Lakes' Martin Scheffer). However it now appears that the wetland habitat has once again become dominant particularly near the lake shores. There is a variety of wildlife in the area and some mute swans and a pair of sea eagles, were spotted soaring overhead during the field trip. Much

of the area around the lake is a nature reserve.

The problem now is that in those parts near the lakeshore vegetation including reed beds are taking over and the area is becoming a wetland habitat rather than an open water body. The lake offers a huge hydrological challenge being very eutrophic with a surface of 38 square kilometers, but an average depth of just 1 metre. There is also a risk of the bottom freezing during the winter months, which could be an ecological disaster. Dewatering of the lake has also occurred to provide drinking water for the city of Uppsala to the south. While this growing city (c.200,000 population) is predominantly supplied by ground water, in dry years some dewatering has occurred. There is a real danger as explained to us on the field trip that over the next number of years if nothing is done to conserve the fresh waterbody and to deepen the lake for example by dredging in part, that it will in time reduce further in size and as it is so shallow, will ultimately disappear.

On a regulatory level it was provided that this lake is closely tied to the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive. The directive requires implementation of ecological changes as well as the involvement of the public. The effort to restore the lake constitutes several social conflicts and dilemmas between various stakeholders such as farmers, recreational interests and governmental agencies. As such the lake mirrors various kinds of social and ecological values, understandings, knowledge and contradictions. There was an interest expressed in developing an ethic of stewardship through community and stakeholder involvement in securing the future of the lake as an entity and as a continuing source of freshwater only when absolutely needed for the city of Uppsala.

As the conference theme was centred on developing/encouraging environmental communication it was provided that a systematic approach to managing change is required to appreciate interconnections among issues at various levels and to mediate for different stakeholders. It was considered that in

such cases, informed arguments, supported by visuals, photographs and images can help overcome uncertainty and hesitation towards enacting environmental change, both for the general public and politicians. In Sweden one of the main pillars of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) is public participation and the establishment of local 'Water Councils', which have been introduced as a governance tool for the implementation of the WFD. It was provided that in Sweden as elsewhere it is needed to have a deeper understanding of governance in complex social ecological settings. In policy and theory sustainable water governance is increasingly seen as a process of experimental learning in public collaborations.

In order to deal with the social conflicts and dilemmas, a full scale social experiment has been launched by the local Water council and researchers from Environmental Communication at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). The Lake Tamnaren environmental communications project is considered to provide an interesting example of the traditional stakeholder approach being replaced by a strong and deliberative citizen approach, creating a space for the local population to identify the common interest across particular more narrow interests. This process of communication would combine with expert knowledge in order to create a more sustainable way forward for the future management of the lake and the sensitive environment of this Natura 2000 site.

