

DEATH FROM NOSTALGIC SENTIMENT OR A NEW NARRATIVE FOR RURAL IRELAND?

Thursday, 26th September 2019 - Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk, Co. Louth

Death from Nostalgic Sentiment Or A New Narrative for Rural Ireland?

Rural areas are diverse, each facing a unique set of opportunities and challenges that are often closely informed by their proximity to urban centres. Proximity to larger urban centres can have a strong bearing on the vibrancy - or not - of rural towns and villages.

The vibrancy or vulnerability of rural places can also be impacted by the role nostalgia and associated rural narratives play in influencing the rural development agenda. How rural change is understood shapes how the future is imagined in terms of both policy and practitioner responses.

This 1-day conference provides a timely opportunity for dialogue and debate on the future of rural Ireland, particularly our rural towns and villages. This event will consider the current nuances in rural policy and practice, and the imperative of framing a new narrative for rural Ireland - without losing the 'essence' of place. A shared challenge for central, regional and local government, together with rural communities, is to co-create vibrant rural societies that embrace increasingly diverse rural economies and are sustainable into the future.

This event considers the interventions required to sustain and build vibrant rural societies across the island of Ireland. As with the previous events in this series, it recognises that reframing the future of Rural Ireland requires a cross-disciplinary dialogue that has regard to the realities of 21st Century living, and the impact of this on both the built and natural environment. The conference will have contributions demonstrating experience / best practice at international level.

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ALL-ISLAND LOCAL AUTHORITY FORUM

The All-Island Local Authority Forum is a strategic partnership comprising Chief Executives from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, NI (SOLACE NI) and Chief Executives from the County and City Management Association (CCMA). The Local Authority Forum is the only cross-border focused Local Authority group operating at a Chief Executive level and comprises ten members. The aim of the Forum is to progress and develop meaningful cross-border relationships within the local government sector. The Forum provides opportunities for cross-border co-operation on a range of issues of mutual interest to both administrations and the work of the Forum is developed through practical joint projects and the sharing of knowledge, expertise and best practice.

The mission statement for the All-Island Local Authority Forum is as follows:

"To advance mutual understanding by promoting practical co-operation between local authorities on the island of Ireland, through maximising shared learning and the production of tangible benefits for services and local communities".

The work of the Forum currently focuses on six key areas as follows: Strategic/Development Planning, Community Planning & Place Shaping, Tourism, Shared Services, Leadership and Housing.

Further information on the work of the Forum is available at www.cooperationireland.org.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) is a North-South-U.S. partnership. It was formally established in 2006 to explore and expand the contribution that spatial planning and the development of physical, social and economic infrastructure can make to peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland, and elsewhere. The ICLRd has developed out of a unique collaboration between academics and spatial planning specialists, with current partners including the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at Maynooth University, the Belfast School of Architecture and the Built Environment at Ulster University and the National Center for Smart Growth at University of Maryland.

A central objective of the ICLRd is to strengthen the policy and operational linkages between central, regional and local policy-makers and among officials and practitioners involved in spatial planning and social and economic development across the island of Ireland. It does this through action research, policy advice and publications; professional facilitation and education and capacity building programmes that assist local governments and communities to translate policy into 'on the ground' action; and active outreach and networking that includes conferences, workshops and international co-operation and exchanges to identify best practices.

The ICLRd continues to expand its collaboration with other institutions and has built up close working relationships with individual faculty and researchers from universities and research institutions - both on the island of Ireland and internationally - and with other organisations involved in cross-border research and activities including Co-operation Ireland.

Further information on the work of the ICLRd is available at www.iclrd.org



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Chair: Mr. Conor Skehan, School of Spatial Planning, Technological University Dublin

09.00-10.00	Registration / Refreshments
10.00-10.10	Welcoming by Chair Mr. Conor Skehan, School of Spatial Planning, Technological University Dublin
10.10-10.30	Death from Nostalgic Sentiment or A New Narrative for Rural Ireland? Mr. Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive, Roscommon County Council
SESSION 1: NUANCES IN THE RURAL IRELAND NARRATIVE A critical look at the narratives surrounding Rural Ireland and their implications for rural policy and practice	
10.30-10.35	Opening Remarks Session 1 Chair: Mr. Conor Skehan, School of Spatial Planning, Technological University Dublin
10.35-11.00	Looking Forward, Not Back; Nostalgia and the Rural Idyll vs Sustainable Futures Prof. Des McCafferty, Head of Geography, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
11.00-11.20	The Rural Narrative: Stuck in Nostalgic Sentiment and Political Opportunism? Dr. Karen Keaveney, Assistant Professor of Rural Development, School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin & Senior Research Associate, ICLRD
11.20-11.40	Thinking Rural: Reflecting on the Impact of Rural Proofing on Northern Ireland Policy Mr. Colm McQuillan, Director of Housing Services, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
11.40-11.50	Q&A
11.50-12.15	Refreshments & Networking
SESSION 2: A NEW NARRATIVE FOR RURAL IRELAND – THE ROLE OF PEOPLE	
12.15-12.20	Opening Remarks Session 2 Chair: Mr. Conor Skehan, School of Spatial Planning, Technological University Dublin
12.20-12.40	Perceiving Futures in the Present: Exploring the Future Creativity of Place Mr. Kevin Murray, Director, Kevin Murray Associates & Honorary Professor of Planning, University of Dundee
12.40-13.00	Valuing Towns: People Make the Difference Ms. Pippa Coutts, Policy and Development Manager, Carnegie UK Trust
13.00-13.15	Q&A
13.15-14.15	Lunch
SESSION 3: FRAMING A NEW NARRATIVE FOR RURAL PLACES	
14.15-14.20	Opening Remarks Session 3 Chair: Mr. Conor Skehan, School of Spatial Planning, Technological University Dublin
14.20-14.40	Breaking Ground – European Approaches to Changing Rural Narratives Ms Caroline Creamer, Director, International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD)
14.40-15.00	Rural Shrinkage : A New Narrative for Rural Ireland Dr. David Meredith, Senior Research Officer, Teagasc
15.00-15.15	Q&A
SESSION 4: CONFERENCE CLOSE	
15.15-15.45	Concluding Remarks: A New Narrative for Rural Ireland Mr. Conor Skehan, School of Spatial Planning, Technological University Dublin
Conference End.	

BIOGRAPHIES:



Conor Skehan
TU Dublin

Conor Skehan has over 30 years' experience of rural and urban planning at all scales – both in Ireland and internationally. He lectures – and was previously Department Head – in TU Dublin's School of Transport Engineering, Environment and Planning and has also founded a number of environmental and planning consultancies. He has served as director and chair of a number of government agencies and companies – most recently as Chair of the Housing Agency. He regularly appears in broadcast and print media.



Eugene Cummins
Chief Executive,
Roscommon County Council

Eugene was appointed Chief Executive of Roscommon County Council on 1st October 2015 having held a similar position with Monaghan County Council for the previous two years. Over the years Eugene has worked in five Local Authorities at different grades and has been in Local Government "for a very long time". He is particularly interested in town centre renewal through energising surrounding communities to nurture and develop their collective strengths by being actively involved in community activity to grow / promote / improve their area / town. Eugene has a BE in Civil Engineering and a Masters in Business Administration from Dublin City University.



Prof. Des McCafferty
Professor and Head of the
Department of Geography in
Mary Immaculate College,
University of Limerick

Des McCafferty is Professor and Head of the Department of Geography in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. His research interests are wide ranging, and include the structure and development of the Irish urban hierarchy and its role in territorial development; spatial planning; and area-based measures to combat deprivation in both urban and rural settings. He has participated in Irish and European research programmes across these areas, including research funded by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, and by the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON). He is a past president of the Geographical Society of Ireland, and chairman of the Irish Branch of the Regional Studies Association. He has also served on Strategic Policy Committees, for Social Policy and Housing, and for Transportation and Infrastructure, of the former Limerick City Council.



Dr. Karen Keaveney
Assistant Professor of Rural
Development in the School of
Agriculture and Food Science,
University College Dublin

Karen Keaveney is an Assistant Professor of Rural Development in the School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin. Previously, Karen was Lecturer in Rural Spatial Planning in Queen's University Belfast. She has held a number of visiting appointments internationally, including Visiting Research Fellow in the Joint Centre for Housing Studies, Harvard University, and Visiting Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Toronto. She is a qualified Urban and Regional Planner (UCD) with an undergraduate degree in Human and Physical Geography (NUI Galway) and PhD in Geography (Maynooth University). Karen's key areas of interest are rural planning, housing and development. She has expertise in local decision-making and governance, sustainable rural development, and socio-economic change in the countryside.



Dr. David Meredith
Senior Research Officer, Teagasc

David Meredith (PhD) is a Senior Research Officer at Teagasc, the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority working within the Rural Economy Research Programme. David leads the Rural Development and the Rural Health Research programmes. This portfolio of research projects evaluates the long-run nature of key trends shaping rural communities and rural areas. David completed his PhD in 2012 (NUI Maynooth), has a MLitt (1998) and BA (1995) from NUI Dublin and received a Higher Diploma in Statistics from TCD (2014). David is currently leading a number of national projects exploring different dimensions of rural population change and is the Irish partner in the EU ESPON – funded ESCAPE project which explores the issue of rural population decline and shrinkage.



Colm McQuillan
Director of Housing Services,
Northern Ireland Housing
Executive (NIHE)

Colm McQuillan worked in the Housing Executive for the past 36 years in a variety of posts. Over the last 12 years he has held senior positions covering service modernisation, Supporting People, Housing Benefit, Corporate Services and most recently Housing Services. Since 2017 he has occupied the post of Director of Housing Services with responsibility for the management of the Executive's 86,500 tenancies. He is also responsible for Homelessness and the policy and delivery of services associated with this. He currently serves on the Northern Ireland Board of the Chartered Institute of Housing.



Caroline Creamer
Director, International Centre
for Local and Regional
Development (ICLRD)

Caroline Creamer is Director of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), Facilitator of the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum (AISCF) and a Research Fellow with the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at Maynooth University. A qualified town planner, Caroline has for the past 18 years worked in a research and management capacity on a number of EU funded projects in the areas of urban and rural regeneration, spatial planning, multi-level governance and community participation. Over the last decade, Caroline has been working with local government, regional authorities, communities and other key stakeholders in the Irish border region and Northern Ireland on a range of programmes focused on place-shaping, rural revitalisation and improving the lives of people on the island of Ireland.



Pippa Coutts
Policy and Development
Manager, Carnegie UK Trust

Pippa Coutts is the Policy and Development Manager at Carnegie UK Trust, promoting community and societal wellbeing across the UK, jurisdictional sharing of evidence and cross-sectoral learning. Previously she held another cross-UK policy post with the Alliance for Useful Evidence, Nesta. Pippa has been a manager and independent consultant in the health and social care sector in Scotland for 15 years and prior to that she had a successful career in international development.



Kevin Murray
Director,
Kevin Murray Associates,
Founder Academy of
Urbanism

Kevin Murray is a town planner and urbanist, with specialisms in strategy, regeneration and stakeholder engagement. Kevin is a Founding Director and Past Chair of The Academy of Urbanism, a Fellow and Past President of the RTPI, and current Chair of Partners in Planning. He is also Honorary Professor of Planning at Glasgow and Dundee Universities. He regularly facilitates the development of visions and strategies, action plans and projects, working with communities, public agencies and developers. Kevin has worked in many small towns across Scotland including Ardrishaig, Biggar, Bowling, Clydebank, Denny, Dumbarton. He was involved in developing transformational options at last years Walled City regeneration conference in Derry, and has also worked internationally.

