

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS – REPUBLIC OF IRELAND LOCAL ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

PRESENTED BY RoI BRANCH CHAIR KEITH ELLIOTT AT AGM, 23 OCTOBER 2023

This Report is presented broadly under the subject headings of the ICE RoI Branch Business Plan submitted to ICE HQ in January 2023.

1. Qualification and Membership

ICE membership in the Republic of Ireland increased slightly during this period, with just over 600 members indicating RoI as their location in October 2023, compared with 560 in 2022. Of these, approximately 480 members have indicated on ongoing interest in ICE activities by registering email addresses for ICE communications.

a) Meetings

The Committee of the ICE Republic of Ireland Branch met monthly from September 2022 through to June 2023. In-person meetings resumed at Engineers Ireland's premises at No. 22 Clyde Road, with an online option using the Zoom platform to facilitate attendance by Committee members from a wide range of locations including Roscommon, Limerick, Cork and Galway, and even on occasion from an airport departure lounge!

Membership of the Committee remains reasonably strong at approximately 20, with a combination of mature and younger members. Several new members joined throughout the year, replacing some members who stepped down from the Committee for various reasons. As previously, thanks to the online meeting platform, a significant number of members are located outside the Dublin region. Again, as a consequence of the online meetings, a high level of attendance at Committee meetings was maintained.

As reported in previous Annual Reports, pressure of work and other commitments continue to make it difficult for some committee members to participate as fully in Committee activities as they would wish. As a result, the Vice-Chair role has been vacant since January 2021 and ideally this needs to be filled to provide a viable succession plan for the Committee Chair. Additional committee members are needed (a) to maintain the dynamism of the Committee and ensure a steady flow of ideas for Branch activities and events and (b) to provide a pool of potential candidates to take on the Officer roles as they arise and thus ensure that the RoI Branch continues to thrive.

As in previous years, the December 2022 committee meeting was a joint meeting with Engineers Ireland's Civil Division. It is planned that this will take place again in December 2023, which will be the ninth year of this collaboration.

b) Graduates and Students / Early Careers Network

There is an active ECNet Committee which has continued to meet during the year. The ECNet Committee interacts with third-level colleges in a number of different ways, principally supporting initiatives led by the NI/RoI Membership Development Team based in Northern Ireland. ECNet Committee members took part in several in-person third-level visits in the 2022-2023 academic year.

The Committee also arranged a number of events such as quiz evenings, which proved popular with the target audience of third-level Civil Engineering students.

At the ICE RoI Annual Dinner in April 2023, members of the ECNet Committee entertained a number of their counterparts from the NI ECNet Committee. This afforded the opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the ECNet committees north and south of the border.

c) Other Membership Matters

As Chair of the ICE RoI Branch, it is appropriate to record the achievements of members of our Committee within the Institution.

Firstly, our Country Representative Yvonne Murphy was admitted to Fellowship of ICE during the 2022-2023 session, becoming one of the youngest Fellows of the Institution.

Yvonne has also recently been elected to ICE Council for a second three-year term and actively supports the work of the Institution as a member of the Nominations Committee, an ICE Policy Fellow, Professional Reviewer, Supervising Civil Engineer, and Delegated Engineer, and Chair of the ICE Benevolent Fund in 2022 (having served as a Ben. Fund Member and Trustee for 4 of the preceding 6 years).

Our outgoing ECNet Chair, Niall Gibbons, has been appointed Deputy Chair for the International ECNet structure of ICE. This reflects Niall's commitment to ECNet over the past number of years.

Our new ECNet Chair, Benjamin Delmond, was selected as one of our President's Future Leaders in 2022 and is nearing completion of a year in which he has worked closely with Keith Howells and accompanied him on several of his Presidential visits. This invaluable experience is something that all young graduate engineers and technicians should aspire to. Benjamin is also a Member of the ICE Decarbonisation Community Advisory Board.

Finally, I would like to note that ICE is keen to increase the number of Fellows, particularly from the cohort of women Chartered Engineers. There are many members with vast experience who would readily qualify for Fellowship and all Chartered members are encouraged to review the Fellowship criteria and consider putting themselves forward for Fellowship. The ICE RoI Committee intends to actively promote this aspect of ICE to the RoI membership.

2. Knowledge and Professionalism

a) Technical Meetings

During the 2022-2023 session, the Committee organized several technical webinars using the Zoom Webinar platform.

These were:

- 27 October 2022 – *Cork Airport Runway Reconstruction*, presented by David Fraser (Colas UK).
- 26 January 2023 – *The 2nd Generation Eurocodes Update*, presented by Ken Murphy (National Standards Authority of Ireland) and Jim Mansfield (Kavanagh Mansfield & Partners).
- 23 February 2023 – *Deep Excavations in Water-Bearing Gravels in Cork*, presented by Dr. Mike Long (University College Dublin).
- 31 May 2023 – *The Celtic Interconnector*, presented by Gemma McCarthy (Mott MacDonald) and Kieran French (EirGrid). Hosted by ICE Europe on behalf of ICE RoI.

The first webinar of the 2023-2024 session has already taken place:

- 12 October 2023 – *Whole Life Carbon Assessment – What it means for our Built Environment*, presented by Dr. Barry McDermott (PM Group) and Stephen Barrett (Irish Green Building Council).

All of these events proved popular, with attendance ranging from 130 to almost 300, and considerable interest in the recordings of the events. Several events were co-promoted with the Civil Division of Engineers Ireland, which significantly boosted the attendance. The Committee is always seeking topics and presenters for future webinars and ICE members are encouraged to get involved in communicating their technical knowledge to ICE members and the wider civil engineering community.

Regular communications have continued to be issued by the Committee Chair, aimed at highlighting upcoming events that may be of interest to members. The Committee thereby promotes and encourages attendance by members at technical and other meetings organised by ICE HQ and other regions. With these meetings now mostly hosted online, meetings continue to be accessible to ICE members regardless of their geographical location. Events promoted by the ICE RoI Committee in the past year included:

- The 2022 ICE Presidential Address by Keith Howells, November 2022;
- ICE Brunel Lecture Series 2023.
- Various ICE Europe webinars etc.

b) Competitions

We currently have no plans to run competitions, due to the relatively small and widely dispersed membership in the Republic. However, we do encourage participation in ICE competitions, such as the Emerging Engineers Award for students, graduate engineers and technicians, and the James Rennie medal for recently qualified Chartered Engineers (both of which were won in 2022 by Irish-based engineers for projects in the Republic). In addition, as in previous years ICE in the region was represented by Committee members as judges for the 2022 Irish Building and Design Awards and the BIM Ireland 2023 Irish Construction Excellence Awards. It is anticipated that these roles will be reprised in 2023/24, with an additional member of the Committee joining the judging panel for the 2024 Irish Construction Excellence Awards.

These awards are highly regarded and continue to attract a high calibre of entry from across all areas of engineering and construction, from design and project management to specialist sub-contractors and suppliers. As in previous years, many the projects featured in this year's awards were truly world class in terms of innovation, quality of delivery and level of collaboration right across the supply chain from Client to suppliers, with a strong emphasis on sustainability being evident in all submissions.

In addition, our Immediate Past Chair is a Judge for Engineers Ireland's Chartered Engineer of the Year 2022, continuing a role he has performed in previous years.

3. Education and Inspiration

a) Education

The question of Civil Engineering education at third level continues to be a topic for discussion at Committee and is also discussed at the annual joint committee meeting with Engineers Ireland's Civil Division.

The high profile of high-end manufacturing and technology companies in the Republic, and the associated demand for other engineering disciplines such as Mechanical, Manufacturing, Chemical

and Electrical, continues to present a challenge to Civil Engineering at third level. There is an ongoing difficulty in attracting and retaining students in Civil Engineering courses, which tends to be exacerbated by the relative lack of major infrastructure projects here.

It remains a basic objective of the ICE RoI Committee to continue to promote Civil Engineering as a career choice by engaging with the Universities and the wider community wherever possible. In this regard, the work of the ECNet Committee in engaging with students at every opportunity is to be commended. The RoI Committee also acknowledges the support of the Membership team from ICE Northern Ireland, who have been proactive in setting up third level visits, providing merchandise etc.

It should also be noted that members of the Committee, in their parallel capacity as Engineers Ireland members, pursue an active involvement in the accreditation of third level courses, thus ensuring that appropriate standards of third level training are maintained.

As mentioned in last year's Annual Report, the shortage of Engineering Technicians in the Republic has been the subject of a joint working group between ICE RoI and Engineers Ireland. As the statutory body overseeing professional engineering qualifications in Ireland, Engineers Ireland has taken the lead in this, with valuable inputs from ICE Committee member Catherine O'Brien and ECNet Committee member Amy Farrell. This work has led to the accreditation earlier this year of the first of a suite of Civil Engineering courses through apprenticeship developed by Atlantic Technical University (ATU) Sligo, with Catherine O'Brien being a member of the accreditation panel.

b) Inspiring the Next Generation

ICE in the Republic does not have a programme of engagement with schools, again due to our small and widely dispersed membership. However, as many ICE members have dual membership of ICE and Engineers Ireland, many of our members in their individual capacities and through their employers are visiting schools as part of the Engineers Ireland STEPS programme (www.steps.ie), culminating in Engineers Week, which takes place each year in late February/early March. In 2023 the events of Engineers' Week included both in-person and online events and ICE members initiated and/or participated in a number of these events. The STEPS programme continues to grow, with increasing awareness among engineering organisations and individuals of the value of participation in the programme and ever-growing interest from both primary and secondary schools across the country.

4. Informing Opinion

a) Partnering Other Organisations

ICE Republic of Ireland enjoys a very close working relationship with Engineers Ireland. This is a multi-layered relationship, starting at the grass roots level with many Irish-based Civil Engineers holding dual membership of ICE and Engineers Ireland. This dual membership is actively encouraged by ICE, to strengthen the links between the two Institutions.

Several ICE RoI members, from both the Committee and the general membership, served on various boards and committees within EI during the 2022/2023 session, including:

- Civil Division Committee Member.
- Executive Board Member.
- Vice Chairman, Board of Examiners.
- Member of the Judging Panel, Chartered Engineer of the Year.
- Civil Division representative to CPD Standing Committee.

- EI Representative to Construction Industry Council.
- Course presenter on the Building Control (Amendment) Regulations (BC(A)R).
- Member Accreditation Review Panel IEA (International Engineering Associations).
- Thomond Region Committee.

Also, the ICE RoI Immediate Past Chair recently concluded a 3-year term on the Council of Engineers Ireland as an elected Chartered member and Civil Division representative, and continues as Civil Division representative to Council for the 2023/2024 session.

In addition, ICE RoI committee members support other key functions of Engineers Ireland including acting as Interviewers for Professional Title applications and as Third Level Accreditation Panel members.

Following the successful visit by ICE President Ed McCann to Engineers Ireland in 2022, the tradition of a reciprocal visit by the President of Engineers Ireland to ICE HQ continued in 2023. Engineers Ireland President John Power visited One Great George Street in April 2023 as the guest of current ICE President Keith Howells. The event, which included the presentation by John Power of Professional Titles and awards to a number of UK-based Engineers Ireland members, and was followed by a dinner hosted by Keith Howells, was attended by the Chair of the ICE RoI Committee and invited guests including a number of prominent London-based Irish ICE members.

Members of the ICE RoI Branch Committee also attended the Engineers Ireland Annual Conference, held online in October 2022. This showcased best practice deployed by engineering companies or organisations with an engineering dimension, in progressing their business, with a focus on innovation and a net zero/reduced carbon objective. It is the Committee's intention to attend the 2023 conference, which this year will take place in person and online, on Wednesday 25th of October.

Engagement with other organisations is ongoing in a number of areas including:

- Chair, National Standards Authority of Ireland Construction Standards Consultative Committee.
- Council member Irish Building Control Institute.
- Past Chair, Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland Building Surveying Division
- Building Control (Amendment) Regulations (BC(A)R) – member of an Engineers Ireland team delivering online and in-person BC(A)R training across the industry in the Republic.
- Judge (x2), Irish Construction Excellence Awards.
- Judge, Irish Building & Design Awards.
- Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland (SCSI) professional representative on standing committee on Regulations and Standards
- SCSI Ministerial Nominee to Professional Conduct Committee.
- Vice Chair of British Water's BIM4Water 4D/5D focus group.
- UCD Smurfit Sustainability Club (pending MBA graduation Dec 2024).

It is a key objective of the ICE RoI Committee to encourage engagement and participation by ICE members in as many relevant areas as possible, with a view to maintaining and enhancing the profile of ICE in the Republic.

Engagement with other ICE Bodies

The ECNet Committee participated in a number of ICE NI events during the 2022/23 session and this is expected to continue through the 2023/24 session. As mentioned above, ECNet Committee members have established close links with their NI counterparts and hope to build on these links with the aid of the online communications tools now in common use.

In December 2022, the Rol Chair and an ECNet Committee member attended the ICE NI annual dinner. The ICE NI Chair and several members of the NI ECNet Committee attended the ICE Rol annual dinner in April 2023.

Also, as in previous years, one of our committee members, Yvonne Murphy, continues to represent us as the ICE Country Representative for Ireland on the ICE Europe Committee. In addition to attending regular ICE Europe meetings remotely, Yvonne also arranged for the annual ICE Europe Regional Strategy Meeting to take place in Cork in September to coincide with the visit to Ireland of ICE President Keith Howells. Refer to Country Representative's report to the 2023 AGM for further details.

Social Engagement with Other Professional Bodies

In the aftermath of Covid-19 lockdowns, the number of in-person events offering the opportunity to network with other organisations has reduced somewhat. However, Committee members continue to attend relevant events where possible, including various seminars and technical presentations. Among the significant social events attended were the Engineers Ireland President's Ball, the Association of Consulting Engineers annual dinner, the Engineers Ireland Cork Region annual dinner, the Irish Building & Design Awards dinner and the Irish Construction Excellence Awards Gala Dinner.

A particular social highlight was the ICE Rol Annual Dinner, which took place in April 2023, as detailed in (b) below.

The Committee has also continued to take advantage of the opportunities offered by online platforms to share technical webinars and other events with other organisations.

b) Annual Dinner and Outstanding Achievement Award 2023

The ICE Rol Annual Dinner was held on the 21st of April in the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire, the same venue that successfully hosted our previous two annual dinners. Attendance increased significantly from last year, with almost 70 people present on the night. Attendees included senior representatives of Engineers Ireland, the Irish Branch of IStructE, the Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland, Construction Industry Federation and Civil Engineering Contractors Association, as well as the Chair of ICE Northern Ireland, members of the ICE NI ECNet Committee and representatives of leading civil engineering consultants and contractors. The occasion afforded an excellent networking opportunity, as many of those present were already well acquainted through business and/or the various institutions.

A highlight of the evening was the announcement and presentation of our Outstanding Achievement Award for 2023 to Michael Hand, an exceptional Civil Engineer with an impressive career in the construction industry, in business and in charitable work.

Michael is a Fellow of ICE, Engineers Ireland, the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management and the Irish Academy of Engineering. He holds qualifications in Civil Engineering and the Environment together with a Master of Business Administration degree. In 2014, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Dublin Institute of Technology (now Technical University Dublin) in recognition of his contribution to engineering in Ireland. He is acclaimed by all who have worked with him as a professional of the highest integrity.

In a career spanning almost fifty years, Michael has left an indelible mark on Ireland's infrastructure and personifies the commitment to society that is at the heart of the Civil Engineering profession. He has been a Director and Chairman of PH McCarthy Consulting Engineers Ltd and McCarthy Hyder Consultants Ltd, a Director of White Young Green Ireland Ltd, and a Director and CEO of Grangegorman Development Agency, a state entity. He currently holds several non-executive directorships in both private sector and semi-state organisations. He has also served at Board level in the voluntary community sector, most notably as Director of Rathfarnham & District Heritage Credit Union, trading in the regulated financial services industry, and was a driving force in the development of Ballinteer St. Johns GAA Club for many years.

It is the Committee's intention to continue the Outstanding Achievement Award in the current session, with the 2024 award being presented at the Annual Dinner in April or May next. As last year, it is intended to invite nominations for the award from the ICE RoI membership in the hope of ensuring that no deserving candidate is overlooked. It is worth noting that the 2023 awardee Michael Hand was nominated by an ICE member and former colleague.

c) President's Visit 2023

The ICE President's Visit to Ireland is a co-hosted event between Engineers Ireland and the ICE RoI Branch. These Presidential visits have been very successful in showcasing the work of ICE members in the Republic to successive Presidents and raising the profile of ICE here.

The 2023 visit by ICE President Keith Howells, which took place on the 11th and 12th of September, was hosted by the Cork Region Committee of Engineers Ireland, encouraged and supported by our Cork-based ICE colleague Yvonne Murphy. Our Cork colleagues really "went the extra mile" to ensure a memorable experience for all concerned. The President's itinerary included:

- Meeting with ICE Europe representatives, holding their annual strategy meeting in Cork.
- Hybrid meeting with ICE RoI Committee (in-person in Cork and online via Zoom), including ECNet Committee members.
- Presidential Address by Keith Howells to an audience of ICE and Engineers Ireland members and invited guests, with a response by Engineers Ireland President Dr. Edmond Harty. This event was kindly hosted by Cork County Council in the impressive setting of County Hall, overlooking the River Lee and Cork City. Prior to the address, the President was welcomed to County Hall by the Mayor of the County of Cork, Councillor Frank O'Flynn.
- Networking reception hosted by Engineers Ireland at County Hall.
- Dinner with ICE RoI Committee members and ICE Europe Representatives, and invited guests including Engineers Ireland President, Vice President, Director General and Membership Director as well as representatives of Engineers Ireland Cork Region.
- Guided tour of Cork Old Waterworks heritage museum and STEM education centre.
- Site visit to the recently completed Lee Road Water Treatment Plant, hosted by senior management of Uisce Éireann and their delivery partners. This project was recognized by an award at the 2023 FIDIC Project Awards, which celebrate excellence in infrastructure globally.
- Lunch at University College Cork (UCC) city centre campus with ICE and Engineers Ireland committee members, and academic staff from the UCC Department of Civil Engineering.
- Presentation at UCC Department of Civil Engineering by academic staff and post-graduate researchers who are at the cutting edge of research into sustainability and resilience in

infrastructure. This presentation was attended by the Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Kieran McCarthy, who spoke eloquently on Cork City Council's commitment to sustainable development.

- Visit to the Cork offices of Mott McDonald, of which Keith Howells is a former Director, CEO and Chair.

The visit was very successful, with good attendances at all the events. Our President and Engineers Ireland President Ed Harty both reiterated the importance of the ongoing relationship between our two Institutions in their speeches, and both Keith Howells and our ICE Europe colleagues were suitably impressed by the work of Irish Civil Engineers and academics, as well as the famous Irish hospitality!

At the Committee meeting with the President, the Committee and ECNet Committee took the opportunity to highlight their own individual career experience, further broadening the President's appreciation for the level of expertise and experience in Civil Engineering among ICE members based in the Republic. Keith Howells expounded on his vision and that of the ICE, that Civil Engineers must be at the forefront of efforts to address the pressing issues facing humanity as a result of climate change. He also gave some examples of innovative solutions that he had encountered around the world during his term as President.

The decision to host the visit in Cork was emphatically vindicated and has set the scene for further forays to regional centres for future Presidential visits. In this regard, a decision has been taken, in consultation with Engineers Ireland, to reduce Presidential visits to biennial frequency in future, with ICE and Engineers Ireland Presidents visiting each other on alternate years. Thus, the next visit by an ICE President to the Republic of Ireland will be in 2025, with Engineers Ireland's President visiting London in 2024.

d) ICE Republic of Ireland LinkedIn Page

The ICE Republic of Ireland LinkedIn page, launched in February 2022, has proved a useful platform for the RoI Committee to publicise events and share items of interest with the ICE RoI membership and the wider engineering community. The page continues to attract interest and currently has almost 600 followers.

The Committee encourages all RoI based members to follow and interact with the page and share thoughts and ideas on the future of civil engineering and the ICE in Ireland. The page URL is:

<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/ice-republic-of-ireland/>

5. Forward Planning

There are a number of areas that need forward planning, largely unchanged from previous years, viz.:

1. Vice-Chair: The role of Vice-Chair has been vacant since early 2021. It had been hoped to elect a new Vice Chair who would commit to assume the Chair in October 2023 when the current Chair was due to step down. The Committee would be pleased to hear from any member based in the Republic of Ireland who would like to join the Committee with a view to stepping into the Vice-Chair role at some point. Meanwhile, as provided for in the ICE Local Association Constitution guidelines, the current Chair is willing to commit to a fourth year as Chair, subject to ratification at the 2023 AGM. This extension beyond the normal maximum three-year term has been formally approved by ICE in accordance with ICE guidelines.

2. ECNet Committee: As a result of professional development, relocation for work, or for other reasons, a number of members of the ECNet Committee have stepped down in the past 2 years. Whilst there have been a number of notable new recruits to the committee in the past year, the

viability and effectiveness of the ECNet Committee would be greatly enhanced by the addition of further new members. This will be actively promoted by the ICE Rol Committee in the coming year.

3. Technical Webinars: Despite the fact that ICE members in the Republic are known to be involved in significant design, construction and research projects, the number of members volunteering to present technical webinars based on their work has been persistently small. It is a key objective of the Committee to proactively solicit presentations by members, with a view to achieving our target of one webinar per month during the 2023-2024 session.

6. Budget and Finance

A Treasurer's Report covering the 2022/23 session and summarizing the current financial position of the ICE Rol Branch is presented separately to this Report.

Keith Elliott CEng, FICE, FIEI

23 October 2023