



An Taisce

The National Trust for Ireland

An Taisce Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 6

September 2012

INDEX OF EZINES SINCE JAN 2012

Welcome to An Taisce's September 2012 ezine

Please share widely! We have improved printing from Netscape or Internet Explorer Browsers but it is over 30 pages long - so please print it double sided or 2 pages per sheet.

We have also provided a magnify facility for some images - if a + symbol appears when you roll over an image - click on it and it will magnify.

Full articles

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Job Advertisement - Director of Operations (Part-Time)

An Taisce, The National Trust for Ireland, seeks to employ a part-time Director of Operations on a two-year fixed term contract (with possibility of extension). Initially this appointment will be three days per week increasing to full-time (subject to funding).

The Trust is looking for an operational leader with the strong, clear vision that is needed to fulfill An Taisce's role as Ireland's leading environmental and heritage charity. The successful candidate will have overall responsibility for overseeing all aspects of An Taisce's operations including public relations, financial management and staff supervision.

Person specification:

- Third level qualification (Diploma/Degree).
- Five years relevant experience, preferably with an Environmental NGO or other membership-based charitable organisation.
- Accountancy and financial management experience.
- Effective communicator with strong interpersonal and motivational skills.
- A sound knowledge of the main environmental and heritage issues facing Ireland at the current time and the key challenges going forward.

Special Skills, Aptitude or Personality Requirements:

- A fundamental understanding of the public purpose underlying An Taisce and empathy with the organisational vision, mission, goals and objectives.
- Proven track record in proposal and report writing.
- Proven media and communication skills, to include listening as well as speaking.
- Adaptability and ability to work under pressure often to strict deadlines.
- Ability to surface problems and recommend solutions.
- Methodical and thorough.
- Knowledge of computer applications i.e. Microsoft word and excel.
- Strong budget management skills.
- Ability to motivate and develop skills of others.
- Ability to work both as part of a team and independently.
- Tolerance and acceptance of diversity in a large membership based organisation.

Main Duties & Responsibilities:

- Deliver an effective, coherent and planned implementation of the An Taisce Executive Board and Council strategic policy objectives.
- Communicate and advocate the mission of An Taisce to a range of audiences, in the media and in public.
- Maintain good communications with An Taisce's members and grow the membership base.
- Manage day-to-day activities of An Taisce and effectively lead a multidisciplinary team of employees, interns and volunteers.
- Assist the Executive Board in the management and implementation of An Taisce's strategic objectives through involvement in decision making.
- Ensure that the working environment for staff is upbeat, enthusiastic and adequately resourced.
- Maintain a system of objective setting and performance appraisal for An Taisce staff.
- Maintain a constructive and open dialogue with national, regional and local government together with other key stakeholders.
- Maintain strong relationships and develop strategic links with other environmental NGOs.
- Ensure the effective and timely undertaking of An Taisce's prescribed functions.
- Deliver organisational reform, drive efficiency and build new capabilities.
- Produce regular reports for the An Taisce Executive Board and Council
- Seek out and deliver new funding streams for An Taisce.
- Prepare programme budgets collaboratively with the Executive Board. Track expenditure through monthly management and quarterly financial accounts.
- Oversee the prescribed function of An Taisce and ensure optimal quality and timely submission of reports

and proposals.

- Maintain, protect and develop the profile of An Taisce as Ireland's leading environmental and heritage NGO

Salary will be based upon relevant skills and experience and will likely to be in the range of €45,000-50,000 per annum on a pro-rata basis. Flexible working arrangements will be considered.

If you wish to promote, defend and protect the diverse environment and heritage of Ireland and believe that you can fulfill the requirements above please forward your Curriculum Vitae and cover letter to: chair@antaisce.org or by post to: John Harnett, Chairperson, An Taisce, The Tailors Hall, Back Lane Dublin 8.

Please mark all envelopes and emails "Position of Director of Operations" Any enquiries can be directed to chair@antaisce.org

Closing Date for applications: Friday 5th of October 2012 at 3pm

European Mobility Week



Join in the fun & leave the car behind. Marika Spoonenburg, a Senior Infant pupil at Soeey NS, proudly cycling to school with her

As this week is European Mobility week members may be interested to learn more about the Green-Schools Travel theme. Here is a snap shot of what is going on in Co Sligo at the moment, and with Travel Education Officers nationwide, it is bound to be happening close to you too.....

Throughout the Country, and on a global level, many organisations are actively promoting sustainable travel choices and helping to create a safer environment for these journeys. Sligo too is doing their bit, with An Taisce's Green-Schools Travel programme working closely with Sligo County Council, the Road Safety Authority, An Garda Síochána, Sligo Sports & Recreation as well as lots of teachers and pupils and this joined up thinking is helping benefit families and communities countywide.



Community Garda Tony Lavin & teachers at Scoil Asicus Naofa, Strandhill help children to use the pedestrian crossing safely during their Green-School Travel.

mother Martha.

European Mobility Week will take place between the 16th and 22nd September when towns and cities throughout Europe, and beyond, will encourage more people to get involved. Many Sligo Schools who are working towards, or already have achieved, their Green Flag for Travel will be holding 'Zero Cars in School Zone' Days and promoting more families to take the time to walk or cycle to school together, either all the way or part of the journey if they live further away.

Jesus & Mary Secondary School in Enniscrone and St Patricks NS in Calry, who both achieved their Travel Flags in May this year will be launching their new covered and secure Cycle Storage Units during European Mobility Week. Corran College in Ballymote will be celebrating their Green Flag for Travel on 20th September and Noel Brett, CEO of the RSA, has accepted an invitation to attend the ceremony and raise their flag. "All the schools I work with focus on road safety as part of their Green-Schools Travel theme" said Imelda Ryan-Jones, Travel Education Officer with An Taisce "helping to raise awareness of the fact that adults who walk and cycle more often with children are helping to instil important road safety skills that will stay with that child for the rest of their lives. Teachers also find the RSA resources such as High Glow Silver and Seatbelt Sherrif very helpful in primary schools, and the RSA Shuttle Bus and Rollover visits to Secondary Schools are extremely beneficial to young adults".

Corran College were the first school in Ireland to avail of the RSA Rollover in May 2011, which is a new resource whereby a car turns 360 degrees whilst students inside wear a seatbelt and literally feel the power and importance of the seatbelt when the car turns over. "It is very fitting that Noel Brett is coming to our School to raise our Green Flag for Travel" said Mary Reagan, teacher and Green-Schools Coordinator in the School.

Also during the school summer holidays a group of teachers came together in County Sligo to learn more about the importance of encouraging families to leave the car at home and walk, cycle or use public transport for their journey to and from school. "The advantages of active travel to both the younger generation and the adults are often forgotten" said Deirdre O'Connor, of Scoil Chríost Rá in Enniscrone, one of the teachers involved in the week long Green-Schools Summer Teacher Training Course. "We all know it is good for the environment as there is less exhaust fumes going up into the atmosphere, but in the rush of life we tend to forget that it is so good for our bodies and children's education too".

Studies have proven that children who walk to school, cycle, get the bus or park further away from the school in order to incorporate a walk into the journey, are much more open to learning when they arrive at school, and retain their learning much better than those children who are driven all the way to school.

"It is also promotes positive communication, with families chatting together on their journey to school, as well as benefiting their health and wellbeing" said Siobhan Lavelle, teacher and Green-Schools Coordinator at Rathlee

NS near Easkey. "Our pupils underwent Cycle Training during National Bike Week 2012, when An Taisce and Sligo County Council secured funding so that it was free for the families. It is one of the best training the pupils have ever had, Pedal Right Cycling School were excellent. Both Imelda and our Local Garda Andrew Keegan (the winner of the National Road Safety Leading Light Award in 2011) held road safety sessions with the pupils and the School has had lots of enjoyable WOW, Walk on Wednesday, events as part of the Travel theme too".

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport funds the Green-Schools Travel programme and teachers nationwide find the support of Travel Education Officers very helpful, especially as it is the first Green-Schools theme where habits need to change outside of the school.

Maybe more to the fore of parent's minds is the cost of travelling by car. "It is those shorter journeys, the ones we could walk or cycle, which costs families so much in terms of petrol or diesel" said Imelda. "A family who lives within a few Kilometres from a school will spend a lot of money through the course of the school year getting their car to do that journey. Walking and cycling more often definitely benefits the pocket too, and in this day & age that matters enormously".

European Mobility Week is an initiative to help encourage everyone to consider alternatives to the car, and to join in the week by getting involved during one or more of the days. The knock on effect is hoped that people will enjoy their car free journey and incorporate it more regularly into their lives.

Five new schools in Co Sligo are stepping up to the challenge and starting the Green-Schools Travel theme this month, Coola Post Primary School, Kilross NS, Kilglass NS, Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal in Curry and Ardkeeran NS.

"Our Green-Schools Committee will soon start to make plans for the National Road Safety Week that runs from Monday 8th October and we will launch our new Green-Schools Travel theme during that week" said Joanne McHugh of Ardkeeran NS. "The pupils are all looking forward to putting their best feet forward to help promote more walking to school and we are currently looking into potential Park à Stride locations so the families who live further away can join in too".

Four schools who started the Travel theme last year will be going forward for their Green Flag for sustainable travel in Spring 2013 and they are Culfada NS, Rathlee NS, Holy Family NS in Tubbercurry and St John's NS in Sligo Town. Motorists travelling the areas around these schools are asked to be extra vigilant as families join in the European Mobility Week celebrations.

Notes

There are currently approximately 3,600 schools, primary and secondary, taking part in the



Green-Schools programme across Ireland and over 2,577 schools have been awarded the Green Flag. As a result students, teachers and school communities are having a very positive impact on the environment and dramatically reducing their carbon footprints.

***Holy Family NS
in Tubbercurry
who are busy
promoting
walking and
cycling to
school.***

European Mobility Week is an annual campaign, which runs from 16 to 22 September every year, on sustainable urban mobility, encouraging European local authorities to introduce and promote sustainable transport measures and to invite their citizens to try out alternatives to car use. The Week culminates in the "In Town Without My Car!" event, where participating towns and cities set aside one or several areas solely for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport for a whole day. Since its introduction in 2002, the impact of European Mobility Week has been steadily growing, both across Europe and around the world.

Green-Schools, (known internationally as Eco-Schools), is an international environmental management education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole-school action for the environment. Green-Schools is an initiative of FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education) and began in Europe in 1994. Currently over 50 countries from Europe, Africa, South America, Asia and Oceania are participating in the Eco-Schools Programme. There are now more than 35,000 schools participating in the programme worldwide and over 10,000 have been awarded the Green Flag.

Green-Schools in Ireland is operated and co-ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland), in partnership with Local Authorities throughout the country, is supported by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport and is sponsored by Repak and the Wrigley Company Ltd.

This is the 16th year of Green Schools in Ireland and recent research on the economic value of the programme to schools in Ireland has revealed that the programme has saved schools in Ireland a minimum 2 million euro in waste, electricity, water and fuel costs over the school year 2008-2009. The results reveal a minimum of 12 tonnes of waste diverted from landfills in Ireland every school day by schools undertaking the programme, 3.7 million units of electricity saved, 200 million litres of drinking water saved, and around 500,000 litres of transport fuel saved over the school year. These are conservative estimates and considering the programme also involves the wider community, the overall savings could be several times the 2 million euro saved by the schools. As the number of schools participating is growing every year, this year's savings are expected to be even higher.

The Green-Schools programme is based on a seven step environmental management system and continual improvement process which is very much student led and also involves the wider community. The programme also promotes good citizenship among participants. Green-Schools is a themed programme with schools initially working on the theme of Litter and Waste and then moving onto the next themes of Energy, Water and School

Travel. Schools that successfully implemented the programme are awarded the Green Flag. The award must be renewed every 2 years.

If you require further information please contact:

Name: Imelda Ryan-Jones

Title: Green-Schools Travel Education Officer

Contact Details: 087 132 5506 / home work landline 071 9165587

Email: iryanjones@eeu.antaisce.org

Clare Association's Bat Walk



We ran our sixth consecutive Annual Bat meeting during the Heritage week this year and it proved to be well attended as normal but this time the Bat came out as well.

Dromoland Castle

The lecture by Paul Butler was in the Clare Inn with 31 attending and at the following Bat walk in Dromoland Castle 28 people including 12 children attended and lot of Duabenton bats were on the lake skimming around and a few Pipistelles were flying around the trees.

We were lucky to get suitable weather that evening and the bats made the best of it because it had rained for days and they must have been hungry.

We plan to do the same next in hope the bats will attend again.

Keep Ireland Open.



Major Breakthrough in Rights of Way.

Intensive lobbying of the previous Government by Keep Ireland Open resulted in a section in the Planning Amendment Act(2010) providing for the mandatory listing and mapping of public rights of way by county councils. It is now a requirement that all county development plans

Photo: Why

can't farmers must include these lists.

treat irish

walkers like The first fruits of this breakthrough has now emerged. Meath's draft Plan has listed 24 rights of way. While landowners have a right of appeal, we are hoping that some, at least, will be adopted as rights of way.

means welcome access

The Wexford Draft Plan provides for listing before the expiry of the Plan in six years time. We have pointed out to the council that this is not good enough and that a list must appear in the final version of the Plan as its quite clear that this leisurely approach is a breach of the Act. Another positive in Wexford is a summary of the present law on the requirements for the identification of right of ways and a set of procedures to be followed including a major involvement of the public.

Roger Garland has said that even if we eventually finish up with a few rights of ways here and there, he is not hopeful of anything like a comprehensive list due to the present law based on a number of conflicting court cases. For example the Supreme Court Appeal in the Old coach road case in Enniskerry.

Meanwhle Garland makes a wake-up call for walking clubs.

KIO is pleased to have the support on many clubs but there are others out there who prefer to sit it out and let KIO do the heavy lifting. KIO recently contacted a number of clubs to seek their support the excuses given were varied but the main ones were that the clubs felt that affiliation or any connection with KIO could damage their relationship with landowners. Some clubs also said they had no problems with access. KIO pointed out some known problems and the response came back that the club could get permission for themselves to go through his/her property or they could take an alternative route. Unfortunately that doesn't solve the problem if no alternative route is available or that other routes had also been closed.

Its seems that its to hell with people coming down from Dublin or our foreign visitors - that that's their problem! They are not concerned with the benefits to the local economy by the opening up of the countryside. Its not their problem. They look after the interests of their members.

Roger Garland responds in strong terms "When we succeed in opening up the countryside for walkers, (and we will succeed no matter how long it takes,) these selfish groups will reap the benefits. "

KIO need many more clubs and individuals to join to strengthen our hand when dealing with Government.

KIO ask us to recruit more members and those of you in walking clubs to lobby you club to join.

Membership application forms are available to download from our web site: www.keepirelandopen.org

Remember, we are only looking for the same rights for walkers as obtain in other European countries.

SNIPPETS

National Monuments

From Information gleaned from the answer to a parliamentary question by Minister Jimmy Deenihan it seems that we have, would you believe it, no less than 120,000 of these of which only 727 are in state ownership. The rest are privately owned with public access only provided to small number of them.

Fencing

At last the EU are beginning to put pressure on Ireland to insure that landowners must apply for planning permission for fencing of hitherto open areas. We have supplied photographic evidence of several recent examples but we need more. PI send us photos of any recently erected fences(since Sept 2011). Assuming that they haven't been granted planning permission (we can check this out) then we can advise the EU.

You are invited to a public debate. THE FAIR PROPERTY TAX?:



To be chaired by John Bowman in Trinity College Dublin

Monday 24th September 7.30pm Syngé Theatre, Nassau St entrance

The audience will be invited to question a panel of economists and financial experts who support the introduction of a Site Value Tax in Ireland

The Fair Tax

Constantin Gurdgiev, Ronan Lyons, Karl Deeter, with international speaker to be confirmed.

The tax regime in Ireland, has been very favourable to property owners, but especially to developers who, with their banks, took maximum advantage, says Colm McCarthy in the preface to a new book on Site Value Tax published by the Smart Taxes Network. The system fuelled the disastrous development-site debts of a handful of testosterone-charged developers and led directly to the Irish state's guarantee of the collapsing banks.

The Irish government is belatedly introducing a property tax under pressure from the Troika rather than from a conviction of its merits. Instead of targeting irresponsible developers, speculators and banks, the government is

planning to bail them out again by excluding their land hoards and undeveloped sites from the new property tax. Ordinary homeowners will pay at least 20% extra tax every year so that speculators can continue to pay nothing. Only a Site Value Tax can make them pay their fair share.

Speakers in this public debate will explain how a second massive transfer of wealth from the 99% to the 1% can happen again due to the ignorance of politicians, the hubris of the Department of Finance, and the continuing backroom influence of the developers and bankers. They can explain the real advantages of a Site Value Tax over a conventional property tax and convincingly show how easy it is to assess and implement.

Leaked reports suggest the government believes that the Irish public could not understand a Site Value Tax and so plan to impose a flawed property tax. Do the Irish people deserve this assessment of their intelligence by their leaders? Come along to the debate and make up your own mind.

The debate is hosted by the Smart Taxes network and numerous reports commissioned by the organization can be seen on the website: smarttaxes.org/site-value-tax

Registration not necessary. â‚¬5 on the door

Further information Judy Osborne 086 36 99 575

smarttaxes.org/a-fair-property-tax-a-public-debate

Reminder

Can we ask Local Associations to forward submissions and dates & notes of events for future eZines to ezine@antaisce.org

Environment 2012



Environment Ireland®, now in its eighth year, is Ireland's major annual conference on environmental policy and management. The conference is organised in association with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. The conference is attended each year by delegates representing all the main sectors with an interest in Ireland's environment, including many from Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The theme of this year's conference is 'The environment and the economy' and speakers examined the contribution the environment sector can make to economic recovery, and the importance of Ireland's clean, green, environment in a number of growth industries including tourism and agriculture. Other key issues addressed in the programme will include waste management, planning, environmental regulation, water reform, transport and climate change. These issues were explored through an expert panel of local and visiting speakers.

There were presentations by Minister Hogan and key officials in the environment sector including the new Director General of the EPA Laura Burke and the new Chair of An Bord Pleanála Mary Kelly as well as international speakers from the EU.

A flavour of the day can be got from downloading the presentations at

www.environmentireland.ie/download/2012

Username: environment2012

Password: crokepark

Improving the Urban Cycling Experience. New policy from Fianna Fail!

Fianna Fáil Leader, Micheál Martin TD, says more needs to be done to improve the urban cycling experience throughout the country.

Deputy Martin was speaking at the launch of Fianna Fáil's policy document entitled 'Improving the Urban Cycling



Experience' and researched by the Party's 'Future's Group' in Dublin.

"Policymakers need to take a much more active interest in improving the urban cycling experience in cities and urban areas throughout the country," said Deputy Martin.

Great Western Greenway, the longest off-road walking and cycling trail in Ireland.

"In 2009, Fianna Fáil launched Ireland's first 'National Cycle Policy Framework' which was part of the then Government's 20 year 'Smarter Travel' transport policy.

"Many elements of this progressive policy have yet to be implemented and I am calling on the Minister for Transport to put in place a framework to ensure that the proposals contained in the document are implemented.

"In many cases, the proposals involve simple changes to legislation and don't require significant investment. For example, we are proposing a ban on parking in cycle lanes and greater integration of cycling with public transport.

"The Government continually says that it is interested in constructive suggestions from the Opposition. I would urge them to put aside party political considerations and give serious consideration to the initiatives proposed within this document."

Brian Nolan, a member of the Fianna Fáil Futures Group that drafted the policy document, said one of the main driving forces behind the initiative was the public health dividend available from an increased numbers of cyclists. He said: "There are many long-term benefits of an enhanced urban cycling framework. In a society where obesity is becoming an ever increasing problem, an integrated network of cycle lanes provides thousands of people with an outlet to exercise on a daily basis. This policy proposal advocates educating all primary school children about cycle safety, while children would also be encouraged to cycle more."

Fianna Fáil Transport Spokesperson, Timmy Dooley added: "We have seen an explosion of people using their bikes for personal and business use in recent years. The Dublin Bike Scheme has been an outstanding success, and on its third birthday what we need to do now is capitalise on this and ensure a safe urban cycling experience for everyone."

See: [Improving the Urban Cycling Experience](#)

as if government led policies were conflicting with each other and on many occasions just ignored the Strategy.

A lesson we must, in the context of current prevailing conditions, learn is that it is even more essential that public authorities and their programmes can no longer be simply focused on a particular policy arena emanating from a single Department or Minister. National institutions can no longer be the mechanistic corporate bodies directed by a singular political view that Weber suggested in 1947. Rather, they are a part of a dynamic form of governance. The important factor is not the determination of who does what or indeed who holds the resources per se. Rather the challenge is about ensuring that central government is equipped to interact through a policy framework which has the necessary flexibility to influence the policy choices associated with public management at local level and vice versa.

The creation of the capacity to think through policy impact becomes a key requirement, particularly within a multi-dimensional policy process. This becomes even more significant when policy is being determined through an administrative process at central levels, but will be delivered locally with probable implications for the local electoral process. In a country like Ireland, which many associate with centralisation rather than autonomous local government, it becomes more critical therefore to have national policy systems apply integrated thinking, the sort of thinking originally envisaged in the NSS but so clearly ignored by successive political administrations.

What this means is that the spatial planner necessarily must consider the broader policy process. Equally the sectoral policy planner, regardless of the thematic consideration, has to factor in the spatial/territorial impact of the policy being developed by his/her colleagues in other public policy applications. In the absence of a territorial application, education policy, for example, may undermine rather than underpin the socio-economic sustainability of an area because the schools are not available or are put in the wrong place because the education policy-maker did not think about the spatial policy which places people in a particular location to live.

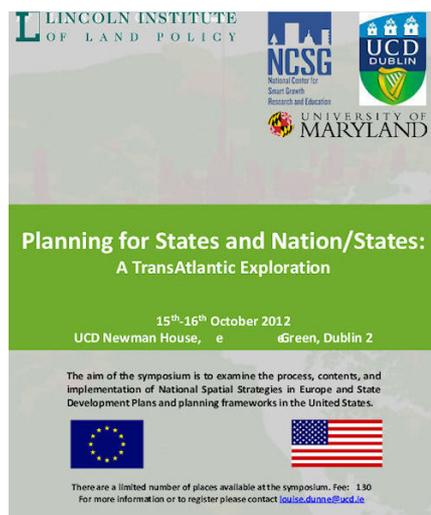
This challenge can only be addressed through the creation of a relationship between the horizontal planning processes of local and regional governance (i.e. those charged with policy responsibility in the State) with those of the State and the international environment such as the influence of the European Union, hence the importance of having a sustainable development policy for the country. It also must address the diagonal nature of cross-boundary planning and policy overlap. This is so as policy influences will arise outside of the immediate territorial or organisational boundary. Equally, however, a failure to address institutional restructuring at the two upper levels of governance i.e. regional/national and national/international will negate most integrationist actions at local / regional level. Integrated planning requires, as a result, a complementary political and administrative commitment to reform at national level.

This will be of particular importance to a public service which is going to see considerable re-structuring in the short-term. the possible migration of back-office services to national or contracted out arrangements will not come

easily, even with goodwill on the part of unions and employers. The idea that government Departments will retain their silo mandates and that spatial planning can be "left" to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government with perhaps the Department of Transport having some input will not be sufficient. the institutional model, which suggests specialised thematic policy implementation at national level, will not work, no more than the model it is intended to replace. Until we get the message that communities live in a spatial context, using health, education, transport and other services as a normal feature of day to day living, and create governance arrangements which respect this reality, until we realise that policy must address communities in a place-shaping framework, until we actually begin to apply the thinking which the National Spatial Strategy set out so succinctly, we will continue to encounter the policy disjointedness that is such a feature of the Irish governance environment.

Even if we begin to move in this direction it will have to be translated into substantive re-structuring of the public service. Retaining current 19 century institutional arrangements at national and local levels is not the way to position the country to confront the challenges of a 21st century society.

Planning for States and Nation/States: A TransAtlantic Exploration



15th--16th October 2012

UCD Newman House, St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

The aim of the symposium is to examine the process, contents, and implementation of National Spatial Strategies in Europe and State Development Plans and planning frameworks in the United States.

There are a limited number of places available at the symposium. Fee: €130

For more information or to register please contact louise.dunne@ucd.ie

Click on image for full brochure

National Rural Development Conference 2012.



'Maximising the Use of Rural Resources'

Organised by Teagasc and the National Rural Network

Tuesday, 16th October 2012

Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield, Co Meath

The conference is being held in association with the Irish Local Development Network, Macra na Feirme and the Western Development Commission. A range of national and international speakers including Scott Daugherty North Carolina's Small Business Commissioner, will address the theme of 'Maximising the Use of Rural Resources' in the morning, followed by a panel discussion. Afternoon workshops will provide an opportunity for those attending the Conference to discuss specific topics related to the theme.

To register click: <http://nationalruraldevelopmentconference2012.eventbrite.com/>

Submission to the Draft Guidelines in Carrying out an EIA - Consultation Document

RE: Submission to the Draft Guidelines in Carrying out an EIA - Consultation Document

An Taisce welcomes the publication of Draft EIA Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála in carrying out an EIA. The guidelines explicitly advise planning authorities and the Board that it is their obligation to carry out 'the assessment' (EIA) and not to specifically rely on 'the statement' (EIS) submitted by an applicant. While this has always been the case it is a poor indictment of the Irish planning system that this is now being clarified almost thirty years after the introduction of the EIA directive and only in response to persistent ECJ judgements against Ireland. We would submit that given Ireland's 'worst-in-class' track record in complying

with EU environmental law it may be an opportune time for a change of direction and the institution of a more proactive and holistic approach to environmental management rather than an incremental response to ECJ judgements.

We note that the Guidelines are procedural only and include no substantive changes. However, we also note that in the case of C-66/06 and C-215/06 it was made clear by the European Commission/ECJ that both 'screening' and 'scoping' are an integral part of the EIA process. Therefore it is imperative that in the cases where no EIS has been submitted (including sub-threshold) that the local authority screen the proposed development. **This must be carried out in all planning applications regardless of the scale or nature of the proposal** . This must also include an assessment of indirect and in-combination impacts.

Therefore, the 'Environmental Impact Assessment Report' must include a 'Screening' section where **each and every** application is screened for the need for EIA and a commentary included as to the decision of the planning authority. For example, a sub-threshold development (such as an individual house) would not on its own require an EIA. However, the 'in-combination' impact with other developments could have a serious impact on a local watercourse or Natura 2000 site. Similarly, the 'Environmental Impact Assessment Report' should include a 'Scoping' section. In circumstances whereby an applicant has submitted a scoping request, the planning authority's response must be recorded.

The proposed new approach does not necessitate a major new administrative burden. A standardised pro-forma template could be deployed (as is the case in Natura Impact Statements) and we recommend that the Department should prepare such a reporting template as soon as possible.

Finally, it is increasingly clear that, as a result of ECJ judgements, the environmental and habitats dimension to planning law has become increasingly complex. This has not been helped by confusing, incremental and multiple amendments to planning legislation, regulations and guidance. The Department must move to rationalise the system and introduce consolidated legislation and guidelines. It is also clear that many planning officers do not have the required skill set to implement the legislation competently leading to inadequate procedures and poor decision making. We recommend that the Department must urgently commence a training programme to re-skill planning officers/inspectors in EIA and on the new procedures and requirements.

Yours Sincerely,

Ian Lumley

Built Environment & Heritage Officer

An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland

Submission to the Draft Development Contribution Guidelines - Consultation Document

RE: Submission to the Draft Development Contribution Guidelines - Consultation Document

An Taisce very much welcomes the publication of Draft Development Contribution Guidelines for Planning Authorities. There can be no doubt that competitive pressures between local authorities and the pursuit of development contributions (and commercial rates) was a leading factor in the creation of the property bubble and the very poor planning outcomes of the 'Celtic Tiger' period. These pressures are even more acute today due to the very poor financial position of most local authorities and the absence of a fair, equitable and sustainable local income source. An integrated approach to funding local infrastructure and services is of fundamental importance to the planning system and, as a result, we broadly welcome these Draft Guidelines to help deliver a more focussed and targeted system in an era of much reduced financial resources.

An Taisce welcomes the strong focus on town centres which have been consistently unable to compete with new out-of-town developments on greenfield sites with large and free surface car parking. The irony is that throughout the past decade S.48 and S.49 levies served as a disincentive for development at more sustainable locations and promoted sprawl. The waivers included on Page 8/9 of the document are therefore encouraging to promote town centre regeneration, brownfield development and to limit unsustainable development sprawl. We submit that the proposed waivers should also make reference to the practice whereby new town centre developments (or change of use) are required to provide a financial contribution in lieu of off-street car parking. Planning Authorities should be advised that this practice should be discontinued as it serves as a disincentive to town centre development and sustainable transport modes, resulting in the persistent vacancy in town centres.

While we acknowledge that the Guidelines recommend a corresponding increase in development contribution levies for out-of-town development and areas which are not prioritised for development in the 'Core Strategy', we would recommend that planning authorities should be encouraged to require the introduction of parking charges on all large out-of-centre commercial developments. A proportion of the income from these charges should be payable as a recurring charge to the local authority to assist in the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of local road infrastructure. A similar recommendation was made in a recent report prepared by Property Industry Ireland (Planning a Better Future - A Report on Reform of the Irish Planning System (June 2012)).

An Taisce welcomes the requirement that waivers should be introduced for protected structures and change of use. However, there are many buildings which are of heritage value which are not protected structures. Many of these buildings have fallen into a state of disrepair. The guidelines should be extended to allow waivers in circumstances where a heritage building is being sensitively restored in accordance with best conservation practice.

The draft guidelines essentially amounts to a much more evidence-based approach to development contribution levies and is consistent with the package of planning reforms in recent years. While this is welcome, it is simply an incremental add-on to the existing system and is likely to result in significant variations of approach between local authorities. We submit that the link between spatial planning and infrastructure/service provision is so fundamental that it requires a much more structured and integrated approach. Each planning authority should be required to produce an explicit Local Infrastructure Plan (as in the UK, for example) as part of the evidence base in delivering the vision set out in the Core Strategy/Development Plan. The purpose of Local Infrastructure Plan should be to provide an infrastructure capacity assessment working in partnership with all physical, social and green infrastructure and service providers to establish what infrastructure provision there is in the area, and identifying any gaps or capacity issues within the existing provision. The Local Infrastructure Plan should provide a detailed assessment of what infrastructure will be required to support development within the local authority area over the plan period and how it will be implemented, phased and funded (including recurring operational costs). It should further aim to provide a clear steer on who is responsible for implementing policies and proposals, by when and the resources that will be required. In advance of a local service/property tax, the Local Infrastructure Plan should be linked directly to local government subvention and other national infrastructure funding. Local authorities should have responsibility for this process (overseen by an independent Planning Regulator) thereby strengthening the accountability of local government. Development contribution levies should be ringfenced and not used as general income by local authorities.

While we note that the new Guidelines essentially amount to a Local Infrastructure Plan it is not explicitly recognised as such. As the adoption of Section 48 schemes is a reserved function of local authority members and, notwithstanding these draft guidelines, there is likely to be significant divergences in approaches between local authorities as a result of differing political priorities. For example, there remains a significant disconnect in the minds of local authority members as to the real cost of infrastructure/service provision to the Exchequer due to the fact that these costs are very often not accounted for in local authority budgets. A useful example is the hidden costs to the tax payer of servicing dispersed settlement patterns.

As noted above, the efficient integration of spatial planning and infrastructure/service provision is fundamental for ensuring a high quality environment, thriving settlements and a high quality of life. The spatial dimension of infrastructure provision has been persistently overlooked by policy makers despite national policies such as the NSS. In recent times a whole range of new planning regulations and guidelines have been introduced at a time

when planning authorities have much reduced staff, capacity and technical expertise. We submit that the Draft Guidelines would benefit from the inclusion of a worked-up best-practice example as model for local authorities to follow. However, this should be pursued only as an interim measure prior to the introduction of a much more structured Local Infrastructure Plan approach. Local Infrastructure Plans underpinned by new planning legislation which will be required to establish an independent Planning Regulator as recommended by the Mahon Report.

Yours Sincerely,

Ian Lumley

Built Environment & Heritage Officer

An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland

Christmas Buffets in Tailors' Hall



What they are Saying about Tailors' Hall

We just wanted to email to say thank you both so much for such sterling work over the last few months - we had a fantastic day and we've had nothing but compliments about the venue and the food, both of which were superb and really made the day.

Christmas Buffet 1

Christmas Buffet 2

We're currently in the airport, waiting to board, hoping the honeymoon is as fabulous as the wedding!

I hope you are well. I can't thank you enough for all of your help. The feedback we've had has been amazing, our guests really enjoyed all aspects of the day, the food, the staff and of course the building itself. I cannot express enough gratitude, i can honestly say it was the best day of my life...and remember, i was a very reluctant bride! Your professionalism and obvious passion for what you do really shone through. thanks again.

Many thanks John for all your help in putting together the party and managing the venue on the evening. From our point of view it was a great success and the uniqueness of Tailor's Hall really added to what was a very special evening for all of us.

Thanks for everything last fri. We thoroughly enjoyed every moment and our guests loved the venue.

I just wanted to say thanks very much for all your help with our ceremony. We had a great day and we were very happy with the venue and your facilitation - especially your stepping into the breach to find the candles!

I just wanted to drop you a line to say how thoroughly impressed we were with the service and food at our wedding on the 18th of August last. Brambles' staff was professional, efficient and thoughtful the entire afternoon. We first started receiving compliments about the quality of the food while the finger-food was being served, and haven't stopped receiving them a week later!

When the hog was served, everyone was delighted. It went down an absolute treat, and not only for the novelty value - it was cooked to perfection, and the crackling was almost like toffee! More than that, our vegetarian guests commented on the consideration given to them - they had previously been to weddings where by the time they came to the head of the queue, there was no more of the vegetarian meal available, as it had already been served to other guests. In this instance, however, an entire dish was kept separate for vegetarian diners. This small detail made a large difference to these guests, greatly enhancing their enjoyment of the day.

Thanks for all your help, and we are and have been happily recommending you to anyone who has asked us for events in future.

Can you recommend this package to some organisation you know.

If so please contact John Ducie, Manager, Tailors Hall Events Ltd on properties.antaisce.org Tel 01 7077076

Events

[See An Taisce's Events Page here](#)

Book Tailors Hall for your event



Please spread the word to your friends, family and colleagues that Tailors' Hall is the ideal place for their special event or meeting.

The Tailors Hall is rapidly becoming re-established as one of Dublin's premier places for public events and celebrations following the granting of licences, the installation of a full service bar and the fit out of the kitchens. In addition marquees for the courtyards have been

purchased and the redecoration of the public rooms has commenced with the redecoration of the lobby and entrance area in tasteful Farrow and Ball colours. We are now seeking some mirrors and an appropriate settee to complete the furnishing of this area.

We recently hosted the prestigious Gold Medal award ceremony of The London City and Guilds and our first Civil Partnership Ceremony when two women got married in the Great Hall under the new legislation to permit same sex partnerships to be legally registered. This is in addition to the increasing number of civil marriages and other events already taking place there.

These events are followed by lavish receptions thanks to our exclusive in house caterers and bar operators. Feedback from customers has been very good with no negative reactions and many sending letters of thanks and recommendation.

Providing food is ordered when booking the hall all kinds of alcohol can be served attracting a VAT rate on food including hire of only 9% as opposed to hire without food which is now 23%, a significant saving for most events.

We can provide tailored packages inclusive of food, hire and other services for different budgets and have a dedicated events team to ensure that all the effort can be taken away from organising any kind of event.

We also have had numerous other events including; wedding receptions, a fancy dress Halloween party, the Irish Association of Health Food Stores Awards and numerous Christmas parties.

To get your copy of our new professionally shot events brochure or to make enquires about having your special event with us please contact John Ducie, Manager, Tailors Hall Events Ltd on properties.antaisce.org Tel 01 7077076

Remember every cent made from events in The Tailors Hall goes to lifting the burden of running the hall from An Taisce and repaying the significant loan to refurbish the hall and get it open for business, as well providing a platform for the management of all An Taisce's other properties. Its one of the best ways of financially supporting all of our work as a charity!

[The Tailors' Hall Website Here](#)

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Contact Us

Your views are important to An Taisce. Please don't hesitate to send us any feedback on content, format, etc. of this newsletter, and if there are any topics in particular that you'd like to see covered, we'll do our best to get them in.

You are being sent these eZines because you are a member of An Taisce - should you no longer wish to be sent these, please email membership@antaisce.org

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Your views are important to An Taisce. Please don't hesitate to send us any feedback

Preserving our built and natural heritage for future generations