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IPAV CONFERENCE HEARS OF THE DEVASTATING LOSS TO PROPERTY VALUES POSED BY JAPANESE KNOTWEED

Japanese knotweed, a regulated invasive plant under EU law, devalues property considerably and can prevent consumers from getting a mortgage for a property where it is found to be, Dr Frances Giaquinto, a botanist and ecologist, told the annual conference of IPAV, the Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers, at the weekend.

She said it exists “in every county in Ireland” and she identified a lack of awareness of the issue as “the biggest problem.”

Dr Giaquinto said properties most at risk include terraced houses with common boundaries; properties next to routes such as rivers, canals, Luas, rail and roads and abandoned or neglected properties.

She said under EU law while it is not illegal to have knotweed at a property per se it is illegal to plant, disperse, allow or cause it to disperse, spread or otherwise cause it to grow. The onus is on all landlords – State and private – to prevent its dispersal. Dr Giaquinto said it can be very expensive to properly rid a property of it, between €30k and €40k.

In the UK under consumer protection law agents are obliged to inform both buyers and sellers of its presence.

IPAV's weekend conference was attended by over 200 auctioneers from throughout Ireland. Brian Dempsey, Partner at DNG Stillorgan, Dublin was elected President of Institute.

Mr Dempsey who holds an Honours Degree in the Built Environment from the University of Glamorgan, Wales and is an external examiner with ITT (Institute of Technology Tallaght), says he wants to prioritise growth in IPAV's education programmes during his term of office.

Ends

Note to editors: IPAV is the only representative body in Ireland which solely caters for the professional and educational requirements of auctioneers and valuers practicing throughout Ireland. Established in 1971, it has over 1,100 members nationwide. For further information see www.ipav.ie.

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