

**INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS – REPUBLIC OF IRELAND LOCAL ASSOCIATION**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

**PRESENTED BY RoI BRANCH CHAIR KEITH ELLIOTT AT AGM, 10 OCTOBER 2022**

This Report is presented broadly under the subject headings of the ICE RoI Branch Business Plan submitted to ICE HQ in April 2022.

**1. Qualification and Membership**

ICE membership in the Republic of Ireland increased slightly during this period, with approximately 560 members indicating RoI as their location in June 2022, compared with 540 in June 2021. Of these, approximately 450 members have indicated on ongoing interest in ICE by registering email addresses for ICE communications.

**a) Meetings**

The Committee of the ICE Republic of Ireland Branch met monthly from September 2021 through to June 2022. With the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to limit opportunities for face-to-face meetings, all meetings were held online using the Zoom platform. This continued to be successful, enabling attendance by Committee members from a wide range of locations including Limerick, Cork, Galway, Mayo and the UK, as well as Dublin-based members.

Membership of the Committee remains reasonably strong, with a combination of mature and younger members, and several new members joining after the 2021 AGM. This year, for the first time, facilitated by the online meeting platform, all the new members were located outside the Dublin region. Again as a consequence of the online meetings, the improved attendance at meetings reported in the 2021 Annual Report was maintained. Accordingly, the Committee has reaffirmed its decision to continue using the Zoom platform when physical meetings resume, to facilitate attendance by members who cannot attend in person for whatever reason. Engineers Ireland reopened No. 22 Clyde Road for evening meetings in mid-September and arrangements have been made to hold Committee meetings as hybrid meetings with both in-person attendance at Clyde Road and remote attendees. These will commence with the 2022 AGM on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October.

As reported in the 2021 Annual Report, pressure of work and other commitments have made it difficult for some committee members to participate as fully in Committee activities as they would wish. As a result, there continues to be some difficulty in filling some of the Officer roles. The Vice-Chair role has been vacant since January 2021 and ideally should be filled early in the 2022-23 session. 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 2021 committee meeting was a joint meeting with Engineers Ireland's Civil Division. It is planned that this will take place again in December 2022, which will be the eighth year of this collaboration.

**b) Graduates and Students / Early Careers Network**

There is an active ECNet Committee (recently re-branded, formerly GSNet) 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. The Covid-19 pandemic restrictions persisted into the 2020-21 academic year but there are plans to develop in-person third-level visits in the current academic year.

The Committee did arrange some virtual events such as quiz evenings, which proved popular with the target audience.

Members of the ECNet Committee attended the ICE Northern Ireland summer dinner in Belfast in May 2022 and established relationships with members of the NI ECNet Committee. These relationships were strengthened when several members of the NI ECNet Committee travelled to Dublin in June to attend the ICE RoI Annual Dinner.

## **2. Knowledge and Professionalism**

### **a) Technical Meetings**

During the first half of 2022, the Committee organized technical webinars using the Zoom Webinar platform.

These were:

- 24 March – *Civil Engineers vs Climate Change: Principles & Practice*, presented by Michael O’Shea (Technical University of the Shannon), Janet Lynch (Arup Ireland), Elliot Neale (Jacobs) and Yvonne Murphy (Mott MacDonald);
- 22 April – *Modern Methods of Construction Including Offsite Production for Next Generation Building in Ireland*, by Martin Searson (Quality Positive Ltd).

Both of these events proved popular, with considerable interest in the recordings of the events, published on the ICE website.

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 routinely hosted online, many more meetings are now accessible to ICE members regardless of their geographical location. Events promoted by the ICE RoI Committee in the past year included:

- The 2021 ICE Presidential Address by Ed McCann, November 2021;
- ICE Brunel Lecture Series 2022.

### **b) Competitions**

We currently have no plans to run competitions or actively promote participation in ICE competitions, due to the relatively small and widely dispersed membership in the Republic. However, as in previous years ICE in the region was represented by two Committee members as judges for the 2021 and 2022 Irish Building and Design Awards respectively and by the Chair and a former Chair as judges for the BIM Ireland 2022 Irish Construction Excellence Awards. It is anticipated that these roles will be reprised in 2022/23.

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. A

number of 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 sub-contractor.

In addition, our Immediate Past Chair is a Judge for Engineers Ireland's Chartered Engineer of the Year 2022, continuing a role he has been invited to undertake over the past number of 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.

While the Civil Engineering courses available in the Republic are of a high standard and by and large satisfy the qualification standards of ICE, there is an ongoing difficulty in attracting and retaining students in these courses. This is partly due to the high profile in Ireland of high-end manufacturing and technology companies, which tends to increase the appeal of other disciplines such as Mechanical, Manufacturing, Chemical and Electrical Engineering. There also continue to be very few significant Civil Engineering projects to attract the interest of potential graduates.

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.

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.

In addition, as mentioned above, the ECNet team are engaging with the third-level institutions with a view to recruiting and encouraging student members.

As mentioned in last year's Annual Report, the shortage of Engineering Technicians was raised by Committee and discussed with ICE President Rachel Skinner, Engineers Ireland President Orla Feely and members of Engineers Ireland Committees during September 2021. As a result, a joint working group was set up between ICE RoI and Engineers Ireland to develop solutions to this problem. It was agreed that as the statutory body overseeing professional engineering qualifications in Ireland, Engineers Ireland should take the lead in this, with support as appropriate from ICE RoI. Several productive meetings of the working group have taken place over the past nine months, with ICE RoI inputs being welcomed by the Engineers Ireland team. At its most recent Council Meeting, Engineers Ireland committed to a new focus on the retention and recruitment of Technicians to the organisation, with specific routes to membership revised to reflect this. This new policy is expected to be effective from 1 January 2023.

#### **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](http://www.steps.ie)), culminating in Engineers Week, which takes place each year in late February/early March. In 2022 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 has gone from strength to strength

in recent years, with the 2022 events attracting the participation of 3,000 teachers and over 160,000 primary and second level students 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 with several members of the ICE RoI committee also being members of boards and committees within EI, including:

- Board of Examiners (Vice-Chair);
- CPD Standing Committee;
- Civil Division Committee;
- Thomond Region Committee;
- Benevolent Fund Committee;
- Professional Practice Committee.

Also, the ICE RoI Immediate Past Chair currently sits on the Council of Engineers Ireland as an elected Chartered member.

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

Following the successful virtual visit by ICE President Rachel Skinner to Engineers Ireland in 2021, the tradition of a reciprocal visit by the President of Engineers Ireland to ICE HQ was reinstated in 2022. Engineers Ireland President Orla Feely visited One Great George Street in May 2022 as the guest of current ICE President Ed McCann. The event, which included the presentation by Orla Feely of Professional Titles and awards to a number of UK-based Engineers Ireland members, and was followed by a dinner hosted by Ed McCann, 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 2021. This provided valuable insights into current thinking in relation to sustainable development and the importance of digital technologies to the work of today's engineers. It is the Committee's intention to attend the 2022 conference, which this year will take place in person and online, on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> of October.

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

- Chair, National Standards Authority of Ireland Construction Standards Consultative Committee;
- Board Member, Construction Industry Register Ireland Admissions & Registration Board;
- Member, Architects' Registration Board;
- Building Control (Amendment) Regulations (BC(A)R) – member of an Engineers Ireland team delivering online and in-person BC(A)R training;

- Member, Professional Conduct Committee of the Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland (SCSI) – by Ministerial appointment;
- Member, Construction Industry Council, Engineers Ireland delegate;
- Judge, Irish Construction Excellence Awards;
- Judge, CIOB Construction Manager of the Year Awards (Ireland);
- Judge, Irish Building & Design Awards;
- Judge, Engineers Ireland Chartered Engineer of the Year 2022;
- Judge, Irish Early Career Awards Engineering & Construction Professional of The Year 2022.

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 2021/22 session and this is expected to continue through the 2022/23 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 2022, for the first time since 2019, it was possible for Committee members to travel to in-person events, and the RoI Chair and a number of ECNet Committee members attended the ICE NI summer dinner. The ICE NI Chair had planned to travel to the RoI annual dinner in June but in the event was unable to do so. However, several members of the NI ECNet Committee did attend. It is anticipated that the current NI Chair will attend the 2023 RoI dinner.

Also, as in previous years, one of our committee members continues to represent us as the ICE Country Representative for Ireland on the ICE International Committee. At the end of 2021 the then Country Rep. Don McEntee stepped down at the end of his three-year term. The role was advertised to the RoI membership and a new Representative, Yvonne Murphy, was appointed in January 2022.

#### *Social Engagement with Other Professional Bodies*

The impact of Covid-19 continued to be felt through the 2021-22 session, with many organisations, including Engineers Ireland, opting to restrict in-person events. This effectively prevented much of the usual networking afforded by attendance at technical evenings and other events.

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

The one significant exception to the above was the ICE RoI Annual Dinner, which took place in June 2022, as detailed in (b) below.

In-person events have gradually become the norm once again and it is expected that normal social interactions such as in-person meetings at Engineers Ireland in Dublin will gradually resume in the coming months, allowing ICE members to engage more fully with those of other institutions once again.

## **b) Annual Dinner 2022 and Outstanding Achievement Awards 2020-2022**

After a two-year Covid-19 enforced hiatus the ICE Rol Annual Dinner was held in the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June. The event was well attended, with some 50 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 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 attending their first in-person event in some time.

A highlight of the evening was the announcement and presentation of Outstanding Achievement Awards to three exceptional Civil Engineers with stellar careers in the industry. These awards were made for 2020, 2021 and 2022, the 2020 and 2021 awards having been deferred due to Covid-19.

The award for 2020 was presented to Murt Coleman, a Fellow of Engineers Ireland whose 40-year career with Irishenco Ltd saw that company become one of Ireland's leading civil contractors. Murt has also given many years' voluntary service to the civil engineering profession through his tireless work with and on behalf of Engineers Ireland.

The 2021 award went to Don McEntee, another lifelong civil engineer who has left his mark on Ireland's civil engineering infrastructure and tirelessly promoted the interests of the profession for more than half a century. A long-time Chartered member of both the ICE and Engineers Ireland, and long-serving member of the ICE Rol Committee, Don introduced the Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) concept to Dublin City Council and was instrumental in SuDS becoming a fundamental requirement of all major infrastructure developments in the Greater Dublin Area.

Finally, the award for 2022 was given posthumously to Hank Fogarty, a legend of the Irish civil engineering scene who sadly died unexpectedly in May 2022. In a career spanning over 50 years, Hank made SIAC Construction Ltd one of the leading Irish contractors and came to be recognized as one of the country's foremost experts on contract law and construction dispute resolution. A Fellow of Engineers Ireland, Hank also devoted much of his spare time throughout his career to the service of that institution. The award was accepted at the Annual Dinner by Hank's son on behalf of his family.

It is the Committee's intention to continue the Outstanding Achievement Award in the current session, with the 2023 award being presented at the Annual Dinner in May. This year, it is intended to invite nominations for the award from the ICE Rol membership in the hope of ensuring that no deserving candidate is overlooked.

## **c) President's Visit 2022**

The ICE President's Visit to Ireland is a co-hosted event between Engineers Ireland and the ICE Rol 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 first physical visit since 2019 took place on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022, when ICE President Ed McCann visited Dublin and Limerick. The President's itinerary included:

- Presidential Address by Ed McCann to an audience of ICE and Engineers Ireland members, both in-person at 22 Clyde Road in Dublin and online via Zoom, with a response by Engineers Ireland Vice President Laura Burke;

- Reception hosted by Engineers Ireland at Clyde Road;
- Dinner with ICE RoI Committee members and invited guests including Engineers Ireland President, Vice President, CPD Director and Communications & Marketing Director as well as representatives of Engineers Ireland Civil Division;
- Hybrid Committee meeting with Ed McCann (in-person in Limerick and online via Zoom), including ECNet Committee members;
- Site visit to Opera Square, part of the Limerick 2030 urban regeneration initiative;
- Lunch in Limerick city centre with ICE members and invited guests from Engineers Ireland, consultants, contractors, third level institutions and various public bodies;
- Address by Ed McCann to students and others at the University of Limerick (UL) Department of Civil Engineering, followed by Q&A with the President;
- Presentation at UL by leading precast concrete supplier Banagher Precast.

The visit was very successful, with good attendances at all the events. Our President captivated his audiences with his passionate addresses, including a packed lecture theatre of eager civil engineering students in Limerick. Members of the ECNet Committee manned an ICE stand outside the theatre, signing up a significant number of students as potential ICE student members.

At the Committee meeting with the President, the Committee gained valuable insight into the ICE's strategy for future development, which is based on the ICE's founding objective – to be a learning institution building and maintaining a body of knowledge for the benefit not only of its members, but of the civil engineering community as a whole and society at large. The President called for ICE members in the RoI region to play their part in contributing to this body of knowledge.

The visit to Limerick, believed to be the first foray outside Dublin by an ICE President, was an initiative of ICE RoI Committee members based in that city, and the presentation by Banagher Precast was arranged by a Cork-based Committee member. Based on the success of this visit, the ICE RoI Committee intends to approach Engineers Ireland with a view to hosting the next President's visit in Cork, with the customary address to Engineers Ireland being delivered there. This would facilitate in-person attendance by ICE members from across the Munster region.

#### **d) ICE Republic of Ireland LinkedIn Page**

In February 2022, ICE launched a dedicated Republic of Ireland page on LinkedIn. This has enabled the RoI Committee to publicise events and share items of interest with the ICE RoI membership and the wider civil engineering community. The page has steadily accumulated followers over the past 7 months.

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, 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 2022 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 third year as Chair, subject to ratification at the 2022 AGM.
2. Hon. Secretary: As reported in the 2021 Annual Report, the current Hon. Secretary, who is also Chair of the RoI ECNet Committee, has expressed a wish to step down from the Hon. Sec. role. The Committee would also welcome expressions of interest from members who might join the Committee with a view to taking up the Secretary role in due course.
3. Continue the engagement with industry bodies where our “wearing of several hats” affords us networking opportunities as ICE. It is hoped that during the 2022/23 session there will be a full return to the traditional networking opportunities presented by face-to-face meetings and events. Already this session, several committee members have attended in-person events at Engineers Ireland and elsewhere, including the first of several awards ceremonies planned for the winter season. The Engineers Ireland Conference in October 2022 will be a hybrid event, with expectations of a good in-person attendance and excellent networking opportunities. ICE members are encouraged to attend this informative event if possible, especially those holding dual membership of ICE and Engineers Ireland, as Engineers Ireland members may attend the conference free of charge.

## 6. Budget and Finance

A Treasurer’s Report covering the 2021/22 session and summarizing the current financial position of the ICE RoI Branch is presented separately to this Report.

**Keith Elliott CEng, FICE, FIEI**

10 October 2022