



**RTPI Ireland**  
Royal Town Planning Institute

# Annual Review 2018



# Chair's Foreword

It has been a busy and productive year for RTPI Ireland. This short review outlines just some of the highlights of 2018 to give you a flavour of how we have been working for our members.

Throughout 2018 we worked hard to raise the profile of the positive things that planners do through our Ireland's Best Places competition. This asked the public to nominate, and then vote for, the places that they loved and which had been created, enhanced or protected by planning. With nearly 12,000 votes cast, it shows the interest people have in the places where they live, work and spend time and has hopefully helped to refocus discussion on the quality of what planners deliver.

We have also continued to engage with influential people and organisations including Ministers, Government officials and key players in local government. RTPI Ireland has responded to key consultation documents issued through the year and was influential in the development of the National Planning Framework published in February.

And we have tried to ensure that we provide our members with opportunities to keep up to date with what is happening in a changing world. Our Open Forums continue to provide members with a means of engaging in debate on key issues and new developments, whilst our Annual Law Seminar still proves to be the most attended event for an update on legal matters.

My thanks go to 'Team RTPI Ireland' - all members of the Irish Executive Committee and the staff - for all the hard work they have put in over the year. We all work to promote the good things that the profession does, to shine a light on what we need to do this, and, to support our members to be able to create great places across the length and breadth of the country.



**Marion R Chalmers**  
Chair, RTPI Ireland

## Irish Executive Committee 2018

Marion Chalmers, Chair  
Aidan Culhane, Vice Chair  
Berna Grist, Honorary Secretary  
Rosemary Gibbons, Honorary Treasurer and Representative to the General Assembly  
John Downey, Immediate Past Chair & Representative to European Council of Spatial Planners  
Conor Norton  
Tomas Bradley  
Niall Byrne  
Klara Crowley  
Tadhg Daly  
Seamus Donhogue  
Philip Jackson  
Colin King  
Thomas Maguire  
Deirdre McGrath  
Majella Quinn

## Staff

Catherine Bolster, Coordinator  
Craig McLaren, Director

# Ireland's Best Places.

In April we launched Ireland's Best Places, a competition to give the public and civic Ireland the opportunity to identify their favourite places that have been built, enhanced or protected by planners and the planning system within Ireland.

In doing this we issued a public call for their favourites which provided 185 different nominations highlighting around 90 different places. Our "Eminent Panel" then used this to agree a shortlist of 10 which was then made open to a public vote. The finalists were:

- Abbeyleix, Laois
- Cobh, Cork
- Cork City Centre, Cork
- Dingle, Kerry
- Grand Canal Square, Dublin
- The Great Western Greenway, Mayo
- Greystones, Wicklow
- Kilkenny City Centre, Kilkenny
- Lough Boora Parklands, Offaly
- Tully Cross, Galway

Almost 12,000 people voted and Lough Boora Parklands was announced as the winner with 18% share of the total votes cast.

Situated in County Offaly, Lough Boora Parklands attracts some 100,000 visitors a

year. Once an industrial peat bog, its transformation includes the creation of a nature reserve maintained by the Irish Wildlife Trust that aims to ensure its natural resources and biodiversity remain for generations to come. A visitor centre, café and extensive trails encourage cyclists and walkers to explore the beautiful landscape and sculpture park, which displays sculptures from national and international artists.

The competition was covered on RTE radio, Virgin TV, the Irish Independent and local media.



# Shaping and Informing Policy and Practice

## Policy Consultations

In the year we have submitted the following policy responses:

- DHPLG new Residential Design Guidelines
- DHPLG Housing Design Manual
- Application of EU rules related to the recognition of professional qualifications in anticipation of the UK's withdrawal from the EU
- DHPLG Draft Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- Consultation on National Marine Planning Baseline Report

## Ministers and Government

Damien English TD, Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, attended the RTPI Ireland Annual Dinner in November.

We have also met with Government Officials several times in the year, including the Chief Planner.

## National Planning Framework

RTPI Ireland Immediate Past Chair John Downey had sat on the National Planning Framework Advisory Group and attended the launch of the NPF and the National Development Plan in February.

## Representation

RTPI Ireland spoke at the Policy Forum Ireland planning conference and was represented at the launches of the Dublin City Living Initiative; the Land Development Agency; the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and the National Marine Planning Framework Baseline Report.

We have also met with the new Chair, Board Members and senior staff at An Bord Pleanála, and Senior Counsels and other members of the Irish Planning, Environmental and Local Government Bar Association.



# Supporting members to access Education, CPD, Training and Skills.

## Open Forums

In 2018 we held three Member Open Forums.

We held an Open Forum on Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies in May in Dublin which included presentations from Paul Hogan in DHPLG and Malachy Bradley of the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly.

We also held a Forum on regeneration on 19 June in Limerick.

## Law Seminar

Our Annual Law seminar was held in October with presentations from Rory Mulcahy SC and Eamonn Kelly. The audience of 80 delegates heard about a range of key planning case law which would be important to them in their work and the new Planning and Development Act. A comprehensive question and answer session allowed delegates to discuss the real detail of the issues raised.

## Annual Dinner

The RTPI Ireland Annual Dinner was held on 16 November in Dublin. This provided the opportunity for us to celebrate and reflect on the work that has been undertaken and the progress made by RTPI Ireland over the year.

Guests of Honour were Damien English TD, Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal and RTPI President John Acres who paid tribute to Irish Executive Committee and members in Ireland for continuing to promote the virtues of planning and highlight good planning policy and practice to policy makers. The dinner also saw the announcement of the winner of Ireland's Best Places competition and the presentation of student prizes to:

- Max McGovern in Dublin Institute of Technology
- Saoirse Kavanagh in University College Cork
- Aoife O'Connor-Massingham in University College Dublin

## Education

The year has seen visits to UCD and DIT by RTPI representatives to speak to students about the RTPI and career planning through outlining the role of the Institute and the different players involved across the public, private and voluntary sectors.



# Promoting the Value of the Institute and of Planning.

## Communications

We continue to spread key messages through our social media channels such as Twitter. The @RTPIIreland twitter account has 1138 followers.

We also continue to send regular e-bulletins to Members updating them on the work of the Institute in Ireland.

## Website

We have regularly updated our web pages so that they become the key place to keep in touch with RTPI Ireland activity.

## Media

In 2018 we issued a number of news releases on topics including Ireland's Best Places and the National Planning Framework

This has led to coverage of our work on RTE radio, Highland Radio, Virgin TV, the Irish Independent and local media.

## The Planner Magazine

We have featured in The Planner magazine on several occasions in 2018, including a two page feature of planning issues in Ireland and the work of the Irish Executive Committee.



# Ireland's Voice in the Institute.

## Representation

RTPI Ireland continues to spread our influence within the Institute. Rosemary Gibbons and Marion Chalmers sit on the Institute's General Assembly. We also have representatives on a number of key RTPI Committees and Panels:

- Policy, Practice and Research Committee – Tadhg Daly
- Education and Lifelong Learning Committee – Marion Chalmers
- Membership and Ethics Committee – Rosemary Gibbons
- Audit Committee – Deirdre McGrath
- Nations and Regions – Tomás Bradley
- General Assembly – Rosemary Gibbons

This has allowed RTPI Ireland to engage with and influence key issues such as the RTPI's review of its routes to membership and the future RTPI research programme.

## RTPI President

RTPI President John Acres visited Dublin in November where visited Dublin Docklands, met with the Chair of An Bord Pleanála, met

with students and staff, including the new Head of School, at UCD and visited Lough Boora to help present them with their award as Ireland's Best Place.

## RTPI Chief Executive

The new RTPI Chief Executive, Victoria Hills, visited Dublin in September to discuss her priorities with the Executive Committee. She also used the visit to meet with the Chief Planner and colleagues in DHPLG, the Chief Planner in Dublin City Council and Senior Counsels and other members of the Irish Planning, Environmental and Local Government Bar Association.





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