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Outgoing IPAV President David McDonnell hands over the chain of office to his successor Tom Crosse.

Photo Brian Dempsey

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AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS
129 LOWER BAGGOT STREET DUBLIN 2

Tel: 01 6785685

E-mail: info@ipav.ie

Website:

www.ipav.ie

TEGoVA Website:

www.tegova.org

CEPI Website:

www.cepi.eu

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Patrick Davitt FIPAV REV MMCEPI

ADVERTISING & DESIGN

Designroom

info@designroom.ie

Tel: 01 615 4714/15

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www.designroom.ie

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Welcome to the Quarter 3 issue of the *Property Professional* magazine.

By now the majority of members are back up and running their businesses thankfully, while complying with the new government guidelines on Covid-19. I am also glad to report that the news from members is that they are very busy again and that there is a huge volume of queries both for sales and lettings. As noted by Dublin agent Clare Connolly for example in this issue, there is a pent-up demand built up during the course of the lock-down and it will take some time to deal with this backlog.

Prices for residential properties seem to be generally holding up and there is no immediate sign of any slump. One of the trends that has emerged from the lockdown is that working from home, either part-time or full-time, is going to become the new normal. Consequently, many people are opting to set-up home in the countryside and this will hopefully help to redress the balance in price between our cities and counties. In his article, Donal Buckley addresses this very issue and the growing interest in having office/workspace in new homes.

As you are aware, IPAV has had to postpone many of its regular activities due to the pandemic, notably the AGM and Annual Conference. The AGM is now set to take place in Portlaoise on Friday, 28 August in full compliance with social distancing guidelines and I hope to see many members there. This will be the first occasion for members to physically meet each other in a long time. The Annual Report and full details of the AGM have recently been circulated to all members.

On the day prior to the AGM, Thursday, 27 August we will have YPN's Annual Golf Classic in Mullingar Golf Club, which is another opportunity for members to socialise together while enjoying a round of golf.

While there are few IPAV events to report on in this issue, it is nevertheless full of interesting articles about issues affecting members as well as featuring interviews with a number of members: P. Burke in Roscommon, Barry Herterich in Waterford and Clare Connolly in Dublin. We also welcome as a regulator contributor Mike Brady, the well-known Cork agent who will be writing on rural issues. There are also short profiles of the new ministers in the Custom House and in Agriculture House. Tommy Barker writes about the attraction of offshore islands to the rich and famous, while college lecturer Frank Quinn discusses the new normal in the classroom.

So, I hope there is something for everybody to enjoy and we are always interested in featuring members and their activities in the magazine.

I look forward to meeting many of you in Portlaoise

Patrick Davitt
CEO

CONTENTS

COVID-19 SPARKS NEW INTEREST IN HOME OFFICE SPACE	PAGE 6
HOW CONVERTING FROM COMMERCIAL TO RESIDENTIAL COULD HELP COURTESY, CONSIDERATION & COMMITMENT	PAGE 8
THE NEW MINISTERS	PAGE 12
LAND: TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY?	PAGE 14
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS WITH SHERRY FITZ	PAGE 16
THE ATTRACTION OF A PRIVATE ISLAND	PAGE 18
PREPARE FOR A NEW NORMAL	PAGE 22
	PAGE 28



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“Again, Head Office will give regular updates to members as we progress into the late summer and autumn period”.

Dear Member

At last after almost three months of lockdown, the country is gradually returning to normal and most people are back at work once again. On your behalf, I wish to extend again my heartfelt thanks to all the frontline staff who saw us through the worst of this pandemic, not just the doctors and nurses, who, of course did a tremendous job, but also the hospital cleaners, porters, caterers and all the other ancillary staff who kept the cogs of our health care system turning. We are forever grateful to them and their work will be long remembered by all.

Thankfully, the property industry is gradually returning to normal and IPAV members are very busy once again in arranging viewings, sales, valuations and other related work. From talking to members around the country IPAV's view of the market was correct and that property prices have weathered the impact of COVID-19. There does appear to be a shift in the type of properties buyers are now seeking in this post-lockdown era. It seems the pandemic will have a lasting change on the way we live and work from now on.

Gardens, potential home-office space and perhaps, most crucially of all, broadband reliability have become some of the most frequently asked questions of estate agents by potential buyers. Indeed, in the immediate future, it is quite likely that we will see a very busy market place to cope with the pent-up demand. This may lead to a slight rise in prices in some areas and sectors although any major increases or decreases seem unlikely in the immediate future.

The rental market, on the other hand, has seen a noticeable softening, particularly in the larger cities. This seems directly as a result of many Airbnb properties coming onto the regular letting market, a trend which is likely to last for some months yet.

Activities at IPAV head office were also curtailed due to COVID-19, although a great deal of online support was provided. IPAV played a major role in the drafting of the Joint Sector Protocol for Property Services Providers which is intended to consolidate practical guidance available since the 18th of May on how to safely manage business continuity during the pandemic. It relates only to Property Services Providers (PSPs) and the valuation sector and how they can safely engage with clients and members of the public. I urge all members to follow its directions and to maintain contact with IPAV in regard to any further changes that may occur.

Our CPD seminars had to be put on hold but it is hoped to restart them in the Autumn when they will be supplemented by some online modules. Again, head office will give regular updates to members as we progress into the late summer and autumn period.

By now of course, I should have handed over the reins of office to my successor Tom Crosse but our postponed AGM has now been set for Friday, August 28 in the Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise. I hope to see a good turn-out of members for this event which will be our first opportunity in many months to physically meet and chat again.

As this is my final President's Message, I wish to thank the CEO Pat Davitt, the members of National Council and all our staff at head office for their support over the past year. While our events and seminars were put on hold since March, I very much enjoyed my presidency which was a great honour for me and my family. IPAV continues to go from strength to strength and next year will be a particularly significant one for us when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our foundation in 1971.

In the meantime, I look forward to meeting you in Portlaoise on August 28.

Best wishes

David McDonnell

President

IPAV Annual General Meeting 2020

The Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers Limited will be held at 11.00 am on **Friday, 28 August, 2020** in the Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise, Co Laois.

Council will meet immediately after the AGM to elect officers of Council.



IPAV's YPN to host 4th Annual Golf Classic

IPAV's YPN are delighted to confirm, with the reopening of Mullingar Golf Club, and with all safety protocols in place, that YPN's 4th Annual Golf Tournament will be taking place on **Thursday 27th August**. IPAV will circulate details in the coming weeks, however, in the meantime, if you would like to note your interest, please email anthony@ipav.ie.

A sincere thank you to OFFR and PINERGY for sponsoring this year's event.



Lorraine Higgins

IPAV launches campaign for a Seller's Legal Pack

IPAV is spearheading a campaign for the introduction of a Seller's Legal Pack (SLP), which is a collection of documents to be provided to aspiring purchasers when a property is placed on the market for sale, thereby front-loading the current process.

Former Labour Senator turned lobbyist Lorraine Higgins is leading the campaign to enlist the support of other stakeholders and politicians. The plan to change the current status quo is rooted in IPAV's recent Conveyancing Survey wherein it was discovered that almost 80% of auctioneers are experiencing conveyancing delays from the time a property is deemed 'sale agreed' to when the sale eventually closes. This statistic can be broken down further to understand the nature of such delays being endured by the industry:

- The average time it takes from when a property is 'sale agreed' to when contracts are signed is 10 weeks, and
- The time it takes from the signing of the sales' contracts to date the sale closes is six weeks.

As the representative body responsible for driving standards for the property sales industry, it is IPAV's ambition to streamline the conveyancing process and make it more efficient.

"We have no doubt, the SLP will satisfy these objectives while substantially reducing the delays incurred in the current sales process which is unaligned, rife with uncertainty and presents legal risks to the Vendor," says CEO Pat Davitt. "IPAV

is committed to working with important stakeholders and policymakers to influence the development of a sustainable property market where people can buy, sell or rent properties in a cost-effective and efficient manner."

The documents contained in the Seller's Legal Pack are:

- Law Society Conditions/Contracts for Sale
- Certified copy of file & file plan or root of unregistered title
- Architect's Certificate of Compliance with planning permission
- Architect's Certificate of Compliance with building regulations and building regulation documents
- Receipts for financial conditions
- Letter confirming roads and services or evidence of rights of way and wayleaves
- Local property history details
- A BER Certificate and Advisory Report of discharge or exemption from Non-Private Residence Charge
- Law Society Objections and Requisitions on Title and associated replies

IPAV has listed the advantages of the Pack as follows:

- Consumers would be fully informed and would be better protected
- It would ensure transparency and speed in the sales process
- It would reduce potential liability for the vendor
- It would make the conveyancing process more efficient and would streamline it with public and online property auctions
- It would reduce the number of property sales which fall through due to gazumping or gazundering

It is IPAV's contention that the introduction of the pack would have unquestionable benefits for the property industry as a whole.



COVID- 19 PANDEMIC: HOW DID WE GET HERE. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

BY PAT DAVITT, CEO, IPAV

St. Patrick's Day 2020 will be a St. Patrick's Day to remember and tell our grandchildren about as long as we live. It was probably the official start of lockdown for most of us, even though it was not until the 27th March that we heard the then Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, deliver the important, sobering message to stay at home. As the weeks passed on, his messages got stronger. Many people talked of their freedom being curtailed, but how free are we really? Certainly, we can move around but our freedom is always curtailed by events around us and, throughout this pandemic, our freedom was no different.

For many, working from home fell into place very quickly, let it be in the child's bedroom, the kitchen, or dining table, listening to the Hoover and our partners and children saying - maybe under their breath - "I wish you'd get back to work!". For some, with their own office in their home, or some living alone, all remained very natural. They were thinking what are the rest giving out about but for whatever situation you were in, or are in, thanks to all the people around you who made it all as enjoyable an experience as they could and just got on with it, thank you so much. Despite the fact Covid-19 tried to slow and close us down, many people nevertheless kept their business ticking over.

While PSPs were not classified as essential services, estate agents were at least allowed to support essential services. They played an important support role to front-line workers by completing valuations, letting agreements and sales for them. It is said when the going gets tough, the tough get going and the resilience and efforts of our members was shown over and over again. We have been through recessions and tough times before but this time the situation was different and, in some cases, agents risked their own lives.

Loss and heartbreak

Sadly, many people passed away during the pandemic, including family, friends and neighbours. To all I say I am very sorry for everyone's loss and heartbreak and most of all the lack of an opportunity to give loved ones a final farewell and a traditional Irish funeral. To all the front-line workers, doctors, nurses, porters, kitchen staff, gardaí, truck drivers - the list just goes on - who risked their lives for all of us, I say a very loud and sincere 'Thank You'.



For some members, Covid-19 was a great opportunity to get some badly needed work done in their offices, or indeed in their homes, whether it be paper-filing, accounts and so on. Indeed, many were happy with the break. For others, it was an opportunity to stop and ask: "How I did I get here? Where am I now? Amidst all the hustle and bustle of the past years when people barely had time to bid each other the time of day. This was an opportunity to seriously look ahead and to plan for their future, their family and their business.

Throughout the pandemic, IPAV always remained positive for members. We were just a telephone-call away, helping and advising as best we could. We maintained we would come out of the Covid-19 lockdown as if nothing ever happened and residential property prices would return to pre Covid-19 prices. I'm sure many members thought I lost it when they heard me say on webinars there will be a big demand when we got back to work. The 'could-bes', the 'would-bes' and the 'maybes' were all out adding fuel to the fire, with all sorts of gloom and doom, suggesting that property prices would fall significantly. Despite all of this, property prices and interest in property have remained firm, with many sales completed since the opening up of the market. Interest remains very strong.

Negative people

The same negative people are still saying property prices will fall by year-end and perhaps they will. What they fail to realise is that we are in a performing property market so, if there is a correction coming because of the global market, our market will correct too, and that should be the case. In the equity/shares market, we often have such corrections and while I do not wish to see them occurring often in the property market, a market that is working and performing should embrace them and move

on. Corrections bring opportunities as the market is made up of buyers and sellers, without both of whom it could not function. Agents have to remember that they do not make the market, but rather the market finds its own level. Agents sell the property whether the prices are up, or down, and we would not want it any other way.

According to the Property Price Register, there have been c. 20,000 sales to June 8th this year. If we are to reach last year's level, we need another 35,000 before the end of the year. The market does not require a miracle but it can be helped. For example, IPAV has asked the Government to extend part, or all, of the FTB grant to second-hand homes. We have also asked the Minister for Finance to examine stamp duty especially on land sales and reduce it to 5% and also that stamp duty rates should be tiered, especially on sales under €500,000 instead of the high rate of 7.5%. We have asked the Central Bank of Ireland to extend the Loan-to-Income scheme to 4.5 times for earners up to €50,000, to help FTBs get on the property ladder.

IPAV can see no value in shutting employees out of the market, simply because their employers availed of the pandemic payment subsidy for employees, put in place by the Government to help them. We expressed these concerns to the Banking and Payments Federation during Covid-19. Many of these workers have now gone back to work and should not be disenfranchised by lenders. All banks and financial institutions should accept a letter from employers confirming the jobs and wages of their employees will be there on the same terms as pre Covid-19, thus enabling employees to move on and progress their property purchase and mortgage.

I will never forget in the early days of Covid-19, hearing the medical experts tell us they were looking at the possibility of 100,000 cases per day and indeed RTE's George Lee reporting



the figures. I thought to myself if that happened, ever man, woman and child in Ireland would have Covid-19 in less than 50 days. We could be wiped out! Everyone was understandably very frightened. Now, we are again frightened to some extent because of the fear of a second wave.

As always, common sense goes a long way. If we heed the advice and allow our common sense to prevail, we all manage and manage very well. Don't put yourself in harm's way and no harm will come to you.

Let us keep doing what we have been doing and pray that a vaccine will be found as soon as possible so that we can all get back to the good old Irish way of welcoming each other and doing business together.

OVER-ZEALOUS LENDING RESTRICTIONS COULD SEVERELY DAMAGE SUPPLY OF HOMES



IPAV has warned that if over-zealous lending restrictions are implemented by banks it will ruin confidence among builders and cause house building to slow to a trickle.

Pat Davitt, Chief Executive of IPAV said: "While no one expects lenders to engage in irresponsible lending, if lending to those on State Covid-19 payments who have jobs to return to are stopped or severely delayed from getting mortgages it is likely to have a devastating impact on the supply of new homes, which are already behind schedule as a result of the pandemic."

Mr Davitt said there has been a patronising attitude towards prospective first-time buyers.

"The current narrative seems to be that aspiring buyers need to be protected from borrowing. In our experience young aspiring buyers are responsible and will, by themselves, not want to take on debt if they don't have the confidence that they will have

the capacity to repay their mortgages," he said. "They and their parents have learned from the last financial crash when they were encouraged to believe there was no end in sight to rising property prices."

"In 2007 borrowers were able to negotiate 100pc mortgages with higher interest rates than today, up to 7 times salary on properties that were 40pc higher than today and we had 300,000 too many properties. Today we have 70pc to 90pc mortgages, 3.5 Loan to Income limit on borrowing, cheaper property prices and interest rates and at least 300,000 too few properties."

Welcoming the move by AIB to revise its stance on the issue, he said while several lenders maintain that they will treat each case on its own merits "the worry is that they have, in fact, become severely risk averse and their interpretation of dealing with each case on its own merits may differ in a meaningful way from that of prospective buyers and others."

Mr Davitt said he believes damage has already been done, it is difficult to see how builders would want to continue to build if only the select few could get mortgages.

"I believe we will be back to 17,000 new builds this year, over-zealous lending restrictions will kill confidence at a time when we need positivity. Supply is already negatively impacted by the pandemic and trying to recover," he said.



COVID-19 SPARKS NEW INTEREST IN HOME OFFICE SPACE

BY DONAL BUCKLEY

Now that COVID-19 has encouraged more people to work from home, the need for a dedicated office space has been among the issues which they are considered for their homes. Some remote workers have been working from various rooms in the house with living rooms and dining rooms being the most popular. But sometimes it has been determined by the rooms where Wifi reception is best such as the kitchen. In some cases, with the kids off school, they too want to use the living room or dining room to watch TV so that means that the parental bedroom is the quietest room in the home.

Sherry FitzGerald has noticed a pick-up in enquires, demand and viewings for existing homes with either home offices in place or space that can be adapted to that of a home office. Colm Byrne, director with SF New Homes, says some developers have also been rethinking existing show houses.

For instance, developer DRES has changed its four-bedroom show house in Eastmount to now include a home office. Sika Woods by Winterbrook in Enniskerry will be including home offices and “nooks for desks” in their new scheme. Annesley Gardens in Ranelagh by Seabren Developments will include studies in a mezzanine area in some of their houses when they launch later this year. “Some of these ideas were already in place pre-Covid,” he adds.

Referring to Cairn’s offer to include office pods in rear gardens, Mr Byrne expects some developers to offer this as an extra option rather than a standard feature as this will involve extra electrical and, in some cases, plumbing works.

“We will increasingly see developers look to incorporate small studies into new schemes especially three-storey houses where top floor space can be used efficiently or revisiting the attic spaces making them suitable for conversion either at the time of purchase or future proofed for conversion down the line. For now, it will be more of a change in show house style to include a home office in one of the bedrooms, or some clever desk space in smaller spaces underneath stairs to help show people how their home can be easily laid out to enable working from home,” he adds.

Offices and studies

Offices and studies have been included in higher end show houses for some time now such as Brighton Wood, Foxrock; Anglesea, Dunlaoghaire and Lansdowne Place, Ballsbridge.

“We may also see people who typically only needed a three-bedroom buying four-bedroom houses with the extra bedroom being used for a home office. With an increase in working from home, this may also mean people will rethink the location they are buying in using their budget to buy a larger house in a



location outside Dublin if they don’t feel they will be required to continue the daily commute to the office.

“Long term with a number of employers looking at remote working or part remote working we believe there will be continued demand for this housing type both within Dublin and throughout the country,” Mr Byrne concludes.

Ken MacDonald of Hooke and MacDonald says some developers such as Cosgraves have been providing dedicated study/office area in both houses and apartments for a number of years, sometimes as a separate room, or else as part of a second bedroom.

Another possible response to this demand is the living over the shop concept. This could see home workers buy former retail outlets and convert the front rooms to office use while converting the remainder of the property to residential use.

During the last property boom, Dublin City Council sought to encourage living over the shop in order to provide residential units in the vacant space over the shops. It even revamped a couple of shops in Dublin’s Capel Street in order to show investors and developers how to undertake a living over the shop project. This was necessary because of the need to address a number of challenges in the design such as separate street access to the residential space on the upper floors and fire safety.

Live/work unit

While the campaign itself may not have generated many living over the shop developments, there had been increases in this activity following the increased rents. Another boom time way of addressing the home working challenge was the concept of the live/work unit and it will be interesting to see if this might gain traction.

The term was usually used to describe units in an apartment development which were bigger than an apartment and offered commercial as well as residential accommodation. Many, but not all, had own door direct access to the outside of a building so that other members of a team or clients would have easy access.

Now that COVID-19 has been encouraging people to keep their social distances from strangers, more people are conscious of the advantage of having own-door access to their home.

Unlike the home offices which have been carved out of dining rooms, bedrooms and even kitchen spaces, the live/work unit's workspace was designed to be physically separate from the residential area. In some it was also designed to operate as a stand-alone commercial space to accommodate additional employees and clients. Typically, the units appealed to professional people including some with a small team and operating office type businesses. However, there were instances of a range of other businesses including a dentist and a beautician who operated from units in Sandyford, Dublin 18.

In Ireland, these types of units appear to have had their hay day at peak of the Celtic Tiger. In 2008 The Irish Times reported that at the Old Chocolate Factory, Kilmainham Square, Dublin 8, one-bedroom live-work suites which measured 78 sq m (850sq ft) were priced between €485,000 to €530,000. Their two-bedroom live-work units with 110-118sq m (1,180-1,270sq ft) were priced from €565,000 to €580,000. That suggests a starting price of €5,136 per sq m.

On Dublin's northside at Crosbie's Yard development off the North Strand and within walking distance of the IFSC, prices started at €365,000 for one-bed units with 77-91 sq m (825-975sq ft).

Last year a live/work unit at 1 The Cubes 2, Beacon South Quarter, Sandyford, Dublin 18, sold for €322,500 at a BidX1 online auction. Extending to 94 sq. m (1,011 sq. ft) the price equated to €3,430 per square metre for the ground floor two-bedroom unit.

That price was an 18% increase on the €2,900 per sq m price achieved for a neighbouring apartment 2, The Cubes 3, Beacon South Quarter, Sandyford, Dublin 18, less than two years previously. That 74.04 sq. m ground floor live/work unit with a generous external decking area and a basement car space sold for €215,000.

However, even with the separation of the commercial from the residential space, purchasers of live/work units will also consider the health risks so any demand is likely to come from occupiers who do not have visiting clients, or work colleagues. Alternatively, they may follow another trend which has been to convert them purely to residential use.

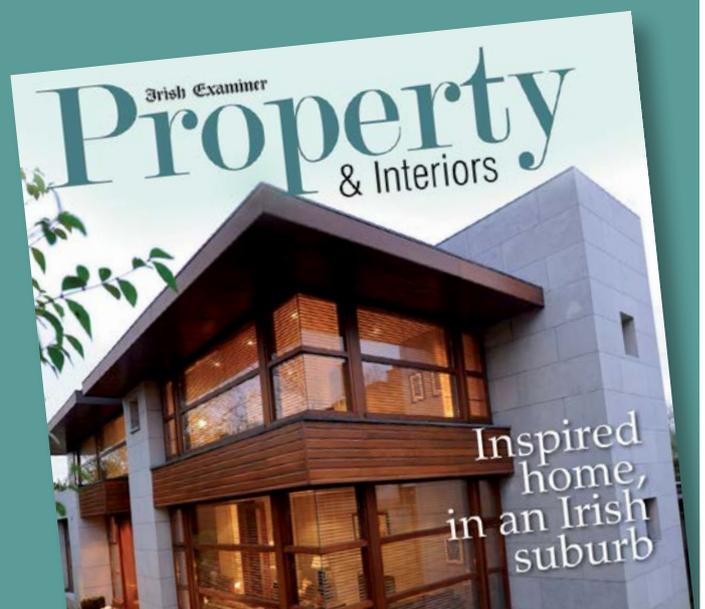


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HOW CONVERTING FROM COMMERCIAL TO RESIDENTIAL COULD HELP EASE IRELAND'S HOUSING CRISIS

BY TIM RYAN

COVID-19 has changed the way people work and live for certain. Working more from home, less time spent commuting and more time to be spent with family are all new features of the lives of Irish people which are likely to stay with us into the future. With more and more people working from home, it is likely that there may well be a surplus of commercial units in our cities and towns. One way to help ease the housing crisis – which has not gone away – is to convert commercial units into residential homes which can then be sold or rented out.

Dublin Architect John Henry has converted a commercial unit close to Dublin's Royal Canal which was recently let by well-known IPAV estate agent Paul Tobin. Built back in 2004, it was originally intended as a retail outlet. However, the unit failed to sell, or let, and lay ideal for a number of years.

"I used to pass it every day on my way to work as I live locally and often thought what a waste and that it would make a very nice office for myself," says John. Then in 2016 he purchased the 65 sq m unit for €92,000 but held off progressing it due to financial reasons. In 2017 he was granted permission for a change-of-use to office. In the summer of 2018 the Government, following an English model, in an effort to solve the housing crisis, made it far easier than heretofore to convert commercial use to residential without the need to obtain planning permission. Popular in England with empty office blocks, as there are no minimum room sizes there, the Department of Housing here relaxed requirements for private balcony space, no parking and so on. They also relaxed the requirements to obtain a Disability Access Certificate (Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 526 of 2018)).

Exempt from planning

Regarding planning and the law being new John Henry wanted to be certain that his building was definitely exempt from planning. This could be done by making what is known as a Section 5 application to the local authority. The new Statutory Instrument, S.I.No.30 of 2018 of the Planning and Development (Amendment)(No.2) Regulations 2018, published by the

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is an amendment of Article 10 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 which relates to exempted developments. It refers to a change of use, and any related works, from Class 1, 2, 3 or 6 of Part 4 of Schedule 1 which are used as a shop, financial services office, offices, residential club/ guest house/ hostel to residential use of a structure that has been vacant for a period of two years, or more, immediately prior to commencement of the proposed development. It applies to developments carried out from 13 February 2018 until 31 December 2021.

The proposed intention of this Regulation is to increase the residential stock by allowing vacant parts of existing specified properties to be converted into residential units without an application for planning permission. However, there are a number of conditions and limitations applicable. "The basic rule is that it has to be vacant for at least two years," says John. "That's the starting point. And you must also comply with all the current apartment design guidelines (Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities by Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, March 2018) in relation to minimum sizes and so on. So, what it effectively does is bypass the planning. You would probably not get planning permission in a commercial unit like this normally although it does happen in locations where there are established ground level dwellings."

Section 5 is basically a formal way to confirm that the work is exempted from planning permission but is itself, effectively, planning permission. It is a far quicker way than a planning application process. It allows any person to make a written request to the planning authority for such a declaration of an exempted development by including all relevant information and the required fee of just €80. The authority must then issue a declaration within 4 weeks (or 3 weeks from the receipt of further information) giving the reasons for its decision. This is known as a 'Section 5 Declaration'. Once the planning authority makes a declaration, there is a four-week window in which to seek a review by An Bord Pleanála (in effect, an appeal). Alternatively, if the planning authority fails to make a decision within the set time period, the matter can be referred – also within four weeks – to the Board for a determination. A Section 5 also adds certainty and can later be used as part of the Deeds of the property.



The local authority planner asked John to make a few changes to his plans and, after that, his next step was to obtain a new Fire Safety Certificate which is required for all residential dwellings – as with all statutory licences, this was purely a paper exercise. In 2019 having served a Commencement Notice to the Building Control authority, he then proceeded via direct labour to convert the unit. This involved the building of internal walls, the installation of a kitchen and bathroom. The large external windows and structure could not be altered in any way so there is little or no external material alterations. Instead, John opaque glazed a number of them inside and built up new internal walls using steel studs and insulation in a similar process to an office fit-out. Internal hot water heat pump, electric storage heating, MVHR ventilation along with good air tightness were also installed. Ultimately while the unit is now a perfect residential apartment dwelling, it can be easily re-converted back into a commercial unit, such as an office. The total cost of the changes was c. €90,000 but John reckons the value of the unit has increased to around €270,000, the current price for a two-bed in the area. The going rate for an office of similar size is around €180,000.

Energy Rating

Improving the building energy rating was also high on John's agenda. Designed as A3 BER, he needs to obtain Planning Permission as well as approval from the management company to erect external electric solar panels and so for now he settled for a B1 BER. (He will apply for planning permission for this minor external material alteration in due course). External alterations are allowed, for example the replacement of a shopfront for a smaller window opening, that is in keeping aesthetically with the greater façade. It is worth noting that from 1/1/2019 that all new commercial builds need to reach the same A2 BER level as dwellings which is part of the Near Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) EU directive.

The Government has published helpful guidelines to explain the whole process (Bringing Back Homes Manual for the reuse of existing buildings, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government) <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/home-ownership/vacant-homes/bringing-back-homes-manual-reuse-existing-buildings>.

John sees great scope for such conversions in many forgotten rural towns and villages. "They are trying to re-energize old buildings that will probably never be used as commercial premises again," he says.

However, as an Architect he warns against probable abuse or short-cuts. "Unfortunately, we live in a world of opportunists and it suits them to hear the word 'exempt' and will apply this blindly to any regulation such as Fire Safety. They probably will get away with it for a number of years and when they come to the point of sale, they hit trouble. They claim innocence, saying they rang the council and they said it was ok. In my daily working life, I witness disasters such as shoe boxes with no windows, which can be complicated to regularise. Needless to say, I always recommend getting professional advice and doing your feasibility first even just to see if it is possible."

But provided property owners follow the regulations and guidelines, it works very well and in addition, there is scope for capital appreciation, as well as, in some small way helping to solve the housing crisis.



The exterior of the unit before conversion



The exterior after conversion



The interior before conversion



The interior after conversion

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BALANCING BUSINESS WITH CAUTION

OPEN

Agents nationwide breathed sighs of relief when they officially opened their doors to a more normal market since Monday, June 8. Most agents have now reopened their offices, although with skeleton staffing in some cases. The phased “return to work” followed the publication of a set of protocols, laudably agreed between IPAV, the SCSI and the Property Services Regulatory Authority. Those protocols provide practical rules by which the business can manage the transition.

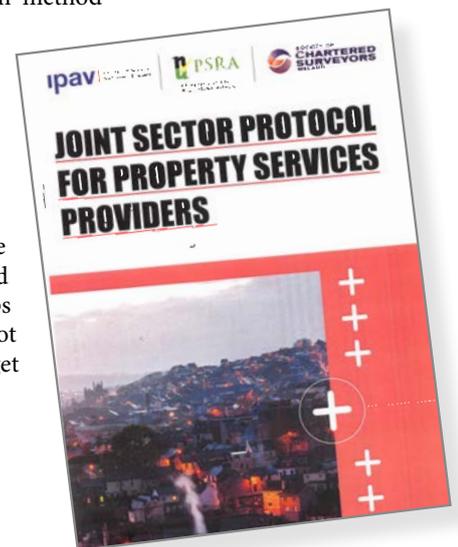
Agents can now inspect properties again, with a view to putting them on the market or valuing them, and can also show viewers around commercial and residential properties, and sites. Implementing these new rules is, of course, going to slow down the normal course of business, add bureaucracy and cost, and are more difficult to implement in the residential sector than in commercial. But so far, so good and they are a workable way forward.

The protocols revolve around reducing human interaction at every stage of the process. For example, viewers are required to make appointments in advance, and not at the office. If they come to the office, perspex screens should be considered at reception. The agent should “pre-qualify” viewers by sending them, ideally a video of the property, and as much information as possible, in order to filter the most seriously interested parties, and reduce the time spent answering questions at the viewing. The agent must confirm if the enquirer has travelled from abroad or has had symptoms of Covid-19 in the previous 14 days. If so, the agent cannot provide the service. Naturally, social distancing measures must be maintained, and a maximum of two people can inspect at the one time. Where possible, viewings should take place outside normal business hours, to reduce interaction with people in buildings. Touchpoints in buildings must be identified and cleaned and records maintained.

Whilst all of these measures are workable for commercial properties, they are more difficult to implement in the residential market, where estate agents are well used to having 20 people or more in a showhouse at one time and, indeed, longer queues for apartments to let.

The big loss in all of this is what is generally referred to as the “human element”. The best agents are those that excel at dealing with a range of people, and that’s a big part of what clients are paying for. A fundamental part of any negotiator’s skill is reading people and it is very hard to do this by email. The default communication method for those under 30 is email, and firms should insist that their staff make phone calls where meetings are not possible.

The crucial part of the business for most agents that revolves around live meetings with people and in developing relationships with clients. Let’s hope it’s not too long before agents can get back to that.



THE RETURN TO THE “NEW NORMAL” IN THE IRISH PLANNING SYSTEM

BY DEIRDRE NAGLE, MASON, HAYES & CURRAN SOLICITORS

Orders which came into effect on 29 March 2020, under Section 251A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), placing a freeze on certain planning procedures were lifted on 23 May 2020. The lifting of the orders is indicative of a relative return to normal, albeit with certain necessary restrictions and safety measures in place. The Government has also released further guidance as to how the planning system is to operate as it emerges from this unprecedented crisis.

Resumption of statutory timelines

Statutory timelines of planning applications/public consultation periods resumed on 24 May 2020.

- All new planning applications submitted on or after 24 May 2020 will apply the standard statutory timelines.
- If a planning application was submitted during the period that the order was in force – 29 March 2020 to 23 May 2020 inclusive, the relevant statutory timeline began on 24 May 2020.
- The statutory timelines for planning applications submitted prior to the order (before 29 March 2020) will depend on the number of days of the time period that remained on the coming into effect of order. The remaining time period of the statutory timeline began to run from 24 May 2020.

Duration of planning permission

The order operates to extend the life span of existing planning permissions by the period of duration of the order (56 days), where the default lifespan of 5 years under Section 40 of the Planning and Development Act has been applied. Where a different duration is specified in the permission, no extension to the life of the planning permission is granted.

Timelines for judicial review

The period of time for making an application for leave to seek judicial review of a planning decision has been extended by the applicable period of the duration of the order (56 days).

Planning authorities / An Bord Pleanála

An Bord Pleanála and all 31 planning authorities reopened their planning public counters from Monday 25 May 2020. Supplementary measures to support planning processes have been put in place, including the requirement that planning authorities upload all planning application documents onto their internet websites within 5 working days of receipt, subject to exceptional circumstances.

Site visits and inspections

Site visits for planning assessment purposes may now proceed. Safety procedures and protocols put in place by the local authorities and An Bord Pleanála may include the requirement of a prior appointment where the entering of dwellings is strictly necessary for the assessment of a planning proposal.

Licensing for rescheduling events

Event licence applications in respect of events scheduled to take place in the period up to the end of August will not be considered. In the case where a public consultation on a proposed event is still ongoing or where the public consultation has concluded but no decision has been made, the event promotor can notify the planning authority that the proposed event is to be rescheduled. The pre-planning consultation meeting held in respect of the original proposed event still stands, however the planning authority may request further information or a further consultation meeting in respect of the rescheduled event.

Relaxation of planning laws

Planning authorities have been requested to apply discretion in the enforcement of the construction working hours permitted in planning conditions. This is aimed to assist in the splitting of shifts in order to separate trades and activities to achieve the necessary physical distancing and to maintain productivity in the industry. This may be applied for all or some of the period up to 9 November 2020.

Court Hearings

Hearings have resumed with certain precautionary measures in place such as social distancing, staggered Court sittings and reduced numbers attending. The Court services have announced that they envisage that these restrictions will remain in place for the remainder of the legal year.

An Bord Pleanála is currently examining how it can facilitate the re-scheduling and resumption of oral hearings while taking into the account the requirements for social distancing. The scope to conduct some smaller oral hearings by video conference is also being explored. The Board has been holding pre-application meetings by video link.

Conclusion

The order effectively put a freeze in place on certain decisions and public participation windows during the period of the crisis. Planning applications were still accepted during the period of the order, however the relevant statutory timelines did not run until after the order was lifted on 24 May 2020. The order did not prevent pending applications being assessed and a decision being determined, provided the statutory public consultation period had closed prior to the making of the emergency order. The prospect of an appeal still remained however until after the emergency period ended.

The order did however allow additional time, for anyone who had planning permissions expiring or were exposed to planning enforcement action, to apply for an extension or retention of planning permission.

COURTESY, CONSIDERATION & COMMITMENT – THE THREE PILLARS FOR A SOUTH DUBLIN AGENT

BY TIM RYAN

Clare Connolly
Estate Agent



Like many estate agents inside and outside the capital, Dublin-based estate agent Clare Connolly has found her office is extremely busy since the opening up of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. An agent, who specialises to a large extent in high-end lettings, she recently had over 400 email replies for one property. “There’s a pent-up demand for houses for sale and for

letting,” she says. “There is also a huge amount of movement in the lettings market for a variety of different reasons, with tenants moving home who can work remotely and no longer require accommodation in Dublin, some have purchased their own properties, two actually have underlying respiratory conditions and had to move back to the UK and US in the middle of March.”

Now based on Dundrum’s Main Street, she runs a thriving business which she is passionate about and where she is planning further expansion this year. Clare is also IPAV’s representative to Dublin Chamber of Commerce where she highlights the concerns and views of members.

Clare Connolly grew up in Churchtown in Dublin 14 and for 23 years worked in a variety of different roles in the pharmaceutical industry, ending up a project manager with a Japanese company called Takeda Ireland which has plants in Bray Business Park and City West. “It’s an industry that provides great stability with excellent remuneration but after so many years I began to ask myself if I wanted to stay in the industry for the rest of my life,” Clare recalls. “So, in 2007 I decided to opt for a career break.”

Career break

After 23 years in a very regimented, corporate world, Clare found the career break a real breath of fresh air. She always had an interest in property and at that time decided to buy a few properties overseas including the UK, Poland, Sofia in Bulgaria and the United States. “As we know, the market went pear-shaped in 2008 but now I am so glad I have them because the rents are excellent and they provide a nice cashflow. It’s also nice to know there is a little nest egg there for the future.”

During her career break, Clare did a number of different jobs including viewings for Dundrum agent Vincent Finnegan. She also worked for a friend whose family owned 60 properties in and around Dublin, all of which were pre-63 and required constant attention. This gave her a very good grounding in the property lettings industry. In 2010 Clare began to feel the pinch financially and went to the House of Fraser which had opened in Dundrum and secured a four-day week concession-manager role. She also ran the seminars for ‘Horizon Speakers &



Ceannabhan Cottage in Cliften

Seminars’ who brought over a number of motivation speakers to Ireland to try and help people cope throughout the recession. “I knew I wanted to work with people but I was always drawn back to property,” she says.

In 2012 she set up Dundrum Lettings but dabbled in it part-time at first. A customer who came into House of Fraser gave Clare her very first property to let in Ballinteer and it went from there. She continued to work part-time in a health care company while growing the lettings business at the same time.

At this time Clare undertook the IPAV Certificate course at TU Dublin, Tallaght and qualified in 2014 when she took out, first a lettings’ licence and finally a full auctioneer’s licence. In fact, Clare got a Distinction in her exams for ‘Property Promotion’, something which she is still proud of and highlights to this day. “IPAV has served me very well. Pat Davitt has done so much for Auctioneers in Ireland. He has really pushed us out there and given us a voice.”

Today Clare and her staff of three manage 100 properties, largely at the high-end of the market mainly in south Dublin. “I love this segment of the market because the properties are stunningly beautiful and I am so grateful for the database that I have built up,” she says. The rents for these magnificent properties range from approximately €2,500 per month to €7,000 per week. In fact, a new house coming onto her books which comprises 9,500 sq ft., has its own gym, mini-golf course and swimming pool, comes with an asking price of €10,000 per week! Clients come from many countries including Ireland and clearly money is not a concern but rather the whole quality of the product that is provided.

Staging and Styling

“I also love the idea of staging and styling and this is a critical part of the sales process,” she says. “It adds so much to the overall value of the property. Virtual staging is now becoming more established in Ireland. It is very much part of the sales process in the US and Middle East, and is only a matter of time before it will become the norm over here. Apart from the office staff, Clare has a whole team she can call on including three sets of cleaners, plumbers, electricians, painters, carpenters, roofers, all of whom she can call upon at any time. Clients at that end of the market – notably the Americans – can be quite fussy and Clare and her team have to be on the alert at all times, 24/7.

While she does some short-lets – less than 14 nights, or 90 days in a full year - most of her business is in regular tenancies which are registered with the RTB. For Clare, it’s all about finding a niche market in the business and working at it. However, recently she has got into sales and this end of the business is growing, too. On her books at the moment is a beautiful property, Ceannabhan Cottage in Connemara in Clifden, a perfect family home nestled in a most unique magical setting on a breath-taking site overlooking Mannin Bay in Connemara. It has 12 acres of land and is guiding €485,000. An interesting house coming up on Clare’s book shortly will be the home of a former famous writer and critic in Rathgar which is expected to attract a lot of interest.

Looking to the future Clare believes the whole life of the estate agent will change and go largely online. Covid-19 has already brought the date forward. Clare was quick to embrace it and during the lockdown managed to let around a dozen properties

which suddenly came on the market through people moving back home, all without the tenants ever physically visiting them. “It could take another five years, but I can see all aspects of lettings and sales moving online. During lockdown we worked remotely and used virtual viewings, e-signing of documentation, lockbox for key collection and so on. There was no handling whatsoever.”

CIPS

Clare is also a member of the Certified International Property Specialists (CIPS), a group of IPAV property specialists, based throughout Ireland, who are connected with a Global Network of CIPS members, all with one goal in mind, to provide a professional international service to their clients. “Our tagline is ‘Irish Agents, Global Reach’. We have our website in place but are currently elaborating on the content and are working on the social media platforms. We are making good progress,” says Clare.

As the business grows, Clare needs to hire another negotiator and that’s her plan for the autumn. “It’s so exciting, I really love what I do,” says a clearly delighted Clare who is one of those lucky people who has managed to turn her hobby into her day job. And it’s all about customer service with her three guiding principles and pillar words of “Courtesy, Consideration and Commitment”.

Outside of her work, Clare has a passion for travel and hiking. Proudly displayed on her wall is her certificate for having climbed Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, some years back. Whenever restrictions are fully lifted, these are hobbies she intends to take up again.



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THREE NEW MINISTERS IN THE CUSTOM HOUSE AND AGRICULTURE HOUSE



Housing

There are three new Ministers – one senior and two junior – in the Custom House. Fianna Fail's Darragh O'Brien is the senior minister while Fine Gael's Peter Burke and the Green Party's Malcolm Noonan are both junior ministers.

Housing



Darragh O'Brien (FF, Fingal)

Darragh O'Brien is the new Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage. A native of Malahide, Co. Dublin he was Fianna Fáil spokesman on housing, planning and local government in the last Dáil. First elected to the Dáil in 2007, he lost out in the 2011 decimation of the party in the economic recession. He became one of 51 party TDs to be defeated at the hands of angry voters. He successfully ran for the Seanad that year on the Labour panel and became Seanad leader, keeping a place in the Oireachtas. But his Dáil defeat had a salutary effect, resulting in him building up a strong constituency base with his brother as a local councillor

He was elected to Fingal County Council in June 2004 to represent Portmarnock, Malahide and Kinsealy Ward. Before entering politics he worked in the financial services sector for 15 years as an area manager with Life Assurance Company. Married with a young family, he is a member of Malahide Cricket Club, St. Sylvester's GAA Club and Malahide United.



Peter Burke (FG, Longford–Westmeath)

Peter Burke is the new Junior Minister at the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage with responsibility for Local Government and Planning. A native of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, he was first elected at the 2016 general election and has served as a member of the Committee of Public Accounts and the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and Taoiseach.

He was a member of Westmeath County Council 2009 - 2016. A chartered accountant by profession, he worked with Stephens Cooke & Co., Chartered Accountants in Mullingar for 10 years. He is married with one child.



Malcolm Noonan (GP, Carlow-Kilkenny)

Malcolm Noonan is the new Junior Minister at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with responsibility for Heritage and Electoral Reform. He unsuccessfully contested the Carlow-Kilkenny by-election in 2015 and the general election in 2016. He was a member of Kilkenny City and Council since 2004 until his election to the Dáil and served as Mayor in 2009. He is a former member of the EU Committee of the Regions.

He contested the leadership of the Green Party in 2011. He previously spent 20 years as a community and environmental activist with Friends of the Earth. He is a former project worker with a Kilkenny-based suicide prevention project and is a keen musician and artist.

Agriculture

There are also three new Ministers – one senior and two junior – in Agriculture House. Fianna Fail's Dara Calleary is the senior minister while Fine Gael's Martin Heydon and the Green Party's Senator Pippa Hackett are both junior ministers.

Agriculture



Dara Calleary (FF, Mayo)

Dara Calleary was appointed Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine on 15 July 2020 following the removal from office of Brian Cowen by the Taoiseach following controversy over a drink-driving incident in 2016. He served briefly as Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for the Gaeltacht and Sport from 27 June to 15 July 2020. He is deputy leader of Fianna Fáil. Previously he served as the Fianna Fáil Spokesman on Public Expenditure and Reform.

First elected to the Dáil in 2007, he is a son of Sean Calleary TD for East Mayo 1973 – 92 and Minister of State and a grandson of Phelim Calleary, TD for North Mayo 1952 – 69.



Pippa Hackett (GP, Laois - Offaly)

Senator Pippa Hackett is the new Super Junior Minister at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine who will attend Cabinet. She has responsibility for Land Use and Biodiversity. She is just the third senator since Independence to be appointed a minister from the Seanad.

She was first elected to the Seanad as a Green Party Senator in a by-election in November 2019 caused by the election of Senator Grace O'Sullivan to the European Parliament. She unsuccessfully contested the February 2020 general election in Laois-Offaly. She is a former member of Offaly County Council and a former college lecturer. Originally from Mayo, now living near Geashill, Co Offaly, she and her husband have a mixed organic farm as well as breeding thoroughbred horses.



Martin Heydon (FG, South Kildare)

Martin Heydon is the new Junior Minister at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with responsibility for Research & Development, Farm Safety and New Market Development. He was previously Chairman of the Fine Gael Parliamentary Party and was a member of Joint Committee on Petitions. He served as Chair of Fine Gael's Internal Committee on Agriculture & Rural Affairs between 2011 and 2016.

First elected in the 2011 general election, he was a member of Kildare County Council for Athy electoral area from 2009 to 2011 and Fine Gael Whip on the Council. A practising farmer, he was educated at Kildalton Agricultural College.



LAND - TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY?

BY MICHAEL BRADY

Land is an obsession in Ireland, this is perfectly characterised by the Bull McCabe in John B. Keane's play 'The Field'.

The Bull's sole focus in life was buying the field he rented from the widow woman, every single day was spent in preparation for the auction and buying the land. Preparation was not simply having the cash to purchase the land, it also involved making sure the neighbours knew their place i.e. it was the Bull's land to buy and not to interfere by bidding at the auction and making it more expensive on him. This is what the Bull called 'The Law of the Land' a much more important law than the common law, in the Bull's eyes!

Neighbours have been known to disagree and not to talk to each other for generations over sour land deals. Farm families have been denied proper standards of living, local authorities and banks have felt the wrath of defiant land-owners when they try and take land from Irish owners. Days, weeks and months have been spent in court houses up and down the country resolving bitter land disputes.

Why have we such an obsession with land?

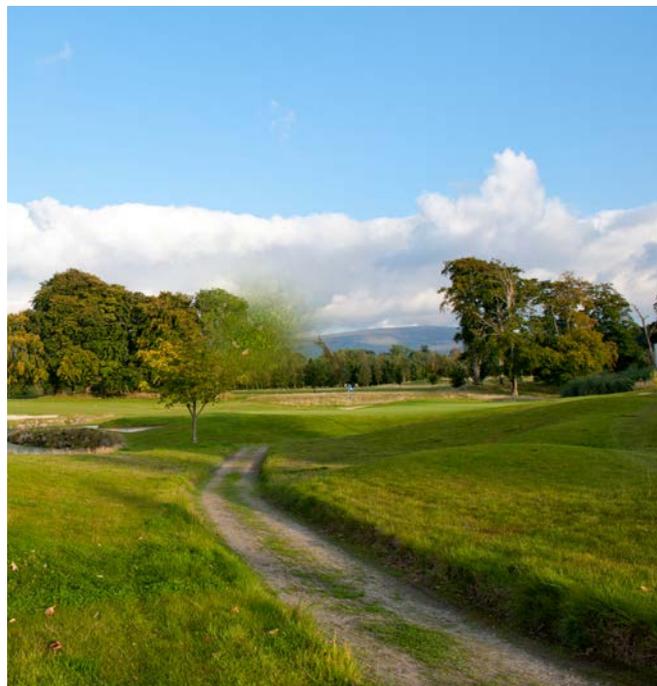
Our history, including over 800 years of British rule is often cited as the root cause but, is this really relevant in today's world of well educated, tech-savvy farmers? What is it that stirs the emotions of Irish farmers to the extent that all common sense is ignored in pursuit of owning that parcel of land, is it all worth it?

Land is only traded every 400 years in Ireland, so what triggers the sale of land?

Executor Sale

The first and most common reason to sell land is the 'executor sale', this is where the land owner has died and the land must be sold to distribute the proceeds of the estate to all the beneficiaries. Such sales are often anticipated well in advance of the actual sale by neighbours and relations. First, the bachelor farmer ceases farming, then he leases out his land and finally when he passes on, it is put up for public auction. The contents of a will, or even the lack of a will, make for interesting conversation in such cases when locals speculate as to who inherited the land and whether they will retain it, or sell it.

The second most common reason for selling land nowadays is marriage breakdown. It is just over 20 years since the divorce



referendum was passed in Ireland and it has catapulted into one of the main reasons for land sale. You can often tell such sales from the newspaper adverts as there are usually two agents appointed to sell the land.

Voluntary sales of land by farmers are common when an outside farm is sold to buy a farm nearer home. Since the 1997-2007 economic boom the tightening of lending rules by the main banks has made bridging finance almost impossible to obtain and this is a significant obstacle in the sale of land today. Farmers simply do not like to sell land before they buy it, as there are Capital Gains Tax (CGT) implications and also farmers do not want to show their hand, or financial strength before purchasing a neighbouring farm.

The final reason for land sale in Ireland is compulsory or forced sales. Again, during the economic boom Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO's) were common where local authorities and semi-state bodies purchased land for roads, gas, water, sewerage schemes etc. There are many differing attitudes to CPO's, some land-owners are glad to receive the compensation cheque but others resist to the death offering up their sacred land. The emotive area of bank repossessions has reared its ugly head in recent times due to the economic recession. Forced repossessions of property by banks be it a private dwelling house, investment property, businesses or land are highly charged emotive events. We have not seen too many land repossessions to date in Ireland but they do exist.

Table1: The Return on Investment (RoI) of buying one acre of land for €10,000

Year	Dairy	Cattle Rearing	Cattle Other	Sheep	Tillage	Leasing Out
*Farm Income 2011-2018 €/acre	€761	€-94	€-43	€-59	€155	€200
Return on Investment (RoI) %	7.6%	-0.9%	-0.4%	-0.6%	1.5%	2%

*Source: Teagasc National Farm Survey Family Farm Income (Net profit) less direct payments

So, who buys the land offered for sale in Ireland today?

Farmers of course buy the majority of land sold in the country today but the question is how they buy it when the profitability and scale of most farm businesses does not generate enough profit to do so.

Table 1 shows the Return on Investment (RoI) of paying €10,000 per acre, including all costs for land. Clearly the beef and sheep farm enterprises are a non-runner as they lose money per acre when direct payments are excluded. Leasing out the land at €200/acre generates a RoI of 2%. However even the much-vaulted dairy farm enterprise only generates an annual return on investment of 7-8% when profit per acre generated by the average dairy farmer in the Teagasc National Farm Survey is used to calculate the RoI.

A good rule of thumb for a desirable return on any investment would be cost of borrowing plus a margin of say 10%. At present, farmers are borrowing money around 3.5% interest therefore 13% to 15% would be a reasonable RoI to expect for the risk involved. If the dairy farmer in the example above wanted a RoI of 15% the value of the land would be €5,073 per acre! Land either farmed or leased out in this country simply does not match up from a RoI point of view.



This begs the question who and why do people still buy land in Ireland?

Return on Investment

The shortage of supply is the main reason why Irish land continues to sell well above its RoI value. Approximately 75,000 acres are offered for sale each year, this would be the size of a large farm in Brazil or Australia. Supply and demand of land for sale is probably the only place where economic theory actually applies in the Irish land market.

Dairy farmers and equine farmers are the base of the land market. The top performing farmers in these enterprises generate large profits which they reinvest into additional land, therefore they are always strong buyers in the land market.

Farmers who have sold land for development or CPO are also strong buyers in the land market. Even though most of the Celtic tiger money from development land sales and CPO's is long spent or is never going to be spent, it is still a factor in demand. Often such farmers resell purchased land to purchase a farm that better suits their farming programme, or is nearer the home farm.

When non-farming business people make money, they look for opportunities to invest surplus cash, land often fits the need. Land sales recorded in the outskirts of Dublin and Cork in recent years suggest the non-farming land speculator has returned to the market. The shortage of houses in the country has local authorities under pressure to rezone land to kickstart building in residential areas with good services so that we can provide houses for our youth in the years ahead.

The Capital Acquisition Tax (CAT) benefits of transferring land instead of cash from one generation to the next is also boosting the land market. This brings non-farmer money into land and is often an unpredictable variable in a land sale.

Finally, the hobby farmer is always a customer for small to medium size holdings, especially on the outskirts of cities and large towns. Again, this is an unpredictable but welcome variable in the land market.

When one strips away the financial justification for buying land in Ireland, the facts of the matter are that tradition and social status are big drivers in the motivation to buy land. Success as a farmer is measured by how much land you have purchased in your lifetime and success as a non-farmer is often judged by the land holding you have acquired to be your home.

As the saying goes in respect of Irish land 'God isn't making any more of it' and 'you don't have to paint it to maintain it.

• Michael Brady is an Agricultural Consultant and managing director at Brady Group: Agricultural Consultants & Land Agents. The Lodge, Lee Road, Cork. Tel: 021- 45 45 120 email: mike@bradygroup.ie



ROSCOMMON ESTATE AGENT CELEBRATES 20 YEARS WITH THE SHERRY FITZ FRANCHISE

BY TIM RYAN

Most people who go to Roscommon Town for employment, end up retiring there such is the town's attraction, says local estate agent and IPAV member P. Burke who, on 9 June, celebrated 20 years as a Sherry FitzGerald franchisee. Unlike many inland, rural towns today, there is a real buzz about the town which is normally bustling with daily activity.

The town owes its name to Ros Comáin, or St Coman's Wood, a saint who built a monastery there in the 5th century. Nor has the town been decimated like so many others by years of appalling planning decisions which moved the centre of retail activity outside the town altogether. Rather, Roscommon has all its shopping within walking distance of the main square and significantly, there are no parking charges.

The population of circa 5,500 is mainly employed in the public service with a number of offices centred around the town including the County Council offices, the Department of Agriculture, the Garda Barracks and the Land Registry as well as the large public hospital for the county and a number of nursing homes plus two hotels. In addition, there are a number of SMEs which employ 40 – 50 people each, which together contribute to a thriving and vibrant community.

"It is partly a commuter town and has a very low crime rate with very good shopping facilities," says P. Burke. "So, it's a very nice town to live in."

Padraig Burke, or simply 'P' as he is known locally, was born in Ardsallagh, on the outskirts of the town, directly across the road from where he now lives with his wife Bernie, close to the Hospital and the GAA's Hyde Park. Having been educated locally, P studied at Mellows Agricultural College, before joining the forestry service and later the Farm Development Service of the Department of Agriculture. Subsequently, he worked as a meat inspector with the Department, first at the Hanleys in Rooskey and then at the Kepac Plant in Athleague.

An estate agent

However, he always harboured an ambition to be an estate agent and the opportunity came when he took a year's career break from the Department.

"It was always something I wanted to do," says P. "I always had it in my head that I wanted to be an auctioneer. When I got married and my wife was fairly well established in the boutique



(l – r): Nicola Beirne, P Burke, Bernie Burke and David Flynn

business, we lived over the shop on the Square. In 1996, I took the chance and took a career break. I also owned a property on Lanesboro Street and I opened the office there. I started with basically nothing."

A tied insurance agency with Hibernian provided a start and the business grew from there. The business went well and a few years later decided to opt for a franchise and chose Sherry FitzGerald. "Philip Sherry came down and met me. He suggested I move to a better location. As it happened, I already had bought the current office building on Goff Street and I moved there on the 9th of June 2000. Brian Cowen, then Minister for Foreign Affairs officially opened the office."

P. had planned to mark the 20th anniversary with a small celebratory event but this had to be postponed due to COVID-19. It is now planned to hold it at a later date.

In a comment marking the anniversary, Des O'Malley, Head of Sherry FitzGerald Countrywide said: "P. Burke has become a very good personal friend of mine over the last 20 years and I have always admired his ability to leverage his many contacts not only in Roscommon but throughout the country. He is always thinking about the next deal for his many loyal clients and has a very shrewd business head."

From the start, the office covered all aspects of property including sales, lettings, management and valuation. "We were here through the boom and through the bang, too," says P. Unfortunately, like most other estate agents, he had to make some staff redundant and generally tighten up the operation to survive the recession, which he did successfully. "We just started working at it and eventually worked our way out of it. But it was

not easy."

Tax incentives

Prior to the recession, County Roscommon, particularly the northern part of the county, had benefitted from the various tax incentives and a large number of houses were built. "Some of them probably should not have been built but it was all 'Go, Go, Go' at the time. Many investors bought them with the intention of letting them out which never happened. Developers built estates which never sold, so the whole thing ground to a halt, you might say. We just had to gather up the pieces and start again." Prices for three-bed semis went as low as €60,000 but have since recovered to €140,000. Today, P. Burke and staff members, David Flynn, Nicola Gavin and, more recently, his wife Bernie manage many of these houses for investors along with two large retail parks which are now largely tenanted.

In fact, P. says the property industry in Roscommon was starting to rally just prior to COVID-19, the effects of which have yet to be seen. Prior to the virus, new A-rated houses in the county were fetching prices of up to €180,000. In Roscommon Town itself there has been very little building as it is still cheaper to buy a house than to build one. Accordingly, there is good demand for any houses that come up for sale. "I know builders that are ready to go but they will not build if they see a scenario where they will not make any profit," says P. "In fact, we were just getting to that stage where they could build again pre-COVID."

The letting market is also vibrant with three and four-bed houses attracting rents of up to €800 per month. There are less than 100 apartments in Roscommon Town with two-beds attracting rents of c. €600 per month.

P. would like to see a few hundred jobs created for the IDA Industrial Park on the outskirts of the town. "Often you hear complaints that the skilled staff might not be there. But that is ridiculous as if you have a factory, the staff will come regardless. Something like that would give us a bit of an edge."

P. is concerned at the fallout from COVID-19 and the effect it could have on retail shops. "A huge amount of people have now got used to buying online but I still think many would like to come out and shop again. Too much use of computers is not good for the mental health of people either." However, he is concerned that some pubs and restaurants will not re-open again as social distancing will make it non-viable.

P. is far more confident about the economy post-COVID-19 than post the 2007 – 11 recession. "At least this time we did not have the troika flying into town telling us to sell this or that. This time we have access to money at very good rates. And we also have the EU pumping in money. So hopefully we won't have a surge of the virus again."

IPAV membership

IPAV membership has also played a part in helping P. develop his business. "IPAV is a very good organisation. I've known the CEO Pat Davitt since I joined about 20 years ago and it has been tremendous the way he has developed the institute. We are now in the era of regulation and estate agents have their own regulator."

The Blue Book for valuation has been particularly significant, says P. and it has helped him to develop that side of the business. "I do commercial and residential valuations and we are on some of the bank panels. I did the TEGoVA course when it was first introduced and it was of immense benefit. Doing valuations keeps you up to speed as to what is happening in the market out there. It gives you a very good indicator."



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The back-up provided by the Sherry FitzGerald franchise is also critical, he says, to providing a good service. “We have been loyal to them and they have been loyal to us over the last 20 years and I am delighted to be working with them. It’s great to have a back-up team to talk to so you don’t feel you are on your own.”

Outside of the office, P. has one major interest and that is Fianna Fáil. “Since I was about 19 years of age I’ve been involved with politics. I’ve served in many capacities including director of organization, director of elections and currently I am chairman of the Roscommon Comhairle Dáil Ceanntair. If you ask me what’s my pastime, then that’s most of it.” But P. has also been involved in the Roscommon Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, the Board of the Credit Union and the County Development Board. “I don’t play golf, I don’t play tennis, in fact I don’t play anything but I have been involved in many organizations. But I do enjoy a few pints at the weekend and I go out and have a bit of craic. But basically, I love my work and I am lucky to have a very good team.”

Highlake House

One of P. Burke’s high-profile sales over the past two years was Highlake House, in Ballynaheglish about 15kms from Roscommon Town. Highlake is a detached seven-bay, two storey, former Franciscan Monastery built c 1857. It has its own church and a crenelated three-stage tower at rear elevation. For many years the monks ran a nearby school and played an important role in the small community of Ballymacurley.

Highlake House has an interesting history. In 1800 Matthew Farmer, his wife, two sons and four daughters had to flee when

their house was burned by Orangemen. (His niece was Governess at the household of the Catholic Lord De Freyne.) He granted her uncle Matthew 40 acres of land. In 1836 one son, Hugh became a Franciscan brother and was elected Superior of Mountbellew in 1840.

Matthew Farmer died in 1846 and left his farm to his other son Daniel with the provision that, if Daniel had no children, it would fall to Hugh for the founding of a Franciscan monastery. In 1854 Daniel Farmer died childless and willed the farm and £150 to Hugh (Brother Benedict) who took possession and made an assignment of the farm and all of its belongings to the Third Order of St Francis. In 1855, Brother Benedict (Hugh) sent a number of Franciscan Brothers to care for the place and teach a free school in the small homestead.

After Bishop Brown of Elphin had assessed their work, he asked them to build a monastery that became Highlake Monastery. The foundation stone was laid on June 20, 1857 and Highlake Monastery continued until the remaining Brothers sold out in 1971 and moved back to Mountbellew.

The property then passed through a number of private owners, including a retired Dutch couple who spent many years carefully restoring its many features. Highlake House currently sits on 20 acres and enjoys huge scenic beauty and rural quiet. The new owner, Leitrim-born Ivan Doherty, who recently returned from Washington DC, has furnished Highlake House with a wide selection of antiques from around the world, including an original 1800s Putnam & Co pump organ from Staunton, Virginia (Birthplace of Woodrow Wilson, 28th US President). The garage also now boasts a 1927 Ford Model T.



01: Highlake House
 02: The Church at Highlake House
 03: The entrance hall to Highlake House
 04: The dining-room at Highlake House

MAYNOOTH IPAV MEMBER SELLS FIRST IRISH RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE IN ONLINE AUCTION

Well known Maynooth auctioneer and former IPAV President Eamon O’Flaherty became the first agent to sell an Irish site via online paperless disposal on Tuesday, May 19. The property market has not suffered much from COVID-19 if the new type of lockdown-based bidding war witnessed at this auction is anything to go by.

The small 0.3-acre site in Maynooth with permission for two semi-detached four-bedroom houses went for 42pc above the reserve price in a hard-fought bidding war between 10 prospective buyers, from as far as Donegal and Wexford all safely ensconced in lockdown.

The property was sold and contracts signed in roughly an hour, representing what Irish Independent Property Editor Mark Keenan described as “the fastest disposal of a site from bidding to signing of contracts ever in Ireland”.

The auction by Sherry FitzGerald Brady O’Flaherty was conducted through the new Offr all-in one auction and sale closing system launched late last year. While online auctions have recently become commonplace, contracts always had to be signed in person. Indeed, this was the third successful online auction carried out by the Maynooth firm during the lockdown period.

Plenty of homes have been sold through Offr since its launch last year, but the Maynooth property was the first development site to be Offr-ed and the first time that developers have bid together on it in a group.

Old Greenfield

The site at the junction of Old Greenfield and Straffan Road is 300m from Maynooth Railway Station and within walking distance of the town’s university. A total of sixteen parties registered to bid remotely, each paying a deposit of €20,000 for access to the bidding button on their devices at home.

The site was guided at €150,000 and 10 of the registered parties fought it out from noon when bidding kicked off at the guideline.

Registered bids turned green at €190,000 to signify the reserve had been reached. Bids continued to fly in with many of the anonymous parties (each denoted only by an identity number) waiting until late in the process to swoop in.

After a rapid-fire session of 25 remotely-placed bids in €5,000 increments, the property sold at 1pm to bidder number 886 for €270,000 in what was that party’s second bid of the session. The successful buyer had waited until the property reached €250,000 before placing their maiden and only other offer.

At this point, the Offr technology applied both sets of pre-supplied signatures automatically to contracts and from that point the sale became legally binding. At 42pc above the reserve,

the final price paid and the number of bidders was reminiscent of Celtic Tiger-era auction room sessions when properties regularly exceeded guideline prices by 20pc and more.

It also contradicts notions that most developers and builders are in serious trouble due to COVID-19. The buyer is believed to be a local developer.

Maynooth is notoriously tight for housing supply. It’s a university town and has rail access to Dublin. Auctioneer Eamon O’Flaherty said: “It demonstrates the appetite currently for small- to medium-sized in-fill sites, even during these extraordinary times. The Offr platform embraces cutting-edge technology and offers an efficient and transparent experience for all involved. Indeed, the auctioneers, solicitors, buyers and sellers were able to participate from the comfort of their own homes due to the current Covid-19 restrictions. I expect we’ll see more of these sales going forward.”

Developed in Ireland by ex-Allsop Space and BidX1 executive Robert Hoban and former REA network chief Philip Farrell, Offr is set to launch next month in the UK and Australia.

Mr Farrell added: “Over 50 homes have sold on Offr since we launched in September but this was the first site to sell using the technology package. The response was fantastic and what can I say other than we’re very happy indeed.”



Eamon O’Flaherty



The Old Greenfield site



THE ATTRACTION OF A PRIVATE ISLAND TO ESCAPE FROM NUCLEAR WAR - AND COVID-19!

BY TOMMY BARKER, PROPERTY EDITOR, IRISH EXAMINER

History, as we all know, has a habit of repeating itself – and during the current Coronavirus pandemic we are looking back at previous plagues and pandemics for comparables, and lessons we might be wise to learn from. We're seeing repeats of previous patterns, too, in the movement of people, and impacts on property.

A small, but salutary example is the purchase in July of 2020 of an entire, privately-owned island in West Cork's Roaringwater Bay, for the princely sum of €5.5 million, about €1.25m under its launch price back in 2018 of €6.75m. Interestingly, it appears that the ultra-high-net-worth-individual (UHNWI) bought it as a safe sanctuary for troubling times, having instructed a London-based agent to source him an international island sanctuary in December 2019 as the Coronavirus embedded itself in China.

Remote Negotiations

Quite remarkably, all of the negotiations for this safe and self-contained bolthole, done at an international level involving at least four agents, were conducted during a lockdown period. It prompted one of the London-based agents to say the deal "highlights a trend that is becoming more apparent as the impact of Covid-19 is felt and people look to purchase property, or land, in remote locations."

Horse Island, off Schull, fitted this client's bill, and the low-profile, European-based purchaser got it after outbidding at least one other prospective buyer, who was understood to have been from Asia, bidding without ever getting the chance to set foot on the scenic 157-acre isle, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and quarantining requirements.

In acquiring Horse Island, knowingly or unknowingly, he was repeating a pattern seen in West Cork, and up the Irish west coast, back half a century ago when a nuclear threat hung over the planet, after Cold War Years, and as the US squared up to Russia over things like Cuba and the Bay of Pigs – an ironic, if coincidental island link, spanning the Atlantic.

Back in the 1960, a number of trophy Irish estates (and, from the 1970s, Irish islands) were snapped up by mainland Europeans who felt that prevailing westerly winds coming over the Atlantic meant Ireland would escape the dust from nuclear mushroom clouds. Even the Swiss Government reportedly got in on the act, buying two period homes on the Lissard Estate near West Cork's Skibbereen.

In 1967, Beatle John Lennon bought a 21-acre island, Dorinish, in Mayo's Clew Bay, only sold on in 1984 after his murder, by his widow Yoko Ono: it made the backbone of a novel by Irish writer Kevin Barry in his book *Beatlebone*.

Religious cults such as the Screemers also famously had an island off the west coast of Ireland. The celebrated 1970s author and Maltese physician and philosopher Edward De Bono, who penned ground-breaking works on Lateral Thinking owned an Irish island, West Skeam, in Roaringwater Bay up until the early 2000s. West Skeam has since resold several times, at €1m+sums.

Lotto Plus

Now, the purchase of islands and trophy properties and status signifiers is nothing new. It's a trophy in our own National Lottery ads, for example, where the humble (but nattily well-dressed) estate agent rows out to a sun-kissed, white sand and palm-blessed island to plant his 'For Sale' sign in the coral sands. Now, the world-wide web does the selling, aided and abetted by helicopter tours, private yachts or fast RIBs.

Buyers include the egotistical: here, the roll-call is long and illustrious, and historically in an Irish context we're thinking of you, Charlie Haughey and your Blasket Island Inishvickillane off the Kerry coast, bought in 1974 for £25,000.

We're thinking 'survivalists,' and the reclusives: here's looking at you, Michael Jackson, who did the helicopter Irish coast tour in the 2000s, when holed up from international media with his children in Kinsale, as his vast fortunes dwindled.

And, we're especially looking to the super-wealthy such as Horse Island's new owner, the mysterious ultra-high-net-worth individual (UHNWIs are those with a net worth in excess of \$30 million, comprising 0.003% of the world's population.)

Among the super-wealthy owners of islands are Oracle founder Larry Ellison, who paid \$300m for the lion's share of a Hawaiian island, getting 90,000 acres for his investment at Lanai. But he could well afford it: his net worth is put at up to \$75billion.

Others who had an attraction to island ownership include the later actor Marlon Brando, and younger actors such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Johnny Depp, along with Nicholas Cage and Eddie Murphy, plus singers Celine Dion, Faith Hill, Ricky Martin, and Jay-Z with Beyonce.

Virgin founder Richard Branson famously has his own island, Necker, which he makes available to the likes of Barack and Michelle Obama, or otherwise rents it out to the likes of you, or me, for \$70,000 a night.

Money Pits

Not quite in the same rent league was Mayo's 67-acre Inishturkbeg Island in Clew Bay, developed as a world-class holiday destination available at €9,000 a night by Egyptian-Irish

marketing guru Nadim Sadek, who impressed when he appeared on Irish TV in the Secret Millionaire series.

He reportedly ploughed €9m into it and associated businesses using the island as a brand (it could have been more!) between 2003 and 2013, before selling in straitened times for €3-4 million. Coincidentally, one of the products the genial Nadim Sadek developed with the Inishturkbeg logo was a single malt whiskey, a good few years before the explosion of new Irish distilleries.

A whiskey distillery was also on the radar and wish-list of West Cork's Horse Island's 2020 vendor, a Dublin financier, who'd bought Horse Island from a German owner, Gert Kolbel, who had invented the body-building device, the Bullworker.

The low-profile Dubliner had his 157-acre Horse Island retreat (main 4,800 sq ft residence, six guest houses, three beaches etc) made self-sufficient with access pier and slip, boathouse, helipad, diesel generators, wind turbines, wells, treatment plant, internal roads, tennis/basketball court....the works.

(Like many who buy Irish islands for the utmost privacy, various owners are then disappointed to find that anyone can land on their trophy purchase, bask on their 'private' beaches like sun-soaked seals, and remain there legally up as far as the high-water mark. Again, for those valuing privacy, island need upkeep and specialist on hand, such as boatmen and women and/or pilots: Horse Island, which once had 100 inhabitants, for example has a resident caretaking couple).

Ironically, though, Horse's owner's island distillery plans got derailed because of access issues: not because the island, about a mile off the coast, might have been problematic. He was refused because the mainland roads by Rossbrin, Ballydhob and Schull to the island's main access pier were deemed too tiny, bendy and windy for trucks to transport his raw materials and finished, liquid gold.

Damn.

Ain't that just the problem? You buy your own island fiefdom, and then it's the mainland that lets you down.



Horse Island, Roaringwater Bay



Inishturkbeg, Clew bay.



Patrick O'Connor-Scarteen with his wife Katie.

IPAV MEMBER ELECTED MAYOR OF KERRY

Patrick O'Connor-Scarteen was elected Mayor of Kerry/ Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council on 29th June. Patrick is a long-time member of IPAV, like his parents Michael and Eleanor before him. He works in the family Auctioneering business in Kenmare and lives between Kenmare and Killarney with his wife Katie O'Connell whom he married in September 2019.

Patrick was first elected to Kerry County Council in 2009 and comes from the longest serving family on Kerry County Council with over three quarters of a century of unbroken service to the people of Kerry. His Father Michael, Grandfather Pat who was also a Senator and TD and Granduncle Tim preceded him. Patrick became the first Kenmare person to become Mayor since Councils were formed in 1899.



TRAMORE-BASED IPAV MEMBER EXPANDS IN THE SOUTH-EAST

BY TIM RYAN

Tramore-based agent Barry Herterich recently opened a second office in partnership in Waterford city. Tim Ryan spoke to him about his life and career to date.

Q: Tell me a little about Tramore and its economy. Many of us remember Tramore and the huge strand as a place for a few days holiday when we were children. Are holidaymakers still a key part of Tramore's economy?

A: Tramore is the biggest town in Co. Waterford with a population of approximately 11,000. This has grown from 3,500 when I was growing up in the town in the 1980s. Tourism is still important to the town but its seasonal, about ten weeks of the year plus some weekends. The bars, restaurants and hotels would not survive if they were solely dependent on the tourists. Tramore is only a 15-minute drive to Waterford city so a large proportion of the population work in Waterford city. Unfortunately, Tramore still does not have a large employer in the town.

Q: Tell me a little about your background, where you grew up and early schooling?

A: My parents moved to Tramore in 1970, they were both from Athy in Co. Kildare. My father's family were pork butchers. Up until the early 1990's you would have found a Herterich butchers in various towns throughout Ireland, including Galway, Westport, Longford, Wexford, Naas and, of course, Athy. My father set up as a butcher in Waterford city and I was born the following year. I went to school in the local CBS in Tramore and it was a great town to grow up in. I was big into sport, particularly football and tennis and I played a bit of GAA as well.

Q: Your name is very unusual, what is its origin?

A: 'Herterich' is a German name. All the Herterichs in Ireland are related as far as I know. I am led to believe that my great grandfather was called up to the German army for WWI but didn't fancy it, so he fled to Ireland!

Q: After secondary school, you studied Economics in Trinity College? What career were you planning at that time?

A: I loved college and I loved Dublin. Dublin was beginning to take off in the mid-1990s and the IFSC was starting to expand. I wouldn't say I had a definite plan but I wanted to get into some aspect of international finance and there were opportunities in Dublin so you didn't have to go to London.

Q: Where did you work after graduating?

A: I got my first job after college with Citibank and I moved jobs a couple of times, working with Chase Bank and Société Générale and whilst I enjoyed it and the money was good I knew it wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I always loved travelling, I have been travelling around the world going to football matches, often on my own, since I was 16. So, in 2002 myself and my girlfriend, who is now my wife, decided to give up our jobs and travel the world.



IPAV President David McDonnell cutting the tape at the new offices of Property Partners Phelan Herterich with Deirdre Phelan and Barry Herterich.



Barry Herterich and Deirdre Phelan with John Buggy, Chairman of Property Partners

Q: What prompted you to return to Tramore and become an auctioneer? Where and when did you start?

A: We spent nine months travelling through South America, New Zealand, Australia and southern Africa. Whilst travelling we decided that rather than go back to the well-paid jobs in Dublin, we would go back to Tramore and try something new. I was always into property and I had bought my first property two years after leaving college, a tax break apartment on Gardiner Street. I have two uncles who were Auctioneers, Don Palmer in Waterford and Jim Fingleton in Athy so maybe it was in the blood. I was good friends with Lorraine Mulligan in Celbridge and she got me an opportunity to train with a ReMax office which was setting up in Waterford city back in 2004. I was only there a few months when I got approached by John Fogarty of Property Partners Fogarty who asked me to head up a new office which he was opening in Tramore.

Q: When did you join Property Partners and why? What are the benefits of being a member?

A: I suppose really, I have been with Property Partners since day one, but it was only really after myself and John went our separate ways back in 2011 that I really became involved in the Property Partners group. Whilst you work for yourself and you are an independent operator, it's great to have a network of experienced Auctioneers to whom you can pick up a phone and look for advice, or maybe get a lead from or give a lead to. The group meets four times a year and we are always looking at ways to improve as individual agents and as a group. This could be in terms of marketing, branding, social media, IT etc. As time has gone on however, I would consider many members of the Property Partners group not just to be work colleagues but friends.

Q: How did you cope with the recession as you had just opened in 2004?

A: We had three very good years leading up to the end of 2007 including the biggest sale ever in Tramore, €17.5 million for a development site. We managed to get that closed in November 2007. What saved us during the recession was that it coincided with the end of many 10-year Section 48/23 Seaside Resort renewal schemes. This meant that holiday home schemes that were built in Tramore in the late 1990s could now be sold or rented long-term by the owners. Consequently, we quickly got into the rental management. We were not managing the blocks, but just individual properties and we quickly built up a reasonable portfolio that at least gave us a guaranteed income every month. The years from 2008 to 2012 was tough but there were not many other opportunities out there, so you just go on with it. We had our three girls between 2006 & 2010, and we built a house in 2007 so we were not going anywhere. One of the advantages of studying economics was that I knew it was inevitable that the cycle would come back in our favour which it started to do in 2013.

Q: You recently opened a second office. Tell me about that?

A: Although our office in Tramore is only 15 minutes from Waterford City, it is very hard to get a slice of the market in the city unless you have an office there. However, Waterford city based-agents pick up a reasonable amount of business in Tramore and to be honest their share of the Tramore market seemed to be growing in recent years and that was frustrating. So I started to look out for a suitable location in Waterford city. I was conscious however of taking my eye off the ball in Tramore if I had to run an office in Waterford myself. Therefore, I decided to discreetly look for a partner. Deirdre Phelan lives in Tramore but is from Waterford and worked with Sherry Fitzgerald John Rohan for 20 years. Deirdre felt she was at a stage where she wanted to have her own business so with both our experience and contacts plus having the Property Partners branding and expertise, we felt it was a partnership that would work. We officially opened our office on John Street in Waterford city on the 2nd March but we were only open 12 days when we had to close again because of Covid-19.

Q: How was the residential market in Co. Waterford prior to Covid-19?

A: Just prior to Covid-19 I was only thinking to myself that the last year or so was the first time in my auctioneering career that we had

a normal market. When I started off we were in the middle of the Celtic Tiger, then we had the crash between 2008 & 2012 and then we had another surge in house prices between 2014 and 2018. But since 2018 price growth had been relatively small and the market had settled into a kind of 'steady as she goes' pattern and then bang Covid-19.

Q: What was the lettings market like pre-Covid-19?

A: Like all cities and major towns in Ireland in recent years, Waterford has had a strong residential lettings market with supply being the big issue for a lot of agents, particularly those like us who do not manage blocks. In Tramore, for example, we could often not have one property available for rent such is the shortage in the town.

Q: What is the current state of the commercial market?

A: For several years now there has been talks of a major mixed-use development on the North Quays of the city, that is the Kilkenny side of the river Suir where the train station is. This is a Saudi-backed development that, to be honest, seemed to be all talk and no action for a long time but then the planning application was lodged earlier this year. If this was to go ahead it could be a game changer for Waterford city. However, one of the consequences of this proposed development is that potential investors in Waterford have had a 'wait and see' attitude for a number of years to see will this happen, meaning that currently the commercial market in Waterford is struggling a bit. As I heard one agent say, we are in a 'holding pattern'.

Q: How long have you been a member of IPAV? In what ways has membership of the institute helped you in your business?

A: I did the IPAV Certificate in Auctioneering & Estate Agency course in 2004 & 2005 in the Waterford Institute of Technology and I have been a member since then. I think Pat Davitt has done a great job growing the profile of IPAV in recent years and I find a lot of the CPD courses to be informative and worthwhile. What I like as well is that the courses provide opportunity to meet agents from other parts of the country.

Q: How do you see the property industry for the remainder of 2020?

A: There has been a lot of negative commentary in the media in recent weeks by so called experts who are predicting a 10% fall in property prices as a result of the lockdown. Personally, I think this is a very pessimistic view and it is not the feeling I am getting on the ground where enquiries from buyers and vendors is strong. Also, I had only just one sale fall through because of Covid. I think this shows the confidence buyers have in the property market in Waterford. Really, I do not think you can make a confident prediction on where prices will go until we know how many people permanently lose their jobs because of the lockdown.

Q: Outside of work, what do you enjoy?

A: My soccer days are over, but my three girls are big into it and I manage our local girls U12 team. The kids also took up surfing a few years ago so I took it up as well as I needed to be in the water with them. It's the toughest sport I've ever tried but I love it even though I'm not much good. I play golf off a 10 handicap, I am aiming to get down to 9 over this summer, hopefully.



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VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNINGS



Virtual “Coffee Mornings” was one of the initiatives used by IPAV to keep members in contact during COVID-19. Members spoke to each other about items of mutual interest, including problems they were encountering on how to cope with the pandemic.

The idea proved hugely popular for many members and has major potential going forward. Below are some quotes from those who participated:

Many thanks for arranging the coffee morning and you couldn't have set me up with a nicer person. it's a great idea and yet again you guys have surpassed yourselves. **Claire**

It was an extremely good call and I'm going to look for some property in Dublin for clients of hers going forward and we are going to stay in touch. Extremely nice member I have to say. Thanks again. **Martin**

Just a quick line to say I was delighted to have a catch-up and had a great chat for over an hour. I got some great advice on my website and information of the trading online voucher available from the Local Enterprise Office to help upgrade my website. I found the conversation overall very worthwhile and energising. **Tommy**

Fantastic to be able to have an honest conversation about the challenges that we face as business owners and don't be surprised to see me drop into your office when this lockdown is over. **Derek**

Thank you for the opportunity. We had a “what's up” face time call of 35 minutes. We discussed everything from business updates, accounting, tax to impact of the lockdown on our lives and businesses. It was a great opportunity to network. **Christine**



IPAV EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2020/2021

Certificate in Real Estate Administration – Level 6 (60 ECTS)

The objective of the Certificate in Real Estate Administration programme is to give appropriate skills to individuals who are working in or those intending to work in real estate offices the knowledge and competencies required to support the property professional and their clients in a professional and competent manner. The programme will be delivered weekly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7-9pm online. On successful completion of the Certificate in Real Estate Administration the graduate will obtain a NFQ Level 6 (60 ECTS) qualification. Students will also be required to attend one facilitated workshop with each module leader, in Athlone IT.

Higher Certificate in Real Estate, Valuation Sale & Management - Level 6 (120 ECTS)

The Higher Certificate in Real Estate Valuation, Sales and Management is a level 6 award (120 ECTS) on the National Framework of Qualifications developed in collaboration with TU Dublin and is approved by the Property Services Regulatory Authority for licensing purposes. Graduates will be eligible to apply for a PSP licence (categories A, B, C and D) also eligible to apply for membership of IPAV.

There is a mix of online learning and classroom-based learning. Classroom and online lectures will be held on Saturdays throughout the academic year, commencing at 9.30am and finishing at 4.30pm (times subject to change). There will be a maximum of 8 classroom-based Saturdays per semester.

Special Purpose Award Top-Up Route for Green Cert Graduates

The Special Purpose Award is run in partnership with ICOS and TU Dublin Tallaght, Dublin for the delivery of an award that satisfies the requirements of Property Services Regulatory Authority for A licensing purposes (A licence only). Graduates who have successfully completed the TEAGASC level 6 green cert and are working for a mart that is a member of ICOS are eligible to apply for this award on the basis of their qualification.

Intending students will be required to attend two full days at TU Dublin, Tallaght at specified dates and will have one academic semester in which to complete all the elements of the module in order to obtain the award.

Fine & Decorative Arts

Diploma Course in the Fine & Decorative Arts

A compact, educational two-day Fine and Decorative Arts Diploma Course. The aim of this course is to offer a modern perspective introducing diverse topics to give the fine art student a wider vision of the fine arts and ancillary arts. A course unique in Ireland, it is designed to provide an opportunity for those who wish to pursue the fine and decorative arts in a structured and focused manner. The course starts in the Renaissance and continues to the end of the 19th century.

The lectures will be held at IPAV run over three terms coinciding with the academic year. Hours of attendance will be from 10.00am to 3.30pm Mondays and Tuesdays.

Modernism - Art and Design of the Early 20th Century

The Modern Movement completely reshaped the basis of art, design and even culture in the early 20th century and remains the starting point for understanding the art of today. IPAV is pleased to offer a lecture series, featuring key movements and artists of Modernism; from the radical innovations of Abstraction, Futurism and Surrealism to Modernism in architecture and design – for instance the Bauhaus and its influence.

The lectures will be held at IPAV on Wednesdays, one lecture in the morning and one lecture in the afternoon 10am to 3.30pm.

Italian Splendour

From Renaissance art to modern design Italy has been an inexhaustible fountain of ideas and expressions of visual beauty. For centuries it has attracted ambitious artists, patrons and collectors, while its architects, designers, artists and composers have in large part shaped the creative landscape of Europe, and beyond. Hugely influential - and studied - its artistic patrimony repays continual engagement. IPAV is pleased to present a new series that will both survey key periods of innovation in Italian art and look in detail at selected episodes of artistic production and culture.

The lectures will be held on Mondays of each week from 6.30pm to 9.30pm, two lectures each evening.

If you like to enquire about any of these courses please contact genevieve@ipav.ie or go to the IPAV website www.ipav.ie/education/courses

ALL IPAV COURSES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



PREPARE FOR A NEW NORMAL, PLAN FOR EMERGENCY

BY FRANK QUINN, LECTURER IN PROPERTY VALUATION,
BLACKROCK FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE



With exam corrections finished and results being sent out to students at the end of the strangest of academic years, our thoughts must turn to September. In education circles, we are lucky to have some time to plan for the 2020/21 intake of students and the year ahead. What situation we find ourselves in is anybody's guess but it can be broken down into two very different scenarios. In the ideal situation, we will be able to have face to face lectures similar to previous years, while observing the new reality of social distancing.

But it is hard to envisage the full academic year taking place without some sort of disruption. This may be only for a month or longer, but we should be ready for this alternative scenario and plan accordingly. So, what worked well in the last few months of lockdown and what can be improved?

One positive aspect of the enforced lockdown was the reduction in the paper used by our college. As the students were handing up their assignments online there was no requirement on them presenting a physical copy. So instead the students were able to email their assignments or upload them to the college Moodle system.

A class of 30 students handing up an assignment of 20 pages each therefore saved 600 pages. If every class had three assignments that's 1,800 pages saved. If this was done for the 50 courses that BFEI run, that's approximately 90,000 pages saved. Repeat this across every college in the country and that's a huge help for the environment. When we were forced to survive without paper it was shown to be very possible.

Online classes

Another great thing that has to be said is that it was positive that online classes were able to take place. Imagine if this emergency had arrived in the pre-internet days with no Zoom, Microsoft teams, or Adobe connect. What we lecturers discovered is that it is possible to hold online classes and meetings with many people in different parts of the country.

Is this a possible improvement on face-to-face lectures? Well, there is no doubt that class feedback suffers without the face-to-face interaction of a classroom setting and there can be an artificial feel to some of the activities. On the other hand, the lack of a commute was a godsend for many and reduced the carbon footprint of all participants. Perhaps we can look at the possibility of some of the lectures in September taking place online. This would have the advantage of demonstrating to the students how to use the online platform before it may have to be used in an emergency situation.

What I found was that using Zoom and Microsoft teams was only a matter of practice and got easier with every class held. I say this as someone from the generation of limited IT skills where every technology problem is solved by turning off and on the computer. Planning for this eventuality also has to examine the difficulties that took place.

Some lecturers found their internet connections weren't strong or reliable enough to cope with the increased demands of an online class platform. One issue was the other laptops and iPhones competing for the Wi-Fi and I found that turning off as many other machines as possible meant better continuous connection. There may also be the possibility of lecturers and students contacting their internet provider and discussing the best option for their increased use.

In all colleges before courses start in September, the most important activity will be induction of students. Usually student induction is that of timetables, booklists and ID cards but this year will be the most crucial induction of all time. Colleges must ensure students have the information and IT equipment to continue their studies in a sudden enforced lockdown. Students must have their email accounts working, obtain access to the colleges learning platforms and also have the necessary IT facilities (laptops, MSWord and Excel) at home.

What the education sector has shown in the past few months is that it can be very resilient and able to adapt to the most difficult of circumstances. We are helped by the fact that most of our students are better with technology than we are and can readily change to the online education world. Together we can hopefully provide students with the quality of education and college experience they deserve. The last few months have been difficult but with planning we should be able to look forward to a better future.

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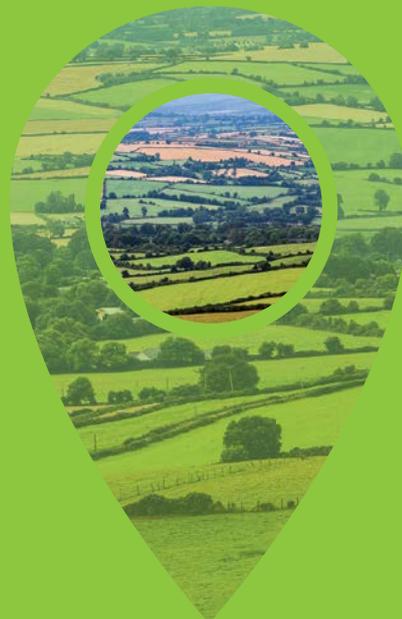
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ADVERTISING
Matthew Ryan
T: 01 4199 556
E: MRYAN@FARMERSJOURNAL.IE



PROPERTY EDITOR
Odile Evans
T: 01 4199 533
E: DEVANS@FARMERSJOURNAL.IE



*SOURCE: KANTAR MEDIA TGI ROI SURVEY 2019



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PROPERTY

120,000

of INM Print Readers expect to **sell and purchase** a house or apartment in next 12 months



101,500

of INM Print Readers expect to **purchase their first home** in next 12 months

664,400

people in Ireland own their own home and have no mortgage

616,300

people have been living in their present home for over 20 years.

90.2k

people are currently saving for a deposit on a mortgage

226.8k

people regularly read property content in newspapers

303.4k

people regularly access property topics online

Irish Independent

Sunday Independent

THE **Herald**

**SUNDAY
WORLD**

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