

CONSTRUCTION

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

JULY/AUGUST 2020

RISING TO THE COVID CHALLENGE





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EDITORIAL



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The Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) should now be embedded as part of every CIF member's safety plans. Many contractors have gone beyond the recommendations of the SOP and the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' by introducing more stringent measures to protect workers and their families. But Covid-19 is still here and remains a real and constant risk. So, it is essential that all persons on sites do not become complacent about social distancing and hand hygiene.

CIF is now asking members and workers to focus their attention on the broader safety picture and address traditional site risks, such as working at height, lifting, and working with machinery. During August, CIF is running programmes to assist safety managers in refocusing attention on these areas.

In this issue of *Construction*, our lead story looks at how two contractors, Ballymore Group and Suir Engineering, have embedded the SOP into their operations, and how this has changed their site operations and impacted on other aspects of their businesses.

In Category Focus, Covid-19 is another risk to add to the list of challenges that civil

engineering contractors must overcome to deliver 'Project Ireland 2040'.

With a High Court judgment – currently under appeal – deeming the Sectoral Employment Order (Electrical Contracting Sector) 2019 invalid, Jean Winters, Director, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, CIF, writes about what the next steps will be in addressing this issue.

Elsewhere in this issue, in Project Focus, we feature the sustainable development of Lidl's Regional Distribution Centre in Kildare, on which main contractor John Paul Construction employed the latest digital construction technologies and lean practices. In Member Profile, we feature Cork-based GPD Building Contractors, whose safety procedures have seen it listed as one of the country's top contractors when it comes to safety.

We also bring you all the latest CIF and industry news as well as upcoming CIF events and courses.

Finally, I recommend that you continue to keep an eye on the news section of the CIF website www.cif.ie for regular updates and information relating to Covid-19 and construction industry matters. **C**

Robbie Cousins
Editor



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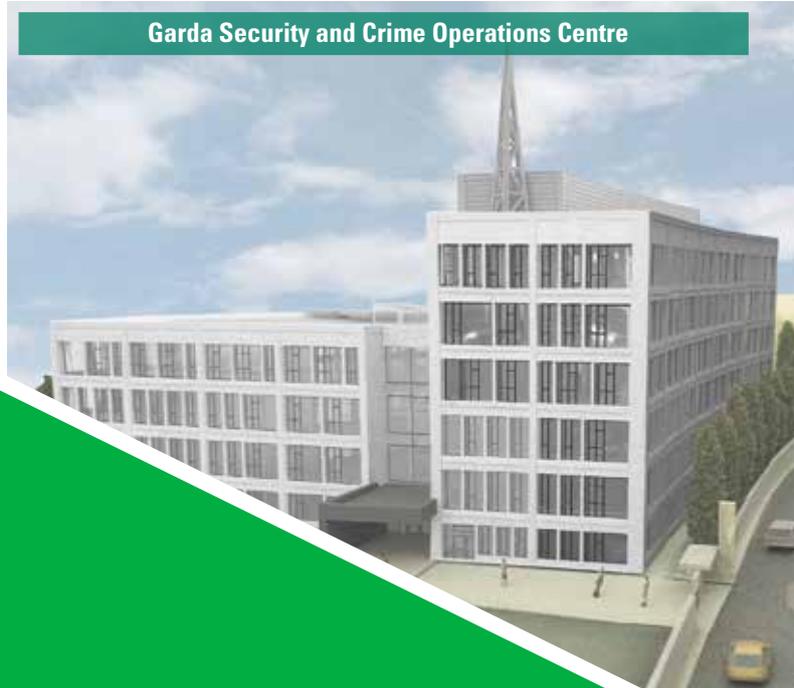
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John Paul Construction



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CIF NEWS

STAY SAFE AND REMAIN VIGILANT AGAINST THE RISK OF CORONAVIRUS SPREADING

A message from CIF Director General Tom Parlon

As the country starts to rebuild, the construction sector has shown strong leadership in addressing the challenges presented by Covid-19. Over the past few months, the Irish construction industry has developed the measures and embraced the changes required to make our workplaces safer. In doing so, it led the way in reopening the Irish economy. This is an achievement that should not pass without being acknowledged.

Despite all the measures taken, coronavirus remains a constant threat to our construction sites. As a result of the implementation of measures contained in the CIF 'C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP), where cases have been identified, our members, working closely with the HSE, have moved quickly to protect those infected, and others working around them. The CIF Safety Committee is continually evolving the SOP and has recently highlighted HSE protocols for potential and actual Covid cases discovered on sites. Members should continue to familiarise themselves with this continually evolving document.

The two-month shutdown from March may have cost the sector in the region of €2bn in lost project time. The industry is now moving to catch up on lost time. It needs the support of the Government, particularly when it comes to introducing stimuli at the right time and in the right place. We are making a strong case to Government to back this industry so we can deliver the essential housing and infrastructure that will underpin economic recovery.

I welcome measures contained in the Government's €7.4bn July stimulus package. I hope they will be delivered quickly and focus on



Tom Parlon,
Director General, CIF.

“ BACKING REGIONAL SMES BY PROVIDING THEM WITH A STRONG PIPELINE OF WORK WILL SPREAD THE RECOVERY TO HARD-HIT COMMUNITIES AROUND IRELAND. ”

regional development as a priority. Every euro invested in construction delivers multiple positive benefits for the economy as we generate value and circulate money at a greater velocity than any other sector. Backing regional SMEs by providing them with a strong pipeline of work will spread the recovery to hard-hit communities around Ireland.

Elements contained in the package, including investment in the renewal of transport infrastructure, the €100m for the Energy Efficiency National Retrofit Programme, and investment in water infrastructure, all now need to be delivered quickly.

The supply of new homes in Ireland is running well behind requirements, with average earners unable to afford homes. The expansion of the Help-to-Buy scheme to €30,000 will give more first-time homebuyers access to the initiative. However, the dysfunction in the housing market requires much more fundamental intervention. The simple fact is that the time and cost pertaining to Government and the State elongating housing delivery must be reduced to make affordable housing possible.

I am particularly happy to see the Apprenticeship Incentivisation Scheme included in the package. This scheme will make a significant difference to SME contractors looking to bring through new apprentices.

In closing, I call on everyone to remain vigilant against the risk of coronavirus spreading, and to ensure that the two-metre social-distancing requirement is being adhered to at all times and that all people on site are following hand-hygiene procedures. **C**

*Stay safe,
Tom Parlon*



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REFOCUS ON SAFETY DURING AUGUST

Following the implementation of the CIF C19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure, the CIF Health Safety and Welfare sub-Committee was concerned that members once again refocus their efforts on overall site safety, particularly in the area of working at height. Sadly, of the five fatalities in the construction industry so far in 2020, four were as a result of falls from heights, and the other involved machinery.

To facilitate members in engaging with workers around overall site safety, the CIF is running a “Refocus on Safety” campaign, up to the end of August.

WORKING AT HEIGHT

Many falls occur at relatively low heights, for example, two or three metres above ground level. According to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), working at height is defined as, “Work in any place, including a place at, above or below ground level,



where a person could be injured if they fell from that place. Access and egress to a place of work can also be work at height”.

The key messaging from the HSA to ensure safe working at height is as follows:

- Carry out risk assessments for work-at-height activities and make sure that all work is planned, organised, and carried out by a competent person.
- Follow the ‘General Principles of Prevention’ for managing risks from work at height, taking steps to avoid, prevent or reduce risks.
- Choose appropriate work equipment and prioritise collective measures

to prevent falls (such as guard rails and working platforms) over other measures which may only reduce the distance and consequences of a fall (such as nets or airbags) or may only provide fall-arrest through personal protection equipment.

The CIF is calling for all those engaged in construction activity to undertake risk assessments for work-at-height activities and to make sure the work is adequately planned and organised to avoid, or at least, reduce risks as much as is reasonably practicable.

The CIF is calling on members to use the hashtag #CIFSITESAFETY in social media posts during August to highlight your safety initiatives on social media, and the CIF will endeavour to provide support. **C**

For further details on any aspect relating to working at height safely, please visit the HSA website www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Work_at_Height/#

LIGHTHOUSE CHARITY LAUNCHES FREE 24/7 MENTAL WELLBEING HELPLINE AND APP

The coronavirus global pandemic is having a negative impact on many people’s mental health in society. Those in the construction industry who had faced a long lay-off are no exception. To help construction workers cope with these issues, the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity has launched a free and confidential 24/7 helpline and wellbeing app.

The Helpline can be called anytime on 1800 939 122, and the app ‘Construction Industry Helpline’ can be downloaded on Android or Apple mobile devices.

Lighthouse CEO Bill Hill says of the helpline launch, “A large proportion of construction workers are either self-employed or work for small businesses. They do not have access to an employee assistance programme (EAP) for support.

“One of the charity’s key objectives is to reduce suicides of those working in the construction sector. The 24/7 Construction Industry helpline delivers an EAP to all workers and is complemented by a supporting helpline app. This app is available on Android and Apple devices and is packed full of information, advice and guidance on mental, physical and financial wellbeing matters.



Bill Hill, CEO, Lighthouse Construction Charity.

“By making all the services free and confidential, the charity aims to remove two of the key barriers to people seeking help. The final barrier to overcome is the stigma of using such services often inherent in stoic, masculine belief.”

Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and

Training, CIF, said, “We’re delighted to partner with the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity on providing this EAP, featuring some of Ireland’s leading support groups, to those working in construction. It’s a stressful time for those who have returned to work, and companies and employees need to work together to ensure we’re working safely. For the CIF, mental health is inseparable from safety because on sites we all depend on each other to keep safe, especially at this time of Covid-19. In the construction industry, we want to mind our workers, and we also recognise they are our greatest resource. This EAP is an excellent resource for the Lighthouse Club to support workers over the coming years. **C**

For more details, including a webinar of the launch, and printable resources such as posters, visit www.constructionindustryhelpline.com/ireland.html



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REPORT IDENTIFIES HIGH IMPACT ACTIONS TO INCREASE CONSTRUCTION INNOVATION AND OUTPUT



Construction Sector Group
Building Innovation



The publication of the 'Construction Sector Group Building Innovation' report follows the recent publication of an economic analysis of productivity in the Irish construction sector. Few sectors of the Irish economy have been as volatile over the past 20 years as the construction sector. The report identifies a number of high impact actions to be undertaken to increase innovation and output in the sector in order to deliver the economic and social infrastructure this country needs.

THREE IMPORTANT THEMES

In 2019, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation launched the Government's Future Jobs Ireland Strategy based on embracing innovation and technological change, improving productivity, enhancing skills and transitioning to a low-carbon economy. Building innovation is strongly aligned with that strategy.

Three important themes have emerged, which if addressed, can help improve profits, wages and output for the industry, and thereby provide value for money in the delivery of 'Project Ireland 2040'. These include:

- The need for the industry, particularly SMEs and small firms, to increase investment in innovation and technology to spur the next wave of growth based on a foundation of

Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Finance, has welcomed a new report that gives an overview of trends in the Irish construction sector, including the initial impacts of Covid-19 on the industry.

digital adoption, by both clients and contractors.

- The need for ongoing regulatory reform of public procurement, environmental, labour and other areas, to streamline and assist in achieving competitiveness and sustainability.
- The need to increase certainty and visibility of the pipeline of projects, to provide the industry with the confidence to invest and individuals with the opportunity to choose a career in the built environment.

GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO PUBLIC CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Minister Donohoe said, "In spite of Covid-19, the extensive requirements for housing and infrastructure identified in Project Ireland 2040 remain substantially unchanged. The Government remains committed to investing public capital expenditure into the development of new social, economic and climate infrastructure.

"More than ever, Ireland needs a competitive, dynamic, and sustainable construction sector that can deliver high-quality physical infrastructure for all our citizens.

"The shutdown of sites due to the necessarily imposed public health restrictions posed a great challenge to all sectors of our economy. I am confident that the implementation of the actions outlined in this report, alongside the continued, open dialogue between Government and industry stakeholders through the Construction Sector Group (CSG) will positively affect the sector's ability to deliver and overcome challenges around capacity following the recent restart."

CIF WELCOMES REPORT

Welcoming the publication of the report, Tom Parlon, Director General, CIF, and a member of the Construction Sector Group, said, "The Building Innovation framework charts a way for the construction industry and the State to



Paschal Donohoe TD,
Minister for Finance.

collaborate efficiently in building a truly innovative and dynamic industry over the next decade. The benefits of doing so will be felt by every citizen in Ireland and the coming generations. For example, the recently published Programme for Government is heavily dependent on having a dynamic construction industry operating at optimum levels. In addition, the construction industry will be front and centre in driving economic recovery in the near term, the housing required to solve the ongoing crisis, and the infrastructure required to reshape Ireland up to 2040. This requires coordination, coherence and commitment across the industry and the multiple Government agencies involved in the delivery of construction output in Ireland.

"We look forward to working with our partners to modernise our industry and in doing so, rebuild our economy and reshape our society to have the maximum positive impact on every citizen's wellbeing." **C**

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SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT ORDERS DEEMED INVALID BY THE HIGH COURT

JEAN WINTERS, Director, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, CIF, writes about the recent High Court judgment that deemed the Sectoral Employment Order (Electrical Contracting Sector) invalid.

On 23rd June, the High Court issued its judgment on a challenge taken by the National Electrical Contractors of Ireland (NECI) against the Labour Court, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Attorney General. NECI challenged the validity of the Sectoral Employment Order (Electrical Contracting Sector) 2019 and the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015. NECI was successful on both counts. The defendants have decided to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT ORDERS

In his judgment, Justice Garrett Simons advised that Chapter 3 of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 is invalid having regard to the provisions of Article 15.2.1 of the Constitution. He also advised that it, therefore, follows that the Electrical SEO is also invalid and must fall with the parent legislation.

The effect of this judgment is that all SEOs introduced in accordance with the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 are now deemed invalid. The SEOs applicable in the general construction industry, the mechanical sector and the electrical sector are, therefore, deemed invalid.

Workers in the industry are currently employed in accordance with the terms of the applicable SEO. A contract is, therefore, in place between employers and workers. Employers do not have the right to amend the terms of a contract of employment unilaterally.

Judge Simons advised that it is proposed to make a declaration that Chapter 3 of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 is invalid. It is, therefore, proposed that an Order is issued in due course giving legal effect to the judgment. However, as the defendants have decided to appeal the judgment to the Supreme Court, they may apply for a Stay on the Construction and Mechanical SEOs in particular pending the outcome of the appeal.

Until the position becomes clearer, construction employers are advised to continue to adhere to the terms of the relevant SEO until at least such time as a declaration is issued giving legal effect to the judgment or a Stay is placed on the SEOs pending appeal to the Supreme Court.

The CIF Industrial Relations sub-Committee has set up a special sub-committee to deal with this issue. This sub-committee will meet on a regular basis over the coming months.

SECTION 12 OF THE REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS ACT

Normally, workers who are on temporary lay-off or short-time working for four consecutive weeks, or a broken series of six weeks within a 13-week period, are entitled to claim redundancy from their employer in accordance with Section 12 of the Redundancy Payments Act 1967. The entitlement to claim redundancy by reason of temporary lay-off was suspended on a temporary basis under the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act 2020. The initial suspension of section 12 of the Redundancy Payments Act 1967 was from 13th March 2020



Jean Winters, Director, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, CIF.

until 31st May 2020. The period of suspension has been extended until 10th August 2020 to coincide with the Government's roadmap to fully re-open society and businesses.

The suspension of the entitlement to claim redundancy by reason of temporary lay-off will be lifted on 10th August 2020. Therefore, any worker who remains on temporary lay-off after 10th August, having been on temporary lay-off for at least four weeks prior to 10th August 2020, will be entitled to make a claim for redundancy.

RETURNING TO WORK FROM HOLIDAYS ABROAD

The construction summer holidays run from finishing time on Friday, 17th July 2020 to starting time on Tuesday, 4th August 2020. Construction employers should make efforts to enquire if workers intend to travel abroad during the summer holidays.

The current Government advice is to avoid all non-essential travel overseas, and those who do travel abroad should self-isolate for 14 days upon return to Ireland. However, on 20th July 2020, at time of writing, the Government intends to publish a 'green list' of countries that will allow travel outside of Ireland without having to self-isolate for 14 days upon return.

Employers should ensure that those workers who have travelled abroad to countries outside of the 'green list' have self-isolated for 14 days upon return to Ireland. Any worker who is self-isolating due to travelling abroad to a country outside the 'green list' will not be entitled to pay due to their inability to work during this time. **C**

OVER 190,000 PEOPLE COMPLETE C-19 INDUCTION PROGRAMME

DERMOT CAREY, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, writes that with the Covid-19 SOP now embedded in every contractor's safety plans, the industry needs to refocus on overall safety issues.



Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF.

The introduction of the CIF Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) would not have been possible without the cooperation and hard work of every stakeholder in the construction industry. The sector completely overhauled how it operates and led the way in reopening the Irish economy.

SOP IMPLEMENTATION

The feedback from members regarding the SOP and its requirements is that it has proceeded without any major difficulty. The CIF is delighted that nearly 200,000 people have now completed the online CIF C-19 Induction programme.

There are concerns about quarantine requirements for workers entering the country, particularly in relation to specialist contractors who are essential

for the progression of projects. The Safety, Health & Welfare sub-Committee is preparing guidance for the industry on what we believe to be best practice.

REFOCUS ON SITE SAFETY

With the SOP now embedded, it should be part of every site's overall safety plans. Focusing on overall site safety, the CIF is greatly concerned about the sector's most prevalent cause of fatality, working at heights. So far this year, there have been five fatalities in the construction industry, of which four have been as a result of falls from height. Considering the construction industry was closed for nearly eight weeks, this is very worrying. We will be running programmes up to the end of August aimed at rebalancing the sector's safety focus.

SAFEPASS

CIF is in ongoing discussions with Solas and relevant Government departments to set out a timeline for the establishment of a pilot SafePass virtual offering. We understand that Government will not be removing the legislation that underpins the exemption for SafePass cards that had expired before the introduction of the industry shutdown. We remind members that due to the reduced capacity for delivering SafePass cards, currently and for the foreseeable future you should endeavour to undergo the required course to renew your card. **C**

DUBLIN SIMON COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT MORE THAN EVER

Last year, the CIF joined forces with the Dublin Simon Community to support 50 individuals and families to get out of unstable emergency accommodation and into more permanent, safe homes.

The concept of the CIF/Dublin Simon Community collaboration is simple: CIF members endeavour to raise funds, amounting to €20,000, throughout the year; and then Dublin Simon Community uses each donation of €20,000 as a deposit on a home for an individual or a family.

Sam McGuinness, CEO, Dublin Simon Community, explains, "Through our partnership with CIF, in the north-east, mid-east and Dublin areas, we are providing direct access to homes for people who would otherwise remain trapped indefinitely in emergency accommodation. At the Simon Community, our vision is to make home a reality for the thousands of men, women and children for whom 'home' feels like an insurmountable challenge. With



Sam McGuinness, CEO, Dublin Simon Community.

the support of CIF, this initiative means that people and families will finally feel free from fear, anxiety and uncertainty as they close the door on homelessness for good."

Eaton became the first CIF member to donate to the programme last year.

This donation enabled Dublin Simon to acquire a two-bedroom apartment in south-west Dublin. The charity is now in

the process of refurbishing the property, which will soon be home to a family who are currently homeless.

Throughout the Covid-19 crisis, people and families living in homelessness have been facing immense stress. Thanks to Eaton, one family will now be able to exit homelessness for good.

Covid-19 has had a massive impact on Dublin Simon. Keeping vulnerable clients and staff safe has been its top priority, which has meant significant investment was required for equipment and resources to manage and prevent the spread of infection. The restrictions on public gatherings and the closure of schools, clubs and places of worship have also curtailed much of its fundraising activity. **C**

To learn more about how you can Dublin Simon Community to provide permanent, safe homes for our most vulnerable, please contact Rachel Moffat at email: rachelmoffat@dubsimon.ie

“IRELAND NEEDS A COMPETITIVE, DYNAMIC, AND SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR”

PAUL SHERIDAN, Director, Main Contracting and Civil Engineering, CIF, writes that when compared to its European counterparts, Irish construction has been the worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, but it is now well placed to drive economic recovery.

Despite the significant impact of Covid-19 on construction sites, members have shown a remarkable ability to remobilise following the Government enforced shutdown. They have made every effort to do this efficiently and safely through problem-solving and implementing complex processes and systems in a dynamic live environment, while all the time protecting workers. The construction sector has shown leadership to all other sectors and has given confidence to the Government and the public that the industry can mitigate against the risk of Covid-19.

Contractors have made a huge effort on behalf of their clients to mitigate against the effects of Covid-19 on their construction projects and have actively sought to engage collaboratively to achieve this. However, the real and ongoing impact of Covid-19 as a health and safety risk remains, and it should be managed supportively and collaboratively by clients and contractors.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

While many private clients recognise that their interests lie in protecting the construction supply chain and hence their project assets, some have refused to engage collaboratively, instead, having resorted to adopting absolute legal positions, often based on quasi-legal opinion. This sets each party on a costly path, with an over-reliance on the involvement of the legal profession leading to unnecessary legal disputes and the loss of client value on construction projects.

The necessary ongoing adjustments to projects as a result of Covid-19 will require continued professional engagement from all parties.

When necessary, the private sector should look to enlightened client behaviour in the public sector, such as the facility of ex-gratia mechanisms to support contractors during the shutdown period, the introduction of cash injections by way of the early release of retention, and mechanisms to address productivity-related adjustments.

MANAGING RISK

Beyond existing projects, there is the challenge of how future tenders and contracts will manage the health and safety risk presented by Covid-19. Risk should only be allocated to the party best placed to manage it. The pricing of a health and safety risk should be done carefully, taking into consideration preliminary items and potential productivity impacts on construction plans. The guidance note issued from the Office of Government Procurement on 23rd July is welcomed and the priority now for contracting authorities should be to maintain a sustainable pipeline of projects to support the construction supply chain.

Covid-19 has shown that the industry can work together to overcome existential threats. It has also shown that all systems require flexibility, agility and adaptability. The drafting of construction contracts and the allocation of risk should be led primarily by construction professionals who understand that construction contracts are not just a list of stand-alone clauses, but an interconnected framework designed to manage the complex delivery of an asset over a prolonged period of time, while cost-effectively managing risk.



Paul Sheridan, Director, Main Contracting and Civil Engineering, CIF.

The Government has signalled its intention for regulatory reform in the construction sector, particularly in recognising the need to improve how client and contractors engage with each other under the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF). The CIF has been calling on the Government for CWMF reform, with submissions made outlining its concerns in 2014 and 2016.

FUTURE WORK

Beyond contracts, the most significant concerns post remobilisation are now future work and the pipeline of work. While there are positive signals from Government, any delay or fall off in tenders and State contracts will have a massively detrimental effect on the construction supply chain, at a time when it is the best place to support economic recovery, particularly for civil engineers and general building contractors who can deliver green infrastructure, transport, healthcare and the retro-fitting programmes. The civil engineering sector is critical to State infrastructure. While still affected by Covid-19, due to its nature, it is better placed to manage Covid-19 health and safety risks. This should, therefore, enable the acceleration of contract awards, tendering and future project design for the civils sector.

By taking a lead role in infrastructural investment pipelines, the Government can help provide the necessary confidence for the private sector to continue its own infrastructural investment, thereby mutually supporting economic recovery.

A pipeline also provides business certainty, which will promote investment in productivity-enhancing solutions within the sector. The Government has reinforced its commitment to investment in the Construction Sector Group 'Building Innovation' report, which has identified that, "More than ever, Ireland needs a competitive, dynamic, and sustainable construction sector that can deliver high-quality physical infrastructure for all our citizens". The construction sector is ready to deliver what our country needs. **C**

CIF COMMERCIAL PARTNERS ASSISTING MEMBERS WITH ADDRESSING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Our industry has changed utterly in the space of three short months. Since sites started to open, CIF members continue to adapt within this new environment. CIF members are acquiring new products and services to improve safety, productivity and profitability.

As part of our commitment to members at this time of change, CIF has launched a new CIF Commercial Partners programme to assist with accessing essential products and services that may be required to bring building sites in line with the provisions set out in the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol, HSE guidelines and guidance set out in the CIF's 'Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure' document. In addition, many of the companies that have already become CIF commercial partners are offering substantial discounts, with genuine savings to be made.

Products and services available to date include:

- Facemasks, visors/sanitiser
- PPE
- Temperature screening



Bernardine Walsh, Membership Development Executive, CIF.

- Covid-19 compliance software
- Hand-sanitising stations
- Tools and social-distancing software

- Printing and signage
- Bespoke rebar solutions
- Lifting equipment and servicing
- Mechanical services
- Work permits
- Safety management
- Accommodation
- Catering
- Mobile toilets
- Video production
- Office furniture.

The latest offers from CIF Commercial Partners can be found at www.cif.ie/commercial-partners

The CIF Commercial Partners programme is a unique package of exclusive products and includes discounts and special offers available only to CIF members.

If you are a company with a unique product or service that will make life on site safer, more efficient and professional, please contact us today. **C**

For more information about becoming a CIF Commercial Partner, contact Bernardine Walsh at Email: bwalsh@cif.ie or Tel: 01 406 6067.

CIF Commercial Partners are suppliers of equipment/services for your construction business



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PRODUCTS: Suppliers of high quality CE-certified Covid-19 PPE & thermal scanners

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ADVANCE ACCESS

PRODUCTS: Site access control systems, handsfree turnstiles, Bluetooth access control, temperature screening

CONTACT: Eoghan Connolly, Tel: 087 905 6764, Email: eoghan@advanceaccess.ie



TEC SECURITY

PRODUCTS: Fever detection face recognition solutions

CONTACT: Stephen Tyrrell, Tel: 01 404 5124, Email: tecsecurity@eircom.net



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 <p>VISION BUILT PRODUCTS: Covid-19 WC Eco Pod mobile toilet facility in line with WHO guidelines CONTACT: Julie Regan, Tel: 091 795505, Email: j.regan@vision-built.com Web: www.vision-built.com</p>	 <p>HILTI IRELAND PRODUCTS: Tool & software solutions for productive social-distancing compliance CONTACT: Micheál Molloy, Tel: 087 989 2326, Email: Micheal.Molloy@hilti.com Web: www.hilti.ie</p>	 <p>FITZERS CATERING LTD SERVICES: Catering specialists who can provide solutions to your venue or site CONTACT: Sharon Fitzpatrick, Tel: 086 255 5651, Email: sharonfitzpatrick@fitzerscatering.ie Web: www.fitzerscatering.ie</p>	 <p>BEWISE PRODUCTS: A full range of PPE and social distancing materials CONTACT: Lee McCreery, Tel: 087 410 5947, Email: lee@jlmgifts.ie Web: www.bewise.ie</p>	 <p>TOPCON PRODUCTS: Sale, Hire & service of construction tools. (Lasers, BIM, UAV, Survey) CONTACT: Joe Glennon, Tel: 01 897 5900. Email: jglennon@topcon.com Web: www.topconpositioning.com</p>	 <p>LOUGHCREW ENTERPRISES PRODUCTS: Hand sanitising stations CONTACT: Tel: 086 775 5779/049 854 1819, Email: padraig@houseofcorrigan.com Web: www.loughcrew-ent.com</p>
 <p>WORKPERMITS IRELAND SERVICES: Consultation, Critical/General/All other skills permit, visa, immigration CONTACT: Colm Hilliard, Tel: 086 469 7939, Email: info@workpermits.ie Web: www.workpermits.ie</p>	 <p>THE BELVEDERE HOTEL SERVICES: Dublin city centre newly refurbished hotel. Special construction worker rate from €60 CONTACT: Agata Hajduk, Tel: 01 873 7700, Email: revenuemanager@belvederehotel.ie Web: www.belvederehoteldublin.com</p>	 <p>PROLIFT HANDLING PRODUCTS: Supply & service of lifting, material handling and height safety gear CONTACT: Darragh Hickey, Tel: 086 780 9679, Email: darragh@prolift.ie Web: www.prolift.ie</p>	 <p>XENON FEVER DEFENCE PRODUCTS: Non-contact temperature-screening device CONTACT: Sales Team, Tel: 086 842 6092. Email: sales@feverdefence.com Web: www.feverdefence.com</p>	 <p>MIDLAND STEEL REINFORCEMENT SUPPLIES PRODUCTS: Bespoke BIM rebar solutions, Modular rebar solutions CONTACT: Michael O'Brien, Tel: 087 116 3201, Email: mobrien@midlandsteelsupplies.ie Web: www.midlandsteelsupplies.ie</p>	 <p>SL DISTRIBUTION PRODUCTS: Face masks, PPE equipment CONTACT: Simon Linscheid, Tel: 086 997 2507, Email: simon@sldistribution.ie Web: www.sldistribution.ie</p>
 <p>SHOOT CUT GRADE LTD PRODUCTS: Construction sector video production & E-Learning specialists. CONTACT: James Galvin, Phone: 01 437 8321, Email: sales@shootcutgrade.com Web: www.shootcutgrade.com</p>	 <p>REACH GROUP PRODUCTS: A diverse range of personal protective equipment and hygiene products CONTACT: Aoife Ryan, Tel: 01 499 3562, Email: sales@reachgroup.ie Web: www.reachretailservices.ie</p>	 <p>SAFETYFREELANCER SERVICES: Outsource all your SHEQ on to our online bid website; 1,000 experts online. CONTACT: Gavin Coyle, Tel: 086 220 0018, Email: gavin@safetyfreelancer.com Web: www.safetyfreelancer.com</p>	 <p>ETAG FIXINGS IRELAND PRODUCTS: Building materials, fixings, PPE, site consumables, social distancing solutions. CONTACT: Damien Lynch/Dave O'Reilly, Tel: 086 389 4995/086 829 1010, Email: sales@etagfixings.com Web: www.etag.ie</p>	 <p>HORIZON DIGITAL PRINT SOLUTIONS PRODUCTS: Print & PPE, Safety signage, Site Hoardings, Building Mesh, Hat & Face Visors CONTACT: Jeff Maguire, Tel: 087 234 2349, Email: jeff@horizondigitalprint.com Web: www.horizondigitalprint.com</p>	 <p>AZZURRI SPORT PRODUCTS: SWIFT-19 and AFNOR specification reusable barrier masks CONTACT: Jack Molloy, Tel: 051-850055, Email: jackmolloy@azzurri.ie Web: www.azzurri.ie</p>



NEW MEMBERS

The Construction Industry Federation welcomes the following new members who, having met all the necessary criteria, have been approved for membership by the CIF Executive Body.



John Foster Construction Ltd

18 Mallow Street
Limerick
Co Limerick
www.fosterconstruction.ie

Kane Group

Docklands Innovation Park
East Wall Road
Dublin 3
www.kanegroup.ie

Kerry Ground Control Ltd

Dromin
Fossa
Killarney
Co Kerry

Kevin Thorpe Ltd

Newtown
Adamstown
Enniscorthy
Co Wexford

Krow Investments AK Ltd

Unit 1, Fairview Close
Richmond Avenue
Fairview
Dublin 3

**Liam Leahy & Son
Building Contractors Ltd**

Unit 15A, Euro Business Park
Little Island
Cork
Co Cork
www.leahybuilders.ie

MPB Fire Protection Ltd

34 Collins Avenue
Donneycarney
Dublin 9
www.mpbfireprotection.ie

P&T Complete Renovations Ltd

Unit 2
Doughcloyne Court,
Doughcloyne Industrial Estate
Wilton
Cork
Co Cork
www.pandt.ie

Pro-Spec

Unit 17B
Six Cross Roads
Business Park
Waterford
Co Waterford

The Fitzwilliam Painting Co Ltd

Clifton House
Fitzwilliam St Lower
Dublin 2
www.fitzwilliampainting.ie

Westar Investments Limited

Dublin Road
Clane
Co Kildare
www.thewestargroup.com

BTP Construction Ltd

Unit 4, Beech House
Ardkeen Cove
Dunmore Road
Co Waterford

Indoor Ventilation Solutions Ltd

Janeville
Drogheda Road
Slane
Co Meath

**Inline Construction and
Custom Carpentry Ltd**

67 Silken Vale
Maynooth
Co Kildare

**J&B Neville Ltd t/a
J&B Neville Construction**

Richmond
Spawell Road
Wexford
Co Wexford

NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS



The Construction Industry Federation welcomes the following new corporate partners



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Workers arriving to start their shifts at Ballymore Group's Dublin Landings site are temperature tested and wash their hands at individual wash facilities before entering the workplace.



HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED THE WAY THAT WE WORK FOREVER

The construction industry was among the very first to reopen during the phased easing of Covid-19 restrictions, and it has proven itself capable of operating without compromising the health and safety of workers or the public. **BARRY MCCALL** reports.

The proactive response of the construction industry to the Covid-19 pandemic has drawn plaudits from across society. Individual contractors quickly put enhanced safety measures in place to protect both their workers and the public from the risks posed by Covid-19. This was followed during the shutdown by the establishment of a Covid-19 working group by the CIF's Safety, Health and Welfare sub-Committee (SHWsC).

SAFE RETURN TO WORK

The working group devised the Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which brought industry practice in line with public health guidelines as well as the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocols'.

Frank Kelly, Chairman, SHWsC, and Senior Vice President, CIF, says the SOP is

an evolving document.

"The SOP has been developed as an evolving document to keep site staff safe. It can be easily adapted to meet any amendments in HSE guidelines, and to cover any changed site circumstances."

The SOP facilitated the safe return to work by the industry on 18th May, well ahead of many other sectors. But the work didn't stop with the development of the SOP, according to Martin Leonard, Safety Director, Ballymore Group.

"The construction industry has changed incredibly in the past few months. The normal way of working close to our colleagues to get the job done has been replaced by a new way of doing things that presents its own set of challenges for everybody," Martin Leonard explains.

"We now need to allow for safe distancing across all activities from the moment our staff leave their houses until they return in the evenings. Before this, we

didn't pay a lot of attention to how staff got to work. Now we must look at their travel arrangements, how they interact in work, eat their lunch, their workloads and so on."

MOST SIGNIFICANT SINGLE INDUSTRY IMPACT

The announcement of the construction industry shutdown was the most significant single impact of the pandemic in the view of Colum Costello, EHS Manager, Suir Engineering.

"We have just over 1,000 employees, and we had to put approximately 700 of them on temporary layoff," he says, "as well as closing both our Dublin and Waterford offices and making arrangements for our office and support staff to work from home. The pace at which the change was happening was certainly challenging. We had approximately 30 projects under construction at the time of the shutdown. Each project had to be assessed



Martin Leonard, Safety Director, Ballymore Group.

individually and a plan put in place with the project manager.”

BRINGING IN CHANGE

Changes ranged from the basic to the more complex.

“In the initial stages, we ensured everyone had access to hand sanitiser and hand-washing facilities, with temperature checking on all of our projects,” says Ballymore Group’s Martin Leonard. “As a further control measure,

we increased the cleaning frequency across all locations. Having different types of projects, we needed to ensure that all measures could be easily transposed to each location. Our first task was to make sure we didn’t contradict or be in breach of any Government guidelines and that we were compliant with the CIF SOP”

Ballymore implemented mandatory hand washing and temperature checks on entry to all projects and offices. This required security monitoring of all people coming into and leaving projects to ensure temperature checking and hand washing took place, reconfiguring entry points, and the installation of hands-free temperature monitors and hand-washing facilities at entry points.

“We also reconfigured welfare facilities to ensure correct social distancing at all times and staggered breaks to limit numbers in welfare facilities,” Martin Leonard adds.

Administration was a key issue for Suir Engineering.

“We already used software such as Microsoft Teams in the business, but the shutdown forced our hand a bit in moving along the technology journey,” says Colum Costello of Suir Engineering. “Some of the less technologically-savvy among us found they could use it despite their preconceptions. We have projects across Ireland and Europe, and we used to have a lot of face-to-face meetings. That has changed significantly.”



Colum Costello, EHS Manager, Suir Engineering.

TRAINING CHANGES

How training is delivered has also radically changed.

“We had plans for a state-of-the-art electrical training centre at our CityWest offices,” Colum Costello continues. “It was to host specialised courses on HV/LV switching, energy isolation, energisation, etc. This has been delayed due to Covid-19. Our plans have been modified slightly to include a virtual delivery plan for these courses, which will make the process



The canteen facility at Dublin landings has two-metre length tables to social distance workers on breaks.



Suir Engineering workers during an outdoor socially distant tool box talk.



Ballymore Group operates a one-way system, internally and externally, across its Dublin Landings site.

of training a lot more efficient for the business; a silver lining resulting from Covid-19 perhaps.

The pandemic has changed our way of thinking in some areas from the traditional methods and gave us the opportunity to introduce more innovative ways of working.”

These changes were guided by a Suir Engineering Covid-19 Steering Group, led by senior management, which was convened at the very outset.

“The team met daily to discuss aspects of our response, including HR policies, hygiene management plans, and so on. We also produced a number of videos on hand sanitising and other safety procedures. The big challenge was the management of working within two-metre distances on sites, including moving around site facilities. Again, we assessed each site individually and developed site-specific

Covid-19 management plans that were in compliance with the CIF SOP. Some of our larger projects implemented initiatives that included shift work to reduce numbers on site, new office and facilities lay-outs, with one-way systems throughout sites, and, of course, all of the necessary additional PPE.

“Things will never go back to the way they were in my opinion,” Colum Costello continues. “While masks and visors will be side-lined when Covid-19 is eventually gone, other areas, such as the increased hygiene and welfare facilities space, will become the new standard.

“I was involved with the CIF on developing the SOP. This was a really positive experience. The industry led by taking a collaborative approach with leading contractors all working together to address the challenges that the industry faced. The outcome of this collaboration is of immense significance for the industry, and how we might address the challenges we face in the future.”

DEALING WITH THE IMPACT

There have been negative impacts as well, of course.

“Schedules are being pushed out as implementing social distancing and other controls have a knock-on effect,” Ballymore’s Martin Leonard explains. “As project timeframes are pushed back, there is an immediate effect on the efficiency of our labour force. There is also anecdotal evidence of materials taking longer to get delivered due to measures being taken in manufacturing plants and so on. A lot of the delays in schedules and increased costs are outside the control of the industry, as they relate to suppliers and manufacturers.”

Colum Costello adds, “The pace at which this pandemic gripped the world was unprecedented. While it remains very challenging, the construction industry



Scaffolding workers keeping a two-metre distance at Ballymore Group’s Dublin Landings site.

here in Ireland has adopted to this ‘New Normal’ quickly, unlike other industries. Prior to Covid-19, construction was already used to a high level of compliance with process, procedure, regulations and PPE. Covid-19 became another hazard for us to figure out, risk assess and control in the workplace.

“From a productivity point of view all our projects are back open and working toward full capacity. However, we track our ‘down time’ on a monthly basis, and Covid-19 still accounts for 49% of this across the business. The increased cost incurred with additional PPE, facilities, equipment, hand sanitisers, etc, has been significant. This obviously wasn’t included for when estimating the projects. But the work must continue and keeping people safe is our number-one priority. We’ll leave the commercial issues to the project directors to negotiate,” he concludes. **C**



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LIDL DISTRIBUTION HUB ONE OF THE MOST SUSTAINABLE IN EUROPE

At three times the size of the Aviva Stadium, John Paul Construction's 13-month fast-track delivery of the new Lidl Regional Distribution Centre in Newbridge was achieved through a high-level of stakeholder cooperation combined with a broad range of digital technologies.

The €100m Lidl Regional Distribution Centre (RDC) in Newbridge, Co Kildare, completed by John Paul Construction, represents Lidl's largest single investment in Ireland and is its largest distribution centre in the country employing up to 350 people.

The warehouse building and associated two-storey office wing together have a gross floor area of 58,000 sq metres. The development is three times the size of the Aviva Stadium, and is nearly half a kilometre in length.

The building comprises 20,000 sq metres of temperature-controlled chambers, 30,000 sq metres of ambient bulk storage and a high-specification administration building adjoined to the main warehouse. The overall campus measures 58 acres and contains 60,000 sq metres of external concrete paving, and 20,000 sq metres of external asphalt paving.

John Paul Construction was appointed following a comprehensive tendering period to deliver the replacement for Lidl's original Newbridge RDC, on a nearby site.

The project, one of the largest single construction sites in Ireland at the time, was delivered in an extremely aggressive

13-month programme. John Paul Construction developed many of the techniques used on the project on fast-track data centre and industrial/pharma projects completed successfully around the country over the past few years.

THE BRIEF

The brief called for the facility to be delivered by October 2019 to meet peak Christmas demand, and provide appropriate warehousing space to hold stock to address uncertain Brexit outcomes.

The programme delivery targeted four areas:

- Groundworks – An engineered design and build ground treatment solution to provide a suitable platform on a site with poor natural ground conditions to construct the warehouse
- Facilities – A curtailed transition period between construction and operations, achieved by integrating many Lidl direct specialist contractors, Lidl IT, their network and order-picking systems, as well as mechanical handling equipment deliveries, into the main build programme
- Specification – a high quality, state of the art and functional working

environment for Lidl staff

- Sustainability – One of the most sustainable and energy-efficient logistics centres in Europe, with an A1 energy rating and BREEAM Excellent standards in design and construction.

COMMON DATA ENVIRONMENT

The entire project team used Viewpoint as a common data environment (CDE) for the sharing and dissemination of all information and project records, with bespoke workflows established from the beginning of the project for technical submittal approval processes, and the tracking of requests for information (RFIs),

CLIENT: Lidl Ireland

MAIN CONTRACTOR: John Paul Construction

PROJECT MANAGER: CQS Group

QUANTITY SURVEYOR: CQS Group

FIT-OUT ARCHITECT: MCA Architecture

MEP ENGINEER: SDS Engineering

CSA CONSULTANT: JV Tierney & Co

GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER: AGL Consulting



A high-bay warehouse building with a gross floor area of 58,032 sq metres.

etc.

Fieldview, using tablets on site, was utilised for safety inspections, quality observations, both good and bad, BCAR inspections, snagging, technical queries, benchmarking and sample approvals, and any tracking and closing-out issues as they arose.

Having single portals for tracking actions and sourcing information proved vital to the delivery of such a large-scale fast-track project.

GROUNDWORKS

The ground improvement strategy employed a contractor-designed lime and cement stabilisation solution to treat the relatively poor existing soils to provide a uniform and consistent building footprint in relation to its structural properties and levels.

Extensive dewatering of the site was required to control the moisture content of the treated materials, and this was carried out in a fully transparent way, using temporary settlement ponds, with controlled discharge of groundwater into a stream adjacent to the site.

MATERIALS

The main warehouse comprises a Kingspan composite panel-cladded, multi-span steel-framed structure, with precast concrete mezzanine floors and a high tolerance industrial concrete floor system. Natural lighting to the operational warehouse is provided by an array of rooflights and perimeter ribbon and feature-windows to maximise ambient light levels during the day and control lighting costs.

LEAN CONSTRUCTION

As part of an active approach to sustainability and to improve efficiencies for

A high-specification administration building is adjoined to the main warehouse.



the client, John

Paul Construction took a lean approach to assist in providing greater productivity, efficiency and profitability on Newbridge 2.

The team utilised the Last Planner® system to focus on better short-term planning, facilitating project managers, Michael Keane and Gareth Bowditch, who were responsible for coordinating the works, to plan the works collaboratively.

The implementation of Last Planner on Newbridge 2 improved schedule accuracy, cost control, quality, and health and safety. The collaborative approach involved all members of the project team, including designers, subcontractors, and the John Paul Construction management team. This approach created a collaborative environment that enabled the team to improve as a whole, and provided a better, leaner solution for the project.

BIM

John Paul Construction employed several digital construction tools to manage the different aspects of the project. A client

requirement

called for the project to be delivered in line with the Fundamental Principles of Level 2 Information Modelling stipulated within PAS1192-2:2013.

John Paul Construction produced a model production delivery table (MPDT) at the start of the project to plan out the BIM model delivery. This defined who was responsible for each element of the model and what level of detail they were required to develop. The MPDT was then used to form the framework of the digital plan of works (DPoW), which was set up on the NBS tool kit web site to manage model development throughout the project. The model tasks and roles were continually updated throughout the project and mapped the model development from stage 3 (Developed Design) through to stage 6 (As-built and handover).

Task information delivery plans (TIDPs) were set up to manage key packages (MEP services, façade, structural steel, etc) through the procurement, approvals,

PROJECT FEATURE: LIDL REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

installation and commissioning phases of the project, with key deliverables and milestones outlined for each stage of construction. The TIDPs were maintained continually throughout the project as live documents and used to manage the information deliverables of the various task team members.

The fully integrated, coordinated and up-to-date BIM model allowed the site team to accurately set out all elements from the model, to generate live as-built records, and to use tablet applications, such as Dalux Viewer, to compare virtual views of the planned installation against actually completed works.

DRONE TECHNOLOGY

A heavy reliance on drone technology aligned with the BIM model, allowed John Paul Construction to manage bulk earthworks in real-time, eliminating discrepancies over measures and quantities of materials placed on site.

The drone survey footage was processed within ReCap Photo to produce a point cloud survey of the site each week. These point cloud surveys were then compared



SCOPE OF WORKS

The works comprised the construction of:

- A high-bay warehouse building with a gross floor area (GFA) of 58,032 sq metres, including a warehouse element with a maximum parapet ridge height of circa 17.9 metres and overall dimensions of circa-437 metres in length and circa-124 metres in width
- 20,068 sq metres of temperature-controlled storage chambers, ranging from a 4,300 sq metres “-24° freezer” to a 6,000 sq metres fruit and vegetable storage facility
- High bay and dynamic racking to “ambient” cross-dock warehouse space
- Two high-specification finished administration buildings (totalling 1,790 sq metres)
- 154 dock levellers
- An earthworks-enabling package for 370,000-cubic metres bulk earthworks
- 330,000-cubic metres of lime and cement stabilisation
- A 4.2km Tubosider drainage system (1400mm diameter)
- 80,000 sq metres of external concrete truck parking and services yards
- Largest building-mounted photovoltaic array in Ireland comprising 4,364 panels capable of generating over 1-million kWh per annum.

within Civil 3D, giving a cut-fill analysis of stockpiles and dig areas being layered back with lime- and cement-treated material.

A site-wide drone fly-around was undertaken once a week along with the site point cloud survey. The footage taken from the weekly fly-around was utilised for project reporting and works quality, along with client meetings reviewing works ongoing and completed.

KEY PROJECT CHALLENGES

The key project challenge was commencing with a three-month delay and a fixed end date that had to be met.

Adverse weather events during the winter bulk dig operations introduced additional constraints on the programme, which had to be overcome by the team, together with scope change as different operational imperatives had to be absorbed by the project, including:

- Revised administration block layouts
- Level strategy for yards
- Planning approval for the PV array on the roof
- Roof lighting strategy
- Future-proofing needs of the industrial concrete floors.

SOLUTIONS

Synergies between the John Paul Construction enabling teams were central to the successful delivery of the project, commencing foundation excavations as the bulk dig was ongoing. The poor quality and variable nature of the ground conditions presented their biggest challenge, achieving in real-time a homogenous footprint using completely variable source soil materials, comprising primarily low-strength alluvial clay and gravel.

Other solutions included:

- Synergies with ground workers, where progress on groundworks was sacrificed at times in favour of providing continuity for follow-on activities, such as framing and cladding.

- Raising perimeter pad foundations to yard level allowed precast wall panels to be installed in tandem with the main structural steel, speeding up the weathering of the building
- Pre-lagging pipework and innovative off-site lagging of refrigeration plant reduced the typical refrigeration commissioning
- Off-site assembly of electrical containment based on BIM modelling reduced the window for cable pulling before commencement of industrial floors
- Carefully coordinating underfloor heating pipework to avoid all known anchor points minimised remedials that are commonplace on comparable projects
- Substituting masonry walls with precast where ever possible
- Applying intumescent coat to steelwork off site.

PROJECT SUCCESS

According to Niall O’Donoghue, Senior Contracts Manager, John Paul Construction, “With the benefit of hindsight, the programme was delivered by reacting to challenges immediately and preserving short-term planning milestones by working additional shifts, weekends and overlapping activities to avoid creep on what was already a very tight programme.”

He also says that the standout feature that contributed to the successful delivery of Newbridge 2 was cooperation between all project teams and the use of digital technology. “This enabled the addressing of challenges in real-time as they arose, and the making of substantial design and programme changes to keep the project on track.

“The pre-eminence of the project-need over individual self-interest or ego, allowed tender design intent to be interrogated and changed in favour of more efficient solutions at every stage of the project.

The two-story administration block.



The commitment to BIM execution and standardised project systems helped streamline the flow of information between design and operations.”

The synergies achieved by John Paul Construction’s civils team and the main build team considerably reduced the works lead time and preserved the end-date as the start date slipped.

“We selected a familiar supply chain with a proven track record in collaborative fast-track industrial facilities and created an environment on site that leveraged their expertise to optimise the delivery of the project and meet the onerous project completion milestones.”

SUSTAINABILITY

The distribution centre is built to the highest environmental standards and has been certified to achieve an A1 energy rating and BREEAM Excellent standards.

In keeping with Lidl’s stated aims of being one of the most energy-efficient logistics facilities in Europe, the project incorporated state-of-the-art-refrigeration systems using natural refrigerants and heat-recovery systems that recycle waste heat to heat the ambient warehouse through a network of nearly 200km of underfloor heating pipework.

There are 4,364 solar panels on the roof of the distribution centre, making this Ireland’s largest-ever installation of PV solar panels. The solar panels produce 1,011,929 kW hours of energy from a sustainable resource annually, which is equivalent to meeting the electricity requirements of 240 homes and reduces the centre’s carbon output by some 473 tonnes annually. As a result, over one quarter of the distribution centre’s energy requirements are now generated by solar power. Provision has also been made for over 40 electric car chargers in the car park. Delivering natural light through roof

“ **THE COMMITMENT TO BIM EXECUTION AND STANDARDISED PROJECT SYSTEMS HELPED STREAMLINE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN DESIGN AND OPERATIONS.** ”

NIALL O’DONOGHUE.

lights, ribbon windows and feature windows to break up the elevations limits the amount of artificial light required within the logistics facility.

John Paul Construction complemented these initiatives, by monitoring waste to

landfill, by fitting timer cut-off switches to all offices to control out of hours unnecessary usage, and step-down generators for low consumption periods, in addition to protecting adjacent streams by using settlement ponds for water run-off.

IN CONCLUSION

The Lidl Regional Distribution Centre has set a benchmark in sustainable design for distribution hubs across Ireland and Europe. Brian Smyth, Construction Project Manager, Lidl Ireland, says that the intent of the design brief was to create a new energy-efficient benchmark in this country for distribution centres.

“The many sustainability measures adopted, including the largest rooftop solar array in the country, underpins our award-winning ‘Better Tomorrow’ programme. Innovative initiatives developed during the course of setting out the project brief were proactively managed and implemented by the contracting team during construction, which had a hugely positive impact in facilitating easier and faster decision-making.”

John Paul Construction’s senior contracts manager Niall O’Donoghue says that the project was a huge success and highlighted how an integrated approach involving the client and the full supply chain facilitated successful project delivery. He also noted that it was a case study in how digital construction technologies have such an essential role to play in the delivery of construction programmes.

“Newbridge 2 was an immensely satisfying project to work on, where everyone, from the client and design side to the contracting team and supply chain, pulled together and rose to every challenge with a level of professionalism and control that ensured the quality of the end-product was never compromised.” **C**



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COVID-19 SHUTDOWN THREATENS PROJECT IRELAND 2040 PROGRAMME

The civil engineering sector is relying on its traditional problem-solving strengths and resilience as it emerges from the enforced Covid-19 shutdown. **BARRY MCCALL** reports.

The Covid-19 crisis has dealt another blow to an industry that was only just recovering from the last recession, according to John G Murphy, President of the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) and Managing Director, Murphy International.

“Quite a lot of companies in the civil engineering sector had only started to rebuild their balance sheets when Covid-19 hit,” he says. “It’s a very worrying time for the industry.”

It is also a worrying time for the country.

“The difference between a civil engineering company surviving and not, is massive for the economy in terms of supplier impact, social welfare payments, lost taxes, and pension schemes. It has much wider implications,” he adds. “We need clear guidelines from Government for everybody. Not just for clients dealing with contractors, but for everyone dealing with the whole supply chain. I don’t think the Government recognises that civil engineering remains a troubled industry, which still hasn’t got over the last recession.”

Eamonn Stapleton, Vice President, CECA, and Managing Director, Clonmel Enterprises, says the civil engineering sector was well placed to open after the shutdown.

“In the immediate aftermath of the shutdown it became apparent that it would be more feasible for civil engineering

sites to reopen than traditional building sites,” he explains. “This perception was used appropriately to promote the reopening of construction generally and was probably instrumental in the decision to reopen construction in advance of a lot of other industries. Over the lockdown period, our key staff and health and safety resources spent the time preparing for reopening. At the same time, CIF and cross-industry resources were preparing the operating procedures to allow businesses to get back to work. It showed that when the industry works together, it can work well and deliver, and this could be used as a template to progress other issues. If Covid was to return, the industry should be confident about dealing with it. On reviewing how different business sectors approached returning to work, the construction industry should be proud of how we did it and possibly seek more public credit for it when the time is appropriate.”

ADDRESSING COVID-19 COSTS

The immediate cost of the two-month shutdown is a key issue to be dealt with, according to Des Mulcair, Director, Roadbridge, and immediate past-President, CECA.

“Engagement with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has been ongoing in respect of determining how the site shutdown and future operational costs will be dealt with in



John G Murphy, President CECA, and Managing Director, Murphy International.

relation to time and costs for contractors,” he says. “The OGP’s initial note recommended an ex gratia payment mechanism to cover the costs incurred by contractors during the period of shutdown. A subsequent note has made further recommendations concerning the ongoing operational costs.

“The CECA has welcomed the OGP’s acknowledgement of the need to share the burden caused by Covid-19 and looks forward to further positive engagement. As the remobilisation of our sites continues, we will see the true impact of Covid-19 on our projects, and engagement with employer representatives and clients is essential to address the costs and productivity issues arising.”

Paul Sheridan, Director, Main Contracting and Civil Engineering, CIF, says that the shutdown and remobilisation phases were very challenging, with contractors having to deal with the uncertainty of what they were coming back to and the significant impact that Covid would have on their construction programmes and productivity.

“But contractors found a way back and did what they are good at, adapting and problem-solving.”

Paul Sheridan welcomes the OGP guidance and its series of information notes. However he says there are some elements, which continue to cause frustration for contractors, particularly around the status of tendered work during the crisis and the future pipeline of projects.

“There are also serious concerns about the limited funding available to address legitimate costs resulting from compliance with Government legislation and protocols, which have arisen through no fault of the client and contractor. It is good that we have a mechanism for engagement and burden sharing. Civil engineering contractors are looking forward to working with their clients to mitigate against Covid, and while most clients are working with their contractors and supply chains, there needs to be a more proactive approach. The recent OGP note outlined immediate steps that can be taken by contracting authorities, and there is no reason to delay instigating the exploratory phase of the cooperation framework.”

John Cradock, Managing Director, John Cradock Ltd, echoes these sentiments.

“It’s good to see sites reopening, but I’m a bit disappointed in the latest note from the OGP. It’s good that they are engaging, but our industry, with very low margins of 3% and below, can’t afford the cost increases caused by Covid-19. What the OGP has said is that employer representatives should engage robustly in

discussions on increases. It has also indicated a willingness to meet only a percentage of the increased costs if the employer/funder has monies available.”

What’s not covered by the OGP note is a more significant issue for John G Murphy.

“Contractors with public works contracts will be compensated to an extent, but this doesn’t extend to semi-State bodies, even where they are State-funded,” he says. “There needs to be fresh guidance from the OGP on this. As it stands, the guidance is restricted to one form of contract. It makes no sense for the OGP to say the guidance applies to one form of contract and no other, even though they come through the same paymaster.”

PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS

The very nature of public works contracts is another problem faced by the industry.

“The current construction contract is not collaborative in nature. This is primarily attributable to contractual remedies in the contract and how it allocates risk,” Paul Sheridan explains. “In other jurisdictions, standard contracts are far more collaborative and have better risk-sharing provisions.”

Work is ongoing on updating the public works contract, according to Des Mulcair.

“In December 2019, the Construction Sector Group (CSG) published its update on the construction procurement review on behalf of the OGP. The document included certain timelines for the publication of position papers, and all elements were due to be completed by the end of 2020. Hopefully, we can maintain this timeline. The importance of implementing these changes cannot be underestimated, particularly if we are facing another difficult economic time as has been anticipated.”

But working within the parameters of existing contracts may pose real difficulties for some contractors.

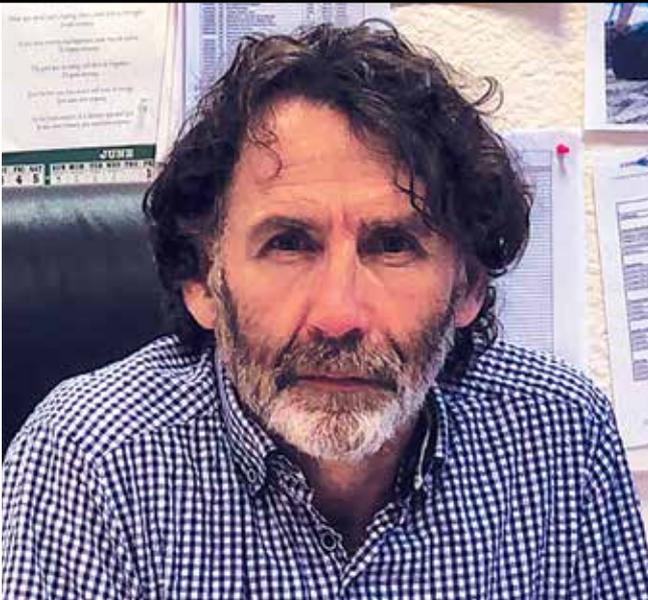
“The shutdown has exposed contractors to the prospect of penalties for late delivery of projects,” comments John G Murphy. “Many clients are accommodating in this regard and giving extensions of time, but others are not. I fear that some contractors may find themselves funding the legal industry for a long time after Covid-19 has passed. Where there’s an ambulance, you’ll usually find somebody chasing it.”

Looking beyond that immediate timeframe, John G Murphy believes that the priority for Government must be to invest in infrastructure as quickly as possible.

“The Government needs to proceed at speed with projects,”



The nature of public works contracts is a problem faced by the industry.



Eamonn Stapleton, Vice President, CECA, and Managing Director, Clonmel Enterprises.

John G Murphy says. “The one sure place you get bang for your public expenditure buck is an investment in infrastructure. The last Government had a very intelligent thought process in relation to that, and I hope the current one does as well. The return on investment for the State is quite high in terms of the assets created, and the economic payback is very high as well in terms of downstream benefits from the construction activity itself.”

“The civil engineering sector is operating well below capacity,” Des Mulcair adds. “We must continue to use every opportunity, including the CSG, to put our sector centre stage for investment.

“It is vital that the projects and programme set out in the National Development Plan and ‘Project Ireland 2040’ are adhered to. Without substantial investment in infrastructure in the immediate term, real and sustainable growth can’t be achieved – it is action and not rhetoric that delivers growth.”

Eamon Stapleton is very sceptical about the ability of the Government to deal with project delivery issues.

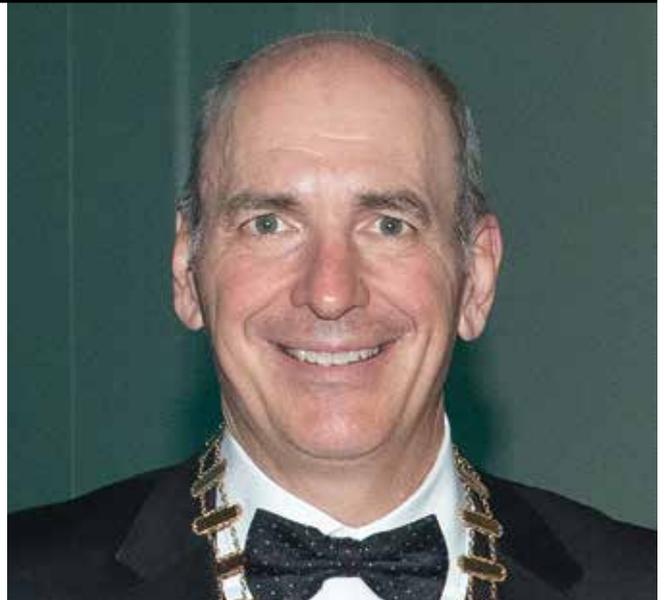
“There are some capable people in decision-making positions, but even they seem to meet obstacles. Government need to deal with all contributors to delivery delays,” he comments. “Contractors seem to get most of the attention. But Government needs to deal with all the parties who contribute to delays. There would appear to be a big focus on the contractual relationships post-award. My experience is that the biggest issue by far is in the procurement stage, which then leads to the construction stage problems. Procurement needs as much attention as contract issues.”

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

While concern has been voiced in some quarters concerning the potential impact of the changed Government complexion on the National Development Plan and Project Ireland 2040 rollout, John G Murphy is sanguine.

“It’s just a question of which projects happen when,” he contends. “The world has become a lot greener. It’s not just about the Green Party being in government. People want their governments to be greener. As civil engineers, we are long-term thinkers. It’s not just about infrastructure for today, we think in terms of generations. 2040 might sound long term, but it’s only 20 years away, which is quite short term when you think about the infrastructure needs of the coming generations.”

Those changed attitudes will result in new living and working patterns with the potential for many more people to work from



Des Mulcair, Director, Roadbridge.

home.

“Is it going to take 10% of the traffic off the road?” John G Murphy asks. “That would set back some projects by 10 years. But other projects in the public transport area like Metro will go ahead instead. Priorities might change, that’s all.”

“The number of electric vehicle charging points has to increase quite dramatically if we are to achieve the ambition of removing fossil-fuel-powered cars from the roads by 2030. That will require increased investment in power grids and the back-up generating capacity to ensure security of supply on a network dominated by intermittent renewable sources. We are looking at a complete restructuring of the economy, and civil engineering will be at the heart of it.”

Water infrastructure will be no less urgent.

“Those projects could move ahead more quickly due to their importance for the environment and quality of life,” he adds.

Paul Sheridan shares this view.

“There is a massive opportunity to deliver on water infrastructure,” Paul Sheridan claims. “It’s not simply about a Shannon to Dublin water supply scheme or anything like that. It’s how we treat our water and what happens to it when it comes out of the system. It’s a circular process. The investment is needed for people’s health and wellbeing and quality of life, as well as for communities and businesses to be able to grow. Manufacturing industries, such as Intel, can’t exist without access to water. Data centres also need access to substantial quantities of water to function.”

Paul Sheridan argues that roads are wrongly characterised in the debate on infrastructure investment.

“Goods have to move around efficiently, and they can do that better on good quality roads. These roads can accommodate cycle lanes and bus lanes as well. They are not just for cars, but all vehicles. It is not a question of roads versus green investment. Better roads also mean greater safety for road users.”

He also points out that the Government doesn’t have to focus on major infrastructure projects.

“Maintenance works are also a great way of stimulating the economy. They tend to be quite labour intensive, and they are very much needed in areas like our roads, bridges, culverts, flood-relief schemes and so on.”

Finance, or lack of it, should not represent the same challenge as it did during the last recession due to the Government’s ability to borrow at very low or even negative interest rates.



Paul Sheridan, Director, Main Contracting and Civil Engineering, CIF.

“It’s very different to the last slowdown,” Paul Sheridan continues. “The Government can invest, and there is a multiplier effect from that. For every one euro invested by the Government, they get 50 cents back in tax, PRSI, VAT and so on, and that’s before you factor in the value the asset delivers to the country. It’s not a one-off investment.”

John Cradock agrees, “My big worry is that Covid-19 will restrict Government spending. I don’t envy the job it has to do to keep everything at a reasonable level. I do not doubt that the downturn will impact the 2040 plan. It’s up to Government to do what it has to do to get economy back. With interest rates so low, it can borrow to keep things going in the short term at least.”

Paul Sheridan also points to the downstream effects.

“If you build the Metro, it will generate investment around the route in housing and new commercial developments. Look at Leixlip; it thrives because of Intel, but you need to have the infrastructure first. The Government wants 200,000 homes built during the next five years. They will need roads, public transport, water, waste- and storm-water, electricity and broadband infrastructure first. All that infrastructure has to go in before you can build a house. That’s all underpinned by civil engineering.”

DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

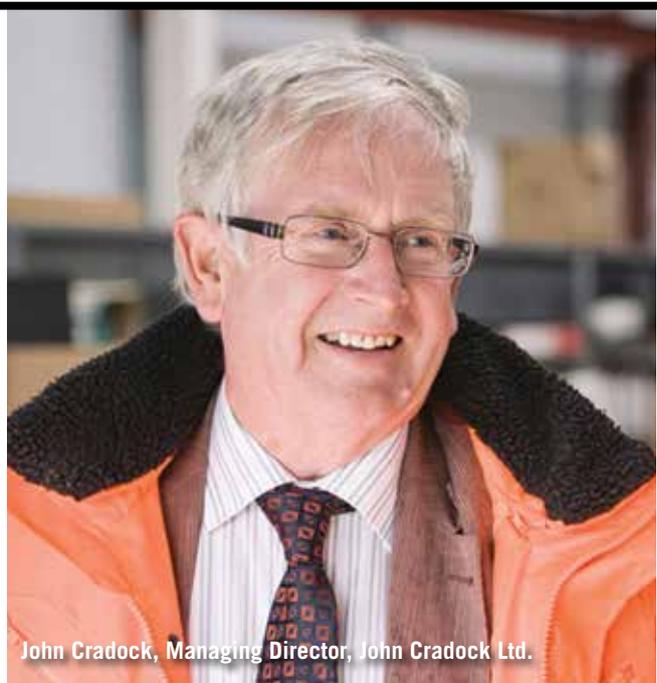
Digital technology is changing how infrastructure projects are being rolled out. Clonmel Enterprises, like other major civil engineers, is finding great success in integrating new technologies into its operations.

Eamonn Stapleton explains, “Over the past couple of years, we have introduced GPS equipment on most of our plant. With a small learning curve, we have found this very beneficial and would advocate it to anybody considering it. We have yet to get involved with BIM in a big way. While we have worked with some private clients, public works have not to any significant degree engaged with BIM so far.

“We are constantly looking at and introducing IT opportunities for circulating training and experiences across our workforce to improve flexibility for contract opportunities. Fortunately, we had begun using Microsoft Teams at the beginning of the year, which made the ‘lockdown’ easier to manage for remote working.”

INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

John G Murphy believes the overall outlook for the industry is positive.



John Cradock, Managing Director, John Cradock Ltd.

“It’s very different to 2008, when we were looking downhill with nothing but the drop in front of us. We are in a relatively good position. It’s not going to end quickly, but Ireland has shown if you do the right things you can get it done.”

However, there are issues to be dealt with.

“When companies are tendering, they have to include a percentage to allow for increased costs as a result of Covid-19 safety measures. But some projects have started where that hasn’t been included; other tenders were submitted before Covid-19 arrived and have not been awarded yet. There isn’t an opportunity to reopen those tenders, and that could present problems. That is the reward we reap for unfair contracts. You can’t make contractors responsible for pandemics or changes in Government legislation. There is something very wrong in principle with that.”

This is an issue predating Covid-19.

“It has just exacerbated the problem,” John G Murphy adds. “But I am still positive. This industry has proven itself to be innovative and adaptive over the years. Ireland was doing well before Covid-19 came along. A bit like Covid-19 itself, companies with underlying issues before this will have problems coming out of it. Without Government support, there will be failures with a knock-on effect across the economy and supply chain.”

These problems can be prevented, he contends.

“For a small amount of money, we can stop that happening and keep the industry healthy for the next two years. The last OGP note indicated that clients should work within their budgets when it comes to compensating contractors for increased costs due to Covid-19. The two-month shutdown gave them ample budget capacity to do that. That guidance should be extended to all clients and main contractors. It is important that contractors look to protect their supply chain. That would involve a minimal amount of money in relation to the total budget. However, it could make a huge difference to companies still reeling from the shock of paying people while off for a few months as well as meeting the added costs of PPE and other measures required to get back on site.”

He says a recurrence of those problems could be prevented with revisions to the public works contract.

“If we had a more reasonable form of contract, there would be no problem and clients wouldn’t need the Government to tell them to do the right thing. We are not looking for anything extra from the Government. We just want the Government to address the additional costs, get projects out, and get the economy back up and running,” John G Murphy concludes. **C**



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“Given the changes in the last few months, we

have just released a brand new 2020-21 Hire & Sales Guide featuring our updated product range. We also have a website upgrade underway to further improve the usability of laoishire.com.” **C**

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Laois Hire Managing Director Michael Killeen states that “We are glad to be back up and running. There has been a huge effort by the team to meet all the necessary Covid-19 guidelines and more. New procedures are working smoothly and we are continuing to invest heavily in multiple areas in order to further expand the business.”

“We have now added a new fleet of 4x4 vehicles to our specialised VMS division to ensure our experienced technicians maintain 24/7 nationwide service. We also have new equipment feeding into our branches in response to customer demand. Large plant arriving includes diggers, dumpers and rollers with new Breakers, Generators and Tools also being added. 13 Ton Hitachi excavators which are known for their safety, reliability and productivity-boosting advantages are among those items joining the range, along with heavy duty, specialist, versatile DD 250 Hilti Core Concrete Drilling rigs.”

“We are reporting increased activity

in all sectors including Residential, Commercial, Civil and Utilities. Our specialist renewable division, which caters for all construction stages, including site set-up / cabins, power generation & fuel supply and large Powered Access, is noticeably busy.”

“We have also adapted to the times by adding new products to the range to



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Meeting House, Cork.

GPD BUILDING CONTRACTORS ACHIEVES GRADE A SAFE-T-CERT FOR FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

Eamon Hetherington, Director, GPD Building Contractors, speaks with **ROBBIE COUSINS** about the company's outstanding Safe-T-Cert record, and how the Kinsale-based contractor went about returning to work following the Covid-19 lockdown.

Founded in 2000 by Eamon and Liam Hetherington, Kinsale-based Glounthaune Property Development Ltd (GPD Building Contractors) has an exceptional track record, particularly in the area of safety, having achieved Grade A Safe-T certification for the past four years.

Eamon Hetherington acknowledges that the company is celebrating this achievement and its 20th year in business in the most unforeseeable of circumstance. Still, he is confident about the short- to medium-term future for the company, with a growing number of projects in the pipeline, and staff safety, as always, remaining the priority of the management team.

"From the time we set up the business, our goal was to provide a safe place of work for all. We achieved this by using the most innovative processes, practices and expertise available," he explains. "We take great pride in having earned our place in the top 10% of construction companies with

respect to safety management and equally in how we prioritise our clients with our service."

AREA OF OPERATIONS

The building contractor operates across Munster but can also be found in Leinster, most typically on specialist subcontracted projects.

Its recent portfolio of work ranges from residential to Government, local authority and commercial projects, energy efficiency upgrades, hospitals and schools, as well as bio-pharma and heritage projects.

MEETING HOUSE, CORK

In June 2020, GPD handed over the newly renovated Friends Meeting House in Summerhill South, Cork, after getting back on site following the Covid-19 hiatus.

Temporarily mothballed by the Covid-19 lockdown, the project involved the renovation of a 1939-built hall next to a 17th century Quaker burial ground. The

building required upgrading to support accessibility as well as overall refurbishment and expansion.

"Our brief was to build in accordance with the environmentally-friendly, sustainable and easy-to-maintain vision mapped out by the client. The newly renovated and extended Meeting House offers an accessible larger social space with modern kitchen and bathroom facilities. It also provides space for various Quaker activities, including weddings, funerals, children's activities, and community outreach programmes."

GPD Building Contractors has already been refilling its project pipeline to compensate for the lockdown.

"We are very optimistic," says Eamon Hetherington, "Enquiries are up, and we are making the most of every opportunity."

SAFE-T-CERT

Returning to the Grade A Safe-T-Cert achievement, Eamon Hetherington says that



**Eamon Hetherington, Director,
GPD Building Contractors.**



**Liam Hetherington, Director,
GPD Building Contractors.**



**Aaron Willis, General Manager,
GPD Building Contractors.**

when it comes to tendering, the company has a distinct competitive advantage.

“For us, it has always been people first,” he says. “But, when it comes to tender selection, margins are so tight that decision-making can come down to the value differentials that construction companies can offer. Strong safety credentials in this industry are an important success factor. It requires discipline to live and work by the requirements, but it’s not by accident, if you’ll pardon the pun, that we’re in the top 10% of construction companies in Ireland for safety management.”

He says that the company has extensive guidelines for health, safety and risk management, and it supports these with a training process and full standard operating procedures, which are auditable and subject to continuous improvement.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Speaking about the impact of Covid-19 changes, Eamon Hetherington explains that like the rest of the sector, GPD Building

“FROM THE TIME WE SET UP THE BUSINESS, OUR GOAL WAS TO PROVIDE A SAFE PLACE OF WORK FOR ALL.”

Contractors introduced an extensive range of new safety measures.

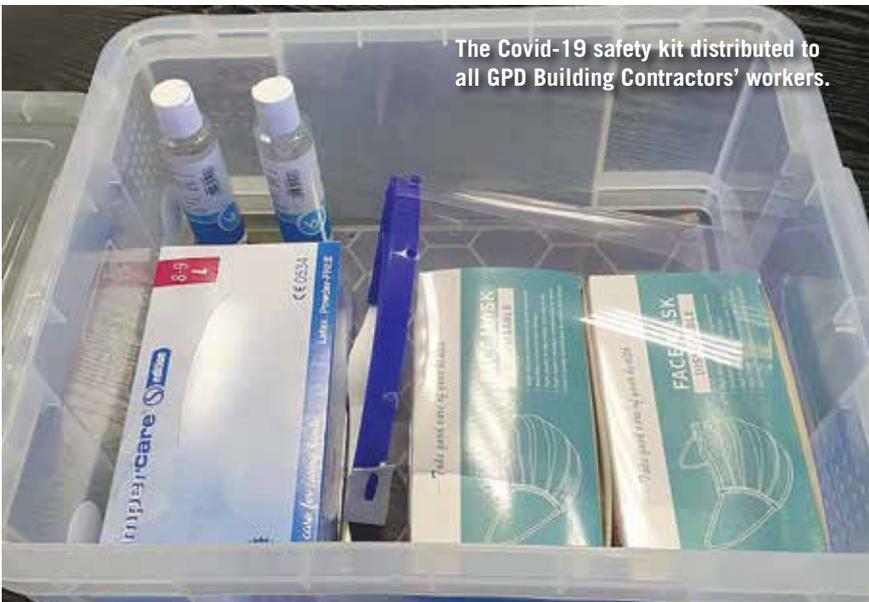
“Our immediate concern was for our people. On closing sites, we switched onto contingency planning pretty swiftly and worked with residential and commercial clients on the postponement and rescheduling of planned work,” he says. “Thankfully, we are back on sites now, which is where we belong, and all are adapting well to the new way of working.”

“The GPD Building Contractors team has been stellar during this period, and the resilience shown has been extraordinary. On the business front, we continued to submit tenders, quote for jobs and are working on filling our pipeline to year-end and into 2021.”

He says that GPD is complying with the CIF C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures.

“We brought in the new Covid-19 training and prepped new safety kits before returning to site on 18th May. We have the new safety induction processes and Covid-19 compliance officers in operation on all sites, as well as providing our Covid-19 compliance kit for each worker. This kit comprises an 18-litre plastic box, with masks, gloves, gel, visor and Tyvek suits. All of our workers are trained in on-site assessment, whether lone working or as part of a team. There’s a level of individual and team responsibility, and it can be onerous at times, particularly in instances of close working when the site team have to put on all their gear.

“This is how it must be for the foreseeable future to keep workers and their families safe and the industry moving. The inconvenience is a small price to pay,” Eamon Hetherington concludes. **G**



The Covid-19 safety kit distributed to all GPD Building Contractors’ workers.

To learn more about GPD Building Contractors, visit www.gpd.ie



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WE CAN'T PREDICT THE FUTURE, BUT WE CAN EASE THE JOURNEY

SUSAN O'MARA suggests a few steps that can be taken to protect personal finances during times of market volatility.

Having been inundated with articles on “How to survive a pandemic”, I wondered was there any such tips for surviving a likely recession. There were a few posts, but not as many as I thought there would be. However, one line in an article the ‘Forbes’ website caught my attention.

In his final thoughts in an article entitled ‘Surviving the recession’, Jay Adkisson writes, “Downturns really are just a season of our economy”. I liked that. It may be a cold winter, but spring will surely follow.

In looking at the markets over previous recessionary periods, research conducted by Irish Life notes that the duration of the bear market (negative market – so-called as the bear swipes down), was 17 months, resulting in a total decrease of 57%. This was followed by 129 months of a bull market and an increase of 378%.

There are similar statistics on investment trends available from the 1973 oil crisis and the so-called, Black Monday. The market shock due to the Covid-19 pandemic is still developing. Markets were down by 32% by the end of March, and while there has been a significant rally, there is also significant volatility. The potential for another sharp drop has been predicted. However, spring will eventually bloom, and in the meantime, there are a few things you can do to protect your finances.

REVIEW YOUR BUDGET

Most of us have some idea of our income versus our outgoings. We know our income, and our fixed expenditure, such as the mortgage. However, achieving a more realistic picture requires a little more effort. You will need to look at outgoings that only happen on a quarterly or less frequent basis. You will need to be realistic and account for costs that will fall under a “lifestyle” section if you regularly attend a sports fixture or the theatre; it all needs to go in the budget. All banks now have online facilities that provide statements going back a year or more. The frequency with which we use Visa and more recently, Revolut means that much of the data is readily available to help us analyse our spending habits. You may find you have a regular deficit. If so, this should be addressed immediately. Knowing your spending habits may help you to take a more practical approach to your finances.

BANK CHARGES

This may seem small, however, do you know what you currently pay to your bank in charges? Some of the more recent charges banks have introduced include fees per transactions, such as ATM withdrawals and chip and pin transactions. Establish what your charges are and if there are conditions to be met to avoid them. If you cannot meet the conditions, find another bank, with terms you can meet, or with lower charges.

REVIEW YOUR PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS AND COSTS

Where you are in your financial life cycle will help clarify what level and type of protection you need. If you have no family and no debt,



Susan O'Mara,
Milestone Advisory.

you may only require income protection – to replace an income if you were unable to work due to illness or injury. On the other hand, if you have a family and mortgage, you are likely to need a combination of life cover, income protection and serious illness cover. Balance is key, and you should speak to a financial adviser to ensure you are not over-covered in one area and under-covered in another.

RETIREMENT PLANNING

Staying the course in pension savings is important, irrespective of what stock markets are doing. If you are concerned about how your fund is invested, you should speak to your provider and ask them to outline your options; however, you do not need to take action simply for the sake of it. As with the seasons analogy above, markets recover as is their nature.

If you are close to retirement, it may be less about making contributions and more about planning which option suits you best when you retire. You should engage with this decision now and not leave it until the day you hit the golden age.

We can't predict the future, but there are steps we can take to ease the journey there. **C**

Susan O'Mara is a financial services consultant with Milestone Advisory DAC t/a Milestone Advisory, which is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. For more information, visit www.milestoneadvisory.ie



‘CLAIMS’ IS NOT A DIRTY WORD, IT IS YOUR ENTITLEMENT

PETER McCARTHY,
Principal, McCarthy Dispute Resolution, writes that in an industry where profit margins are small if contractors don't get paid their entitlements, they will quickly go out of business.



Irish contractors and subcontractors are well regarded around the globe, but I fear the industry does not value itself highly enough at home. When it comes to the subject of claiming entitlements for additional time and money, most contractors are reluctant.

Fears of upsetting the paying party or the fear of not being asked to tender for future work are common reasons for this. However, I feel the Irish construction industry must seek its full entitlements for it to be a viable industry for all.

Many standard employer design contracts expressly ask the contractor not to include the cost of certain events in their contract sum (eg, changes to the employer's design, delay due to late instructions, late or delayed possession of the site, suspension of the works, errors in tender documents, incorrect descriptions in Bills of Quantities and unforeseen ground conditions, to name just a few). The reason behind this arrangement is that the paying party does not want to pay for these events upfront

should they not materialise. The paying party instead promises the contractor that if the above events materialise, they will increase the contract sum and grant the contractor additional time to complete the works.

However, far too often, I have seen when the above events do materialise, the paying party tries to convince the contractor that he should have included the cost of these events in his tender or as an experienced contractor he should have included the cost of these items in his price. This can result in the contractor not getting paid for these events or, in some cases, not seeking payment at all.

In an industry where profit margins are small, if contractors don't get paid their entitlements, they will quickly go out of business. This article seeks to highlight what a contractor and subcontractor must do when they have an entitlement, and the importance of contemporaneous records to demonstrate cause and effect for a claim to be successful. It

5 TOP TIPS

- Don't apologise for making claims; it's your entitlement.
- When making claims, strictly follow the prescribed procedures outlined in your contract. Failure to do so will result in your claims being lost, no matter how strong your claims are.
- You have an obligation to demonstrate cause and effect. To allow you to do so, make sure to keep contemporaneous records to substantiate your claims.
- Be aware of the Alternative Dispute Resolution options available to you. Use your rights under the Construction Contracts Act 2013 if the paying party refuses to engage satisfactorily.
- Seek expert advice as early as possible so that your claims are correctly managed.

also outlines the various options now available to contractors should the paying party refuse to address their claims and the importance of seeking expert advice as early as possible to manage the claims process correctly.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE AN ENTITLEMENT

Construction contracts commonly provide that, if a party wishes to bring a claim under the contract, it must follow a prescribed procedure. This often requires the claiming party to give a particular notice, sometimes followed by a further notice and/or more detailed information, to the other party, which may have to be in a particular format and meet specific requirements as to content. Often, these notice provisions also contain what is commonly referred to as a 'time bar' provision, meaning that the claiming party must give the notice(s) within a specified period of time.

If the time bar is a condition precedent, then a failure to comply with the provisions of the contract will mean that the claiming party loses its entitlement to bring the claim, no matter how strong its claim would otherwise have been. The use of such time bar clauses has become increasingly common, and they now appear in most standard form contracts.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

A contractor wishing to claim under their contract will need to show cause and effect (ie, establish that a particular event(s) caused delay/disruption to the works and demonstrate the effects of such event(s) on the progress of the works). If there is one clear cause of delay, this can be straightforward, but often it is more complex. Sometimes, although the cause of delay may be clear, the consequences of the delay can be difficult to map.

RECORDS, RECORDS, RECORDS

'Global Construction Disputes Report 2020' by Arcadis states that the number one cause of construction disputes in 2020 is poorly drafted or incomplete and unsubstantiated claims. 'Keating on Construction Contracts' emphasised that when making claims for time and/or money it "should be based so far as possible on contemporaneous evidence of what actually happened on site during the progress of the works".

It is therefore essential that good, contemporaneous records are kept and programmes updated whenever required throughout a construction project so that if disputes arise, the impact of events alleged to have caused delay or disruption can be adequately analysed. Lessons learnt from a recent Australian case 'White Construction Pty Ltd v PSB Holding Pty Ltd [2019] NSWSC 1166' provide a good insight into the importance of contemporaneous records and what they should include. The case established that a claimant should establish and maintain a detailed site diary or records that detailed who was on site, what they are doing and where; what is holding up progress; and what instructions were issued. Diaries need to be backed up with worksheets/timesheets that record progress broken down by workstream.

'The Society of Construction Law Delay and Disruption Protocol 2nd Edition' also provides contractors with practical guidance on record keeping and its importance.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE PAYING PARTY IS NOT ADDRESSING YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

Cash flow is the lifeblood of every industry, but especially in construction. Too frequently, I have seen contractors suffering in silence in situations where their claims are not being addressed and

where the paying party is refusing to engage.

Contractors now have a suite of options available to them in the form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) that will allow them to take control. ADR is generally used to describe forms of dispute resolution other than court (or arbitration) proceedings. Forms of ADR commonly used to resolve construction disputes are:

Negotiation – Informal negotiations, often between the parties' senior representatives within a specified timeframe, may be required or encouraged before more formal proceedings are commenced.

Mediation – A consensual process in which the parties attempt to resolve the dispute between them amicably, with the assistance of a mediator. It is frequently attempted at an early stage of the dispute.

Early Neutral Evaluation – A neutral third party, often a construction law expert, provides a non-binding opinion on the merits of the case. It can assist parties who wish to settle a matter, but it does not itself result in settlement without further negotiation.

Adjudication – A dispute resolution procedure prescribed by statute, the Construction Contracts Act 2013 (Act), that is a process which is available regardless of whether it is expressly provided for in the parties' contract. You cannot contract out of the Act. Adjudication is available 'at any time', and a decision will usually be provided within 28 days

from the date that the referring party delivers its initial submission, known as the 'Referral'. Sums awarded in adjudication are payable in accordance with the decision usually within seven days of the decision.

WHICH ROUTE SHOULD I CHOOSE?

The route you choose depends on the paying party's response to your claims. For example, where both parties are in agreement that there is an entitlement, but the dispute relates only to the amount to be paid, mediation might be appropriate, particularly if the parties are not too far apart on the figures and if maintaining the commercial relationship is paramount, or where one party is suffering significant cashflow issues with the other party disputing any entitlement to payment at all. For these situations, where obtaining payment quickly is critical and where the dispute is limited to payment issues, adjudication is more appropriate.

SEEKING EXPERT ADVICE EARLY IS CRUCIAL

A specialist expert is only as good as the information you provide them. I mentioned earlier about the need to notify your claims strictly in accordance with the procedures outlined in the contract to avoid them being 'time-barred' and the need to keep comprehensive records to demonstrate cause and effect. If contractors have not managed these items adequately, then the specialist expert will have an uphill battle. Early, specialist, advice will help you both identify your entitlements and develop the right strategy to maximise your entitlements. It will also help you to identify any weaknesses in your position, which is critical, particularly in the context of knowing what a good 'deal' is if you are minded to settle the matter in without prejudice negotiations or refer your entitlements to ADR. **C**

Peter McCarthy holds a Master of Laws Degree in Construction Law and Adjudication and a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Quantity Surveying. He has extensive first-hand experience of building and civil engineering techniques, design and build projects, programming and measurement, the drafting and interpretation of agreements and the preparation of interim and final accounts. To learn more, email peter@mcdri.ie or visit www.mcdri.ie



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PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH AN ENGAGING ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

ROBERT BUTLER, Head of Learning and Development, CIF, writes about how CIF's online learning portal has been adapted to improve the teacher-student interaction and student-student dynamic.

CIF has employed a three-step plan to develop and maintain online learning, which carries recognised accreditation. In doing this, we looked to strengthen the teacher-student interaction dynamic.

TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

When learners and tutors are physically distant, it becomes more critical to create a social connection.

While learners are waiting for class to start, we use the chat function to ask how they are doing. During the first session, we orient the student to our course structure and requirements.

This initial connection makes them feel more comfortable with using this channel to ask questions and make comments during the class.

Also, we remind them to turn on their cameras. This engagement also helps students to pay attention to the class and avoid succumbing to other distractions associated with learning from home.

At the same time, our CIF administrative team, work at the back-end of the learning platform, taking care of any real-time technical issues, helping to place learners in breakout groups, and providing a real-time summary of the class discussion by group chat.

They also acknowledge questions from the students and manage the appropriate time during the class for the lecturers to

answer them.

REGULAR CHECKPOINTS FOR LIVE STUDENT RESPONSES

Regular checkpoints with real-time responses from students provide valuable insights into their opinions and help us understand their grasp of the content.

These live chats and responses via text enable us to tailor subsequent lessons to suit each learner's level of understanding of the concepts, and keep them engaged. For example, the unannounced checkpoints can be in the form of short, non-graded questions and polls.

In general, many learners typically won't ask a question in class, even the simplest one. They are more open to asking when in the online platform situation. As a result, we have noticed a major improvement in overall engagement, which is helpful to get learners to reply and engage with the subject.

STUDENT INTERACTION

Our classroom interactions and experience help ensure that learners will comfortably interact, ask questions and contribute to groups, much more often than they do in large classrooms. As a result, we decided to divide learners into teams in which they answer problems posed by the tutors.

It is even more important to insert group work in virtual classrooms. Group work allows students to deepen their overall



Robert Butler, Head of Learning and Development, CIF.

understanding of the materials. We also determine the membership of each group, which is fixed over the course.

Learners then rotate responsibility for leading their groups, taking notes, and reporting back to the larger class. They also get to engage more and get to know other students in the class (especially those from different disciplines).

We have found it essential to provide 'ice-breakers' at the beginning of the course to introduce team members to each other. Although this takes extra time, at least one or two of the groups will report back to the entire class at the end on the group activity. **C**

For more full details on the latest online training courses available, turn to page 64 of this issue or visit www.ciftraining.ie. You can also contact Robert Butler on 01 406 6071 or email: rbutler@cif.ie

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GIVE YOUR FIRM A LEAN ADVANTAGE

LIZ CARROLL writes about the latest lean and Last Planner® system training modules available from the Construction Professionals Skillnet.

Construction companies were one of the first to go back to work after the country's Covid-19 shutdown. Many things have changed in the intervening period. With the additional Covid-19 requirements, it is now more important than ever to be looking for improved productivity and higher efficiencies. Effective supply chain management and the use of lean practices can help achieve these requirements and bring projects in on time and on budget.

According to Edward Sweeney (*Perspectives on Supply Chain Management and Logistics, 2007*), there are four fundamentals of supply chain management:

- **The Objectives:** Enhance customer service while optimising supply chain cost
- **The Philosophy:** Every product or service is delivered to the final consumer, the only real source of money, through an often complex series of movements between a number of companies that make up the complete supply chain. And that supply chain is only as strong as its weakest link
- **Managing the Flows:** For a supply chain to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency, the flows of material, money and information

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAY

"We have applied lean thinking and practices, including Last Planner to projects over the past four years. With greater collaboration and the right roles making the right decisions, the project team are focused on one goal. Team members support each other to provide smooth flows, which results in improved safety, quality and schedule efficiency for our clients. With a focus on standards, removal of waste has supported increased productivity, which subsequently enables delivery on budget."

JASON CASEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ARDMAC.



must be managed in an integrated and holistic manner, driven by the overall service and cost objectives

- **Supply Chain Relationships:** This holistic approach requires a reappraisal of internal and external customer-supplier relationships up and down the supply chain. It should not be a zero-sum game based on adversarial relationships, but a win-win game based on partnership approaches.

LEAN TECHNIQUES

In construction terms, this would mean an effective supply chain would complete a project to specification, on time and within budget at a minimum, while ensuring profitability for all those in the supply chain. While much of this makes sense, unfortunately, as they say, common sense isn't very common. It is also not easy to put into practice.

However, using lean techniques and the Last Planner® system can help in managing the flows and developing the supply chain relationships, which can do much to bring projects in on time and budget. Lean has been successfully implemented in manufacturing over the past 50-plus years, significantly reducing costs and lead times – the results of which we, as consumers, see in our pockets as prices decrease. Companies also see increased profit. Developments in technology, particularly information technology, have made the management of the flows more feasible.

REMOVING THE FAT

Lean, in essence, is about removing the fat, ie, waste. This fat can be waste in

material handling, material movements, storage, errors, rework, the movement of people, plant, etc. The focus is on continuous improvement and doing things right the first time. Lean offers a number of tools and techniques that can quickly bring results and don't need to cost huge amounts to introduce.

LAST PLANNER

In more recent years, the Lean Construction Institute has developed the Last Planner system. It is an alternative method of project planning. It is a collaborative approach, where each contractor is involved in developing the plan and is accountable to the commitments agreed within the plan. It involves identifying, in advance, what can prevent work flowing and then managing the constraints before they occur.

CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS SKILLNET LAST PLANNER MODULES

The Construction Professionals Skillnet is offering introductory modules to lean and the Last Planner system and a full programme covering the implementation of the Last Planner system. This could enable construction companies to improve how they do business and remain profitable in a time when there are increased restrictions on how and when work is done. **C**

Liz Carroll is the Network Manager for the Construction Professionals Skillnet. For full details on all available courses see www.cpskillnet.ie. Booking is essential. To book, please contact Liz Carroll at cpskillnet@cif.ie

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THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS — A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

KEITH KELLIHER, Principal, Kelliher & Associates, writes about a new one-day course available through CIF Learning & Development that will provide guidance through the adjudication process and show in particular the pitfalls to avoid.

The CIF Learning & Development Department in partnership with Kelliher & Associates has developed a one-day seminar 'The Adjudication Process – Taking the Case Step by Step', which has been designed to give an overview of the adjudication process under the Construction Contracts Act 2013.

The fourth anniversary of the commencement of the Construction Contracts Act 2013 fell on 25th July 2020. With the number of applications to the Ministerial Panel of Adjudicators established under the Act growing year on year, it is anticipated that the annual report from the panel chairperson Dr Nael Bunni, when published (usually released in early August each year), may well indicate a jump to over 50 applications in a year, and considerable increase on the 39 reported in year three.

GROWTH OF ADJUDICATION

The increase in the use of adjudication for the resolution of payment disputes in construction projects brings with it a clear need for those looking to utilise the process to have the requisite knowledge and understanding to navigate their way through effectively. The absence of knowledge around how the process works and what is required at each stage can easily result in an expensive loss for a party that is not easily or cheaply rectified.

WHAT IS ADJUDICATION

Described by top Australian construction and energy lawyer Robert Fenwick Elliott in 1996 as a "pay now argue later" process, adjudication is a process that aims to have decisions made promptly on disputes, with the result being temporarily binding on the parties, all in order to facilitate the supply of cashflow down the supply chain in construction. It does this quickly and under pressure in a process that is designed to last 28 days from the referral of a dispute to an adjudicator.

Adjudication is a technical procedure carried out under a judicial process. As



**Keith Kelliher, Principal,
Kelliher & Associates.**

a result, anyone seeking to utilise the adjudication process should always take expert advice in respect to their position, the existence of a dispute in legal terms, and advice regarding how to go about utilising the system to give a party the best opportunity of success.

AVOIDING A NEGATIVE ADJUDICATION EXPERIENCE

It is apparent from my experience in the industry that some parties are attempting to utilise the adjudication process without any expert or legal advice and any knowledge of the process. Incorrectly completed documents submitted at incorrect times, and without the required substantiation and support, have, for some, resulted in a negative result and overall negative experience of adjudication. Particularly in cases where a party may have had a strong position, it is difficult to accept a position of failure based simply on an absence of knowledge of the process. This, however, is adjudication where the ability to prove your case by the written word is as important as the facts.

TAKING YOUR CASE STEP BY STEP

To provide support to those in the industry who wish to understand and have a greater

knowledge of the adjudication process, Kelliher & Associates has, in conjunction with the Construction Industry Federation, designed the new training course, The Adjudication Process – Taking the Case Step by Step.

The course takes a step-by-step walk-through of all aspects of adjudication, including confirming you have a dispute, selecting an adjudicator, referring your case, dealing with a response, the decision and its enforcement. The course details the type of documents required, with samples throughout, and specifies all the necessary timeframes, with the entire course carried out with a workshop approach. **C**

For more information, contact Robert Butler, Head of Learning & Development, CIF, on Tel: 01 406 6071, Mob: 086 044 2235, Email: rbutler@cif.ie

THE COURSE – WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Other options of adjudication outside of the Act
- Do I have a crystallised payment dispute?
- Do I have a good claim?
- Jurisdiction of the adjudicator
- The Notice of Intention
- Appointment of the adjudicator
- Referring the case
- Response, reply, rejoinder and surrejoinder
- The adjudicator's decision
- Where next – Enforcement and appeal.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Main contractors
- Subcontractors
- Professionals (quantity surveyors, architects, engineers, project managers etc)
- Students.

CPD POINTS

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AG CEO STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF A SECURE SUPPLY CHAIN DURING COVID-19

MIMI MURRAY speaks with Stephen Acheson, CEO, AG, about the company's new Swords specification centre, the impact of Covid-19, and how sustainability is changing the hard landscaping market.

Hard landscaping and building products provider AG recently celebrated 60 years in business. Having expanded from a single quarry to a business now employing 220 people, the company also recently opened a specification centre in Swords, Co Dublin.

Stephen Acheson, CEO, AG, says that he is delighted to have a local base in the south once again, from where AG is supplying its unique walling, paving and facing brick products to architects, hard landscaping contractors and homeowners.

SWORDS SHOWROOM

"We have sold products in the south for many years. We had to close an office in Dublin during the recession. But last year, we expanded our presence in the south, and sales have been growing strongly since. The new showroom is good for our team, providing an opportunity to showcase products to customers," he explains.

The Republic of Ireland market is an important one for AG. It currently accounts for 20% of its overall turnover.

"Southern Ireland is one of the fastest-growing economies, certainly in recent times, and we see a lot of opportunities for further expansion."

AG's Swords showroom has internal product displays, and the premises can facilitate presentations and client meetings.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Stephen Acheson says that he believes one of the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis is that clients may be starting to think local and re-evaluating their supply chains to become less reliant on importing from thousands of miles away.

"It might be a little bit too early to judge, but customers are starting to choose Irish products more. We pride ourselves on the quality of our products and the raw materials we use," he says. "We also offer security of supply."

Commenting on the health and safety measures put in place for both staff and customers during the Covid-19 crisis, he says, "From our production point of view, social distancing is relatively straightforward. Our factories are



Stephen Acheson, CEO, AG.



The Curragh Racecourse, where AG supplied TerraPave® flagstones for internal and external areas of the new grandstand and outer buildings. AG also supplied made-to-order steps with strip inserts and a unique notch to the underside to improve safety.

automated, they're well ventilated, and people don't have to be in close proximity to each other. Communal space is more of a challenge, for example, changing rooms.

In these areas, we worked closely with our employees to introduce staggered shifts and improved hygiene measures.

"As an industry, there is a strong focus on health and safety. It is something we do well, and we were therefore well prepared to make necessary adjustments. As a result, we got back up and running quite quickly."

MARKET POTENTIAL

Stephen Acheson is upbeat about future market potential and is looking forward to meeting customer needs in the new normal.

"From our point of view, the last few months have been challenging, but we're coming through it, and I think the construction sector will emerge stronger and the longer-term prospects for the economy are still good. There is a lot of talk about investing in infrastructure and housing, and that has to be a good thing for the construction sector."

SUSTAINABILITY

"We believe the market will undergo considerable changes in the coming years as a result of the need to move to a net-zero carbon economy," he continues. "This presents significant challenges to all companies in the cement and concrete products sector, but also tremendous opportunities."

"We're already using new raw materials to reduce the use of Portland cement in our products. We are working with Queen's University in Belfast to develop new ways of reducing carbon contents in our products as part of a 'Knowledge Transfer Partnership'. The vast majority of our raw materials come from our quarries, reducing our carbon footprint by avoiding the need to import materials from abroad. New technology is making our industry cleaner than ever before, and our plant and equipment manufacturers are all pushing the boundaries and making products that are far more energy-efficient," Stephen Acheson concludes. **C**

AG Specifications Centre, Digital Office Centre, Balheary Demesne, Swords, Co Dublin. For further information, Tel: 01 963 0367, Web: www.ag.uk.com



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A SOLID CLIENT BASE

Ktech Security's client base includes Ireland's leading contractors and developers, commercial, retail, asset management and investment businesses. It also secures properties for State, semi-State, and local authority bodies. All sites it guards meet the necessary minimum standards of site security for insurance assessment and protection.

SECURITY OF PRICE

Site security was a major issue during the Covid-19 shutdown, and remains so, as managers look to factor in the costs of any further measures that have to be implemented.

David McGarry, Commercial Director, Ktech Security, says, "Despite the increased demand for our services, we have been able to maintain costs and give clients peace of mind about their security costs at this challenging time. We are fully aware that managers need to be able to adequately protect their assets without worrying about increasing security costs during this crisis. All of our clients have the security of knowing our established pricing structure has not changed, and our service offering can be adapted to meet most budgetary needs."

SECURITY GUARDS

The Private Security Authority fully licenses Ktech Security's guards and supervisors. Ktech holds the industry-standard certification PSA 28:2013.

The changing needs and expectations of Ktech Security's clients are easily met as a result of Ktech's ongoing staff training,



David McGarry, Commercial Director, Ktech Security.

with its procedures and reporting methods tailored to meet each client's specific needs. The company is fully resourced to meet any security need, with the highest standards of customer service.

PROTECTING AGAINST SITE TRESPASS

David McGarry says that criminal gangs who target construction and development sites are highly organised.

"Criminal gangs are well equipped, have their attacks researched, move fast, and, in most cases, know exactly what they are after," he explains. "Their raids on construction sites and part-built developments are well planned, with their intended theft target already identified. These gangs also carefully calculate the time for attendance by the Gardaí.

"KTech Security offers a full site security audit to all clients. Contractors and site managers can mitigate the risks of theft by ensuring their sites are tightly secured. This requires attention to detail, particularly around site perimeters: the first line of defence. The harder and longer it takes for a criminal to breach a perimeter and enter a building, the less attractive a target it will be. For most sites, a robust perimeter, with

a monitored intruder alarm camera system and professional mobile patrol response fleet may provide adequate security."

Ktech Security offers a comprehensive range of on-site guarding, mobile patrols, CCTV with remote monitoring systems, access control solutions, and intruder alarms systems, with no onerous terms or notice periods. **C**

For more details, contact David Mc Garry, Commercial Director, Ktech Security. Tel: 086 855 3154, Email: david@ktech.ie, LinkedIn: Ktech Security and Property Services.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTACT TRACING FOR COVID-19

JOHN EGAN, Executive, Safety and Training, CIF, writes about the importance of contact tracing and the emerging technologies that will assist in identifying persons who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19.

Covid-19 is the term given to Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, a highly infectious virus that emerged in China in December of 2019 and has since become an almost worldwide pandemic. There is currently no vaccine.

Under public health advice, it is incumbent on all persons to limit close contact with persons outside of one's own family and to be able to advise of recent close contacts in the event of contracting Covid-19. The Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' outlines that "physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. The currently recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise the risk of transmission is two metres".

WHAT IS CONTACT TRACING

In the context of Covid-19, the HSE defines contact tracing as when health service professionals seek to identify those in close contact with a confirmed case to determine who may be at risk of catching the virus.

Key objectives include:

- Identifying who someone diagnosed with Covid-19 has been in contact with;
- Determining the extent of that contact;
- Establishing if that person is at risk of catching the virus themselves, and providing them with advice; and,
- Actively following up and referring close contacts for testing.

In the event of a confirmed case of Covid-19, all persons identified as having had contact with this individual during the infectious period should be assessed by the HSE to see if they should be classified as a close or casual contact. The Health Protection Surveillance Centre's (HPSC) definition of a close contact includes, but is not limited to, an individual who has had greater than 15 minutes face-to-face, less than two metres distant contact with a confirmed case, or a household contact – defined as living or sleeping in the same home, individuals in shared accommodation sharing kitchen or bathroom facilities, and sexual partners.

By comparison, an individual may fall under the category of casual contact if they shared a closed space with a confirmed case for less than two hours.

CONTACT TRACING PROCESS

In the Republic of Ireland, contact tracing centres have been established with over 1,500 trained persons to manage a national contact management programme for Covid-19, which operates a four-step process, as follows:

- Case – Rapid notification to a person of a Covid-19 confirmed (detected) or not detected result and provision of advice;
- Contacts – Rapid identification of contacts of confirmed cases of Covid-19;
- Control – Rapid public health management of contacts of confirmed cases; and,
- Follow-up – Active follow-up of contacts for 14 days from the last contact with the confirmed case; this includes daily text messages and arranging testing as required for contacts.



CONSTRUCTION CONTACT TRACING PROGRAMME

Technology offers the potential to track all workers interfacing with an infected individual within two metres for 15 minutes or more, which is the existing threshold for exposure to Covid-19 as per current public health guidelines. Without such controls, a wider population may be placed, perhaps unnecessarily, into self-isolation.

A CIF working group was established in early-May to investigate IT solutions that assist in social distancing and contact tracing. Various IT solutions were assessed for suitability for application in construction. The key requirements that identified were:

- Effectiveness for preventing the spread of Covid-19 at work
- Functionality and ease of use
- Robustness of the technology for work
- Security of personal data, in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations, and
- Cost-effectiveness.

Following the undertaking of a literature review, research of readily available solutions, and discussions with vendors, a preferred IT solution, which includes close-distance working alerts, was recommended to the CIF's Safety, Health & Welfare sub-Committee. A pilot trial is currently being planned.

HSE COVID TRACKER APP

The Health Services Executive (HSE) has launched a free Covid-19 tracker app for mobile phones, which may be downloaded from Apple's App Store or the Google Play Store. The mobile app uses Bluetooth to alert subscribers if they have been in close contact with another registered app user who has tested positive for Covid-19. Importantly, it also serves as an up-to-date information portal for advice on protective measures, symptoms of the virus, prevalence, and other useful data. Use of the app in conjunction with other measures advised by the public health authorities will greatly assist in suppression of the virus. **C**

For medical advice about Covid-19, refer to the HSE by calling 1850 24 1850, by tweeting @HSELive or by visiting
Web: www2.hse.ie/coronavirus

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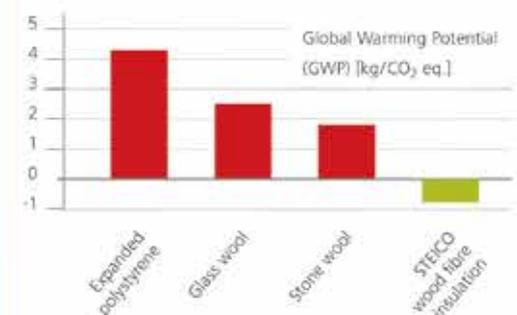
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RORY'S JOURNEYS

Rory O'Connor of 'Rory's Stories' fame speaks to **ROBBIE COUSINS** about his role as CIF Safety Ambassador and why people should not shy away from seeking help if they are struggling with their mental wellbeing.

For the past two years as CIF Safety Ambassador, comedian and social-media star Rory O'Connor has been conveying a straightforward message to be aware of your mental wellbeing and seek help if it is needed.

In 2014, Rory, in an effort to address his demons around gambling, began posting comic videos online that parodied many aspects of everyday Irish life. The videos became a viral sensation, and in 2016 he quit his job at a call centre to pursue his real passion, making people laugh.

Rory believes the seed of his mental health problems lay back in his schooldays. He struggled at school and, in retrospect, feels his teachers should have offered him support.

"School was a real challenge for me. I could not keep up, and I was made to believe I was thick. My experience in the education system later impacted on my inability to make a go of any jobs, which, in turn, affected my mental health. Thankfully, I have now found something that I love to do."

Alongside the online videos, Rory began performing live shows and developed a more serious side-line giving talks about his mental health struggles.

CIF SAFETY AMBASSADOR

Rory's mix of comedy and public speaking brought him to the attention of the CIF, and in 2018 he was appointed as CIF Safety Ambassador. In this role, he presents toolbox talks on sites across the country, which mix his unique style of comedy with discussions on mental health awareness.

"I am not a mental-health expert, I only have the story of my experience to tell," Rory explains. My goal is to encourage those who may be struggling with mental wellbeing not to be afraid to seek help and to move from a negative thought platform to a positive one."

Rory says that the toolbox talks have been a hugely rewarding experience for him.

"After school, I started my career with a very short stint as an apprentice electrician. I was the worst apprentice electrician ever," he laughs, "but, I loved the on-site comradery. Returning to site has enabled me to tap into that energy once again."

GETTING THE RIGHT MIX

"My stand-up routine has evolved over the years," he continues, "I kept in the material



Rory O'Connor.

that worked and improved or dropped what didn't. I took the same approach with the toolbox talks, developing them on a trial-and-error basis. When someone asks a question or raises an issue I had not considered before, I incorporate some of this into future shows."

Speaking about how workers have engaged with the presentations, Rory says the feedback has been very positive, with people coming up to him after the talks to share the most personal of stories. There have also been a few real stand-out moments.

"At one presentation, a worker in his 50s said out of the blue to the group that he had been on medication for many years to deal with his depression. This was very successful for him, and he added that nobody should be ashamed or afraid to ask for help. After another talk, a person spoke to me about a suicide attempt he made a few years earlier, saying he had found help and understood where I was coming from."

BOOK DEAL

Rory O'Connor will achieve a substantial

milestone later this year when his third book is published. Rory is already a two-time best-selling author.

"My first two books were commissioned comedic guides based around Irish life. This third one is my story, covering how I got to be where I am today. So, it is very special to me."

With a wry smile, he says. "I don't think anyone who knew me in school would have associated the expression 'best-selling author' with my name. Despite having lots of help from great editors, the books are something in which I take great pride. If I can achieve this, I think there is no end to what others can achieve if they reach out for help and try to redirect negative thoughts into positive actions," he concludes. **C**

Rory O'Connor will be conducting toolbox talks in the lead up to and during Construction Safety Week 2020. If you would like to enquire about bookings, email Shane Dempsey, Director, Communications. CIF, at sdempsey@cif.ie. The Rory's Stories online channel can be found at www.facebook.com/RorysStoriesOfficial

11,000 CASES OF SKIN CANCER DIAGNOSED ANNUALLY IN IRELAND

Builders and outdoor workers urged to be SunSmart due to their high risk of skin cancer.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in Ireland with over 11,000 cases diagnosed annually, and it is predicted that this number will more than double by the year 2045. Thankfully, most cases of skin cancer can be prevented by protecting skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or artificial sources.

OUTDOOR WORKERS: SKIN CANCER RISK

Outdoor workers are particularly vulnerable to skin cancer, spending long periods of time outdoors exposed to UV rays from the sun. Due to the nature of their occupation, they are exposed to more UV radiation from the sun than indoor workers

Both sporadic and chronic sun exposure can be harmful. Exposure causing sunburn is the most damaging, but frequent nonburning exposures also significantly increase the risk of skin cancer. Those who spend all or part of the day regularly working outdoors can reduce their risk of skin cancer by protecting their skin.

PROTECT YOUR SKIN BETWEEN APRIL AND SEPTEMBER

In Ireland, UV radiation levels from the sun are high from April to September, typically between the hours of 11am to 3pm. You cannot see or feel the UV rays that cause damage to your skin. It doesn't have to be a warm and sunny day for UV levels from the sun to be high. Even on cloudy days, UV levels can be high enough to damage your skin. Remember, it's not the heat of the sun that causes the damage; it's the UV rays from the sun that damage your skin and eyes.

Protect your skin every day between April and September by following the SunSmart code.

SUNSMART CODE

To help protect outdoor workers, Healthy Ireland, the National Cancer Control Programme, and the Construction Industry Federation have joined forces to urge outdoor workers to be SunSmart and follow the '5 S's' of skin protection:

- Slip on clothing, such as long sleeves or collared t-shirts, that covers your skin
- Slap on a wide-brimmed hat
- Slide on wraparound sunglasses
- Seek shade – Especially if outdoors between 11am to 3pm when UV rays are at their strongest. If possible, schedule outdoor work before 11am or after 3pm.
- Slop on sunscreen: Use sunscreen, SPF minimum of 30 or higher, 20 minutes before going outside, and re-apply every two hours – more often if perspiring.

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN USE THE SUNSMART CODE

Employers of outdoor workers can protect workers by:

- Including sun protection advice as part of health and safety programmes
- Reminding employees regularly about the dangers of the sun's



“EVEN ON CLOUDY DAYS, UV LEVELS CAN BE HIGH ENOUGH TO DAMAGE YOUR SKIN”

UV rays when working outdoors by, for example, displaying posters and providing leaflets

- Ensuring that managers and supervisors act as positive role models by being SunSmart
- Developing a UV protection policy to record how your workplace will manage UV exposure risk at work. This policy may involve doing a risk assessment and providing sunprotective clothing, shade and sunscreen.

Supporting and following the 5 S's of the SunSmart code means outdoor workers and their employers can protect against UV exposure and reduce the risk of developing skin cancer. **C**

If you need additional support or resources to support skin cancer prevention behaviours, visit the HSE Cancer services website at www.cancercontrol.ie or email info@cancercontrol.ie to request sample materials such as a workplace audit tool, risk assessment and policy template.

DIGICON 2020 VIRTUAL SUMMIT HEARS FROM GLOBAL DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION LEADERS

ROBBIE COUSINS reports from the virtual CIF Digicon Summit 2020, where speakers from around the world discussed how Covid-19 may be the catalyst that triggers construction's digital transition.

With new online communications tools becoming a staple for all construction teams across the country in the past few months, it was appropriate that CIF's Digicon Summit 2020 became the first major Federation event to be hosted online. The online conference, organised by iQuest, was particularly successful in bringing together a line-up of excellent speakers from across the globe. It also allowed attendees to be present without travelling from across Ireland or abroad. In addition to an impressive list of expert speakers, the conference had virtual roundtable discussion groups and a virtual networking facility.

CIF Communications Director Shane Dempsey hosted the conference from a studio in Dublin.

OPENING ADDRESS

In his opening address, Cillian Kelly, Digital Ambassador for Construction, CIF, and Head of Digital Project Delivery, Sisk, highlighted how critical digital construction tools have been in maintaining productivity in the sector in the past few months, and that companies across the industry are now realising the opportunities and benefits they have to offer. "The growth in the use of online collaboration platforms, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, has been phenomenal."

He added that CIF Construction 4.0 sub-Committee has published guidance on working remotely for members, which can be downloaded from the CIF website.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Stephen Lynam, Technical Advisor, Office of Government Procurement (OGP), spoke about the Government's eProcurement programme and the importance of BIM to future public projects.

He described BIM as a process management system.

"BIM is a system that manages all pre-contractual information, design information, construction information and maintenance information for a project in a structured manner, and this is the huge benefit of it," Stephen Lynam explained.

He told attendees that the Government is planning to implement BIM on a phased basis in the coming years to ensure public bodies invest the necessary resources to adopt BIM, to impose standards for delivery across the public sector in the form of the ISO-19650 series, and to develop BIM skills for all public works contracts.

"Firstly, this will be directed at the clients, so they can understand what they are looking for. They will then inform consultants about how they want their projects designed in BIM. Then, it will be introduced for contractors and the supply chain, with most probably a 12-month lead-in on large-scale projects where there will be a design requirement to use BIM. Twelve months after that mandate has been given, there will be a requirement for contractors to return their bids digitally through BIM. Initially, this will be done for high-value contracts where most of the BIM skills reside."



Shane Dempsey, Director, Communications, CIF, hosting the Digicon 2020 Summit.

Stephen Lynam also said that quite a large number of SMEs are not at a point with BIM that the OGP would like them to be. "The reason we are introducing BIM on a phased basis is to give SMEs time to get into a position where they can bid for public contracts. It will be gradually introduced on lower value contracts as the skillsets develop."

GOOGLE CONSTRUCTION

Daniel Costello, Global Vice President for Data Centre Engineering, Google, spoke about how data centre construction is moving to a pre-manufactured digital prescriptive approach.

"Google has moved to a situation where it is now building standardised, repeatable products that can be assembled in the field, with the focus in the field on increasing productivity and quality, and removing the need for rework."

SPEAKERS

Other speakers on the day included Danielle Dy Buncio, CEO, VIA Technik, USA; Hubert Rhomberg, Futurist and CEO, The Rhomberg Group and CEO, Cree, Austria; Robert Moore, Autodesk Applications & Digital Project Delivery Manager, Diatec; and Leighton Davies, Regional Business Manager, Topcon Positioning Europe.

CLOSING REMARKS

In his closing remarks, Tom Parlon, Director General, CIF, commended CIF members, particularly members of the CIF 4.0 sub-Committee, for driving the digitisation agenda across the industry.

"It has taken a while, but the Government is engaging with the industry on improving productivity. We see a huge opportunity to increase innovation in the industry. Irish construction companies are world leaders and have a real opportunity to disrupt the global construction industry and capture some of the \$1.5tn profit pool that McKinsey estimates is up for grabs in the coming decade."

Gold Sponsors for this year's conference were Topcon, Diatec Group and CertCentral®. Dublin Simon was the Charity Partner, with *Construction* magazine as a media partner. **C**



During Men's Health Week 2020, PJ Hegarty issued workers with the 'MHFI Man Manual' and encouraged them to take on some of the challenges listed in the manual. Pictured left to right: Richard Newport, Noel Cox and Simon O'Donoghue.

RESTORING THE BALANCE FOR MEN'S HEALTH

JOHN EGAN, Executive, Safety and Training, CIF, writes about this year's International Men's Health Week programme, through which the CIF aimed to support construction workers returning to sites after the Covid-19 shutdown.

International Men's Health Week 2020 ran from 15th to 21st June under the theme of 'Restoring the Balance', with the message that everyone needs to 'be part of the solution' to address their own health and wellbeing.

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI), a charity which seeks to promote all aspects of the health and wellbeing of

men and boys, provided access to a suite of resources, including a free, 32-page 'Man Manual'.

CIF SUPPORT

The CIF Safety, Health & Welfare sub-Committee supported this year's campaign. Within the industry, initiatives marking International Men's Health Week included

PJ Hegarty issuing the MHFI Man Manual to workers and encouraging them to take on some of the challenges listed in the manual. The contractor also organised a series of men's health toolbox talks and morning exercise programmes.

Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, says that this year's programme provided an opportunity to



**John Egan, Executive,
Safety and Training, CIF.**

highlight the impact of Covid-19 on men's mental health.

"There is no doubt that many workers were under pressure as a result of the Covid-19 shutdown," Dermot Carey comments. "While the shutdown was to protect workers' and society's physical health, there is no doubt that it brought with it challenges to many people's mental wellbeing. That is why CIF was delighted to participate in the International Men's Health Week 2020 and highlight to construction workers the importance of restoring balance to their lives at this time."

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Owing to Covid-19 safety precautions, any on-site programmes were organised with appropriate social distancing in place. Indoor face-to-face events, where it was not possible to implement Covid-19 precautions, were deferred until a future date. Nonetheless, CIF held a series of live webinars and persons were asked to lend their support by linking to resources provided on the MHFI website www.mhfi.org

Webinars held during International Men's Health Week 2020 included:

- Mental Fitness – It is always a balancing act
- Heart Health – Have you got the balance right?
- Cancer Prevention Is About Creating Balance
- Quit Smoking – Restore the body's balance
- Rethink What You Drink – Get the balance right
- Physical Activity – Restore your overall balance
- Fathers – Help their children to

become balanced adults

MENTAL WELLBEING

This year, attention was also drawn to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on society in general, and on men in particular.

All of our lives and routines have been affected by measures introduced to contain the virus and to protect the population. Many construction workers were unable to work, and this brought its own challenges. Spectrum Life shared stark statistics, which highlighted that:

- One in four deaths of young men aged 15-39 in Ireland are due to alcohol
- Suicide is the leading cause of death among young Irish men aged 15 to 24
- Alcohol is a factor in more than half of completed suicides in Ireland and over one-third of episodes of deliberate self-harm.

Sean Connolly, Health Promotion Officer, Spectrum Life, advises that men follow the 'HOW' acronym:

- H – Honesty with yourself to recognise what the issue may be through inner truth
- O – Opening your mind to new ideas, strategies, and coping mechanisms
- W – Willing to learn and embrace your journey.

"This year, more than ever, balance in terms of overall health and wellbeing has impacted many of us," Sean Connolly says. "We have been forced to isolate, separate and block ourselves off from all aspects of the outside world. Covid-19 has impacted on people's health in many ways, including their physical fitness.

"For instance, the shutdown of sporting facilities and activities has impacted on the physical and mental wellbeing of many men. Many of those who share custody of their children have had to shut off physical contact with them and as a result, suffered high levels of emotional stress. Many men who find support in the comradery of the building site would also have been experiencing increased levels of anxiety due to isolation.

"All of the above have led to many adverse effects on men and men's health, in general, over the past number of months. The balance and structures that men had to support themselves have been knocked and deconstructed. Harmful coping mechanisms will have formed, as well as unhealthy habits. These factors can lead to a severe deterioration and decline in positive aspects of their lives, which brings more darkness into what once was a life full of light, and a weight that now cannot



**Sean Connolly, Health Promotion
Officer, Spectrum Life.**

be easily lifted.

Due to limited physical activity/exercise, lack of social interaction, disconnection with family and job loss, the issue of increased alcohol consumption, self-harm and suicide has been rising unnecessarily."

MANAGING STRESS

While it is normal to experience worry or stress, there is a range of free online resources available to help manage our mental health and wellbeing. For instance, Healthy Ireland, a Government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland, provides a range of support materials which can be accessed at the website www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together

Other supports include CIF-led initiatives, including the 'Build Health Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Programme'. The CIF has collaborated with Laya Healthcare and Spectrum Life to facilitate the Build Health Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Programme, which is a 24/7 Mental Health Support Programme. This can be accessed at www.wellbeing.spectrum.life/cif

The CIF and Remedy Clinic have also come together to offer members a modern approach to counselling services. For more information, visit www.cif-eap.ie

On 3rd June 2020, the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity, supported by the CIF, launched a free 24/7 confidential employee assistance helpline and app for everyone in the Irish construction industry. The helpline can be called anytime on 1800 939 122, and the app 'Construction Industry Helpline' can be downloaded on Android or Apple mobile devices. **C**

INDUSTRY NEWS

UPCOMING CIF CONFERENCES PLANNED AS HYBRID LIVE AND STREAMED EVENTS

The CIF Digicon Summit on 7th July last was a hugely successful fully-virtual event, with speakers and delegates logging on from across Ireland and the globe.

Following on from this, upcoming CIF conferences are planned to have a limited number of seats for delegates to attend in person, in line with all HSE guidelines. At the same time, proceedings will be streamed for delegates attending virtually.

So, this year's CIF Annual Conference will take place on Tuesday, 1st October in Croke Park, with a limited number of delegates in attendance, and it will be streamed across the day to enable delegates not attending in person to follow the proceedings online. The same will be the case for The National Housebuilding Summit in Croke on Tuesday, 10th November; The Southern Region Construction Summit in Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Thursday, 19th November; and the CIF Health & Safety Summit in Croke Park on Thursday, 26th November.



Then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar addressing the CIF Annual Conference 2019.

Sarah Murphy, Managing Director of events organisers iQuest and Business Post Live, says, "Attendees will still be able to enjoy the full conference programme this year, including chatting with exhibitors over lunch, networking with industry peers and discussing the solutions for the industry to move forward. To reflect the unprecedented times we find ourselves in, this year's conference will be available online also

for those not in a position to attend in person. Virtual delegates can log-on in a virtual conference environment from the comfort of their home or office and see the same great content delivered in a new and exciting way.

"We will continue to monitor the situation, and should the Government guidelines change, we will adopt these into our plans." **C**

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *CIF Annual Conference – Thursday 1st October, Croke Park and online – www.cifconference.ie*
- *National Housebuilding Summit – Tuesday 10th November, Croke Park and online – www.housebuildingsummit.ie*
- *Southern Region Construction Summit – Thursday 19th November, Silversprings Hotel, Cork and online – www.southernconstruct.ie*
- *CIF Health & Safety Summit – Thursday 26th November, Croke Park and online – www.cifsafety.ie*

CASEY DOORS REBRANDS AS ARCHITECTURAL DOORSETS

Irish-owned fire-resisting doorsets manufacturer Casey Doors has rebranded to Architectural Doorsets. The company has also expanded by adding 300 sq metres of space to its production facility in Dublin.

Architectural Doorsets will continue to be a design-led manufacturer of the bespoke fire-resisting doorsets, which are independently tested and certified and supported by primary test evidence and accreditation by Warrington Fire.

Brian Lanigan, Managing Director, Architectural Doorsets, commenting on the company's new developments, says, "Excellence in product design and performance is at the heart of what we do. We will continue to deliver on this promise under our new name.

"Our manufacturing facility in Dublin is expanding to enhance production capacity

and accommodate the further introduction of cutting edge technology."

Sustainability is at the core of the business. In addition to investing in facilities and advanced training for its people, Architectural Doorsets also invests in environmentally-friendly manufacturing processes. An example of this is how it utilises all extraction sawdust shavings and off-cuts generated during the manufacturing process to fuel a highly-efficient wood-fired boiler system. This system supplies the entire factory and offices with heat and enough hot water to operate all presses within the production process.

Brian Lanigan concludes by saying, "The company has significantly grown in the past three years, with an estimated €3m investment in machinery, facilities and business development. As we close off



Brian Lanigan, Managing Director, Architectural Doorsets.

the end of a decade, the timing is right to launch in 2020 under a new banner, while holding on to the important values and practices that make us who we are." **C**

WICKLOW YOUTHREACH WINS SECOND-LEVEL GENERATION APPRENTICESHIP 2020

Wicklow Youthreach has won the Second-Level Generation Apprenticeship 2020 competition, with a prize of €1,500. Discovery Centre (Dublin), Woodwork & Trades team received the runner-up prize of €750, with Bridgetown College (Wexford) and St Nathy's College (Roscommon), each receiving €500 for finishing joint third.

Organised by Solas, the Generation Apprenticeship competition asks entrants to build an 'A' letter – based on the Generation Apprenticeship brand – from materials supplied that were previously destined for landfill.

The competition was judged through a two-stage process.

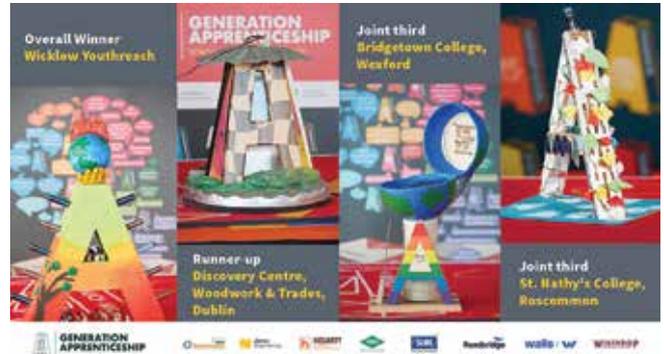
The first round of assessment was undertaken by respected Regional Skills Forum managers Natasha Kinsella (Dublin), Ray Murphy (North East) and John Costello (Midlands). This generated a shortlist of 13 finalists that were then judged remotely by a team of high-level industry leaders.

The judges were Ian Barrett (Walls Construction), Paul Cremmins (Suir Engineering), Ciaran Gormley (Bennett (Construction) Ltd), John Moran (John Paul Construction), Kevin O'Brien (PJ Hegarty & Sons UC) and Simon Watson (Jones Engineering).

When assessing the work, the judges considered the design of each entry, together with how well they elevated the idea of apprenticeship and their potential to positively influence business and society to tackle climate change and sustainability.

Andrew Brownlee, Chief Executive, Solas, congratulated and thanked the 156 teams who entered the competition and judges for their time, as well as its sponsors and the Teaching Union Ireland (TUI) for all their invaluable support.

“Providing students with the opportunity of engaging with top Irish construction companies has generated a unique set of insights



Winners of the Generation Apprenticeship 2020 Second-Level Competition

around what they want from their future employers,” Andrew Brownlee said.

Now in its third year, the Generation Apprenticeship competition included post-primary schools, community training and Youthreach centres for the first time in 2020.

The competition is organised by Solas and supported by the Construction Industry Federation.

This year's competition was sponsored by Bennett (Construction), Jones Engineering, PJ Hegarty & Sons, John Paul Construction, Suir Engineering, Roadbridge, Walls Construction and Winthrop. **C**

To find out more about the Generation Apprenticeship competition, go to www.gacomp.ie.

To find out more about apprenticeships, go to www.apprenticeship.ie

SONICA APPOINTS DAN RYAN AS CONSTRUCTION DIRECTOR

Fit-out and construction company Sonica has appointed Dan Ryan as the company's new construction director.

In this new role, Dan Ryan will oversee all future construction operations, supporting Sonica in targeting large-scale business projects, both locally and internationally, as well as further embedding the Sonica commitment to uncompromising excellence and innovation across their entire project portfolio.

Donnacha Neary, founder, and Managing Director, Sonica says, “We are thrilled to bring Dan into the Sonica family at a time when the phenomenal growth of our organisation requires a passionate, driven professional to assume control of the spine of our construction operations. Dan brings with him a wealth of international expertise and will lend his voice to our senior



Dan Ryan, Construction Director, Sonica.

management team as we target even further market share.”

With over 18 years' experience in the construction industry, Dan Ryan has held previous roles such as project director and operations manager in which he managed commercial and residential projects of between €10m to €50m. He has also worked on construction projects in the US, with experience of construction teams in Alaska.

Dan Ryan's appointment is the latest in a series of appointments by Sonica in recent months, including the appointment of Andreas Heil as Head of Design & Architecture.

Sonica was founded in 2013 and is an award-winning fit-out company with over 50 employees, and offices in Dublin, Cork, Belfast, and Berlin. The company also offers facilities and property services through its subsidiary company Preempt. **C**

SISK GROUP REPORTS TURNOVER OF JUST UNDER €1.4BN FOR 2019

Sicon Limited, the parent company of the Sisk Group's construction and construction-related activities in Ireland, the United Kingdom and a number of international markets, has announced its financial results for the year ended 31st December 2019.

Over 98% of the group's turnover is derived from construction and related activities. The figures also incorporate the results of the Korine Property Partners and Origo Distribution businesses, both of which are wholly-owned subsidiaries.

Commenting, Steve Bowcott, Chief Executive Officer, John Sisk & Son, said: "We are very happy to report another good set of results for the group, reflecting continued strong financial and operational performance in 2019. John Sisk & Son has a consistent record of excellence in project delivery, innovation and value creation across many different construction sectors and markets, including commercial, residential, civil engineering, data centre and life sciences, and we celebrated 160 years in business in 2019.

"We are proud of the important role



Steve Bowcott, Chief Executive Officer, John Sisk & Son.

we play supporting key Irish Government policy objectives in the provision of

social housing, schools and other public infrastructure. During the year, Sisk Living – the group's social housing unit – commenced the building, with its partners, of 590 residential units as part of the Social Housing Bundle 1 PPP project.

"During 2019, we also commenced a number of landmark projects in the UK, including the Mercian Project, which at 42 stories is the tallest residential tower in Birmingham, for Moda.

"Our European business has continued to expand primarily in the specialist sectors of data centres and life sciences, where we have extensive experience. During the year, the group worked on projects in Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden."

SISK 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

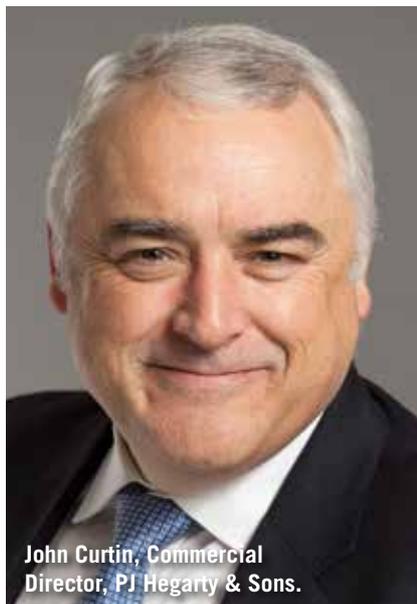
Turnover grew by 19% to just under €1.4bn
 Profit before interest and tax increased by 9.9% to €31.1m
 Shareholders' funds increased to €85.4m
 The group has high levels of cash and has no bank borrowings. **C**

PJ HEGARTY MAKES TWO SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

PJ Hegarty & Sons is delighted to announce the appointments of John Curtin to its board in the role of commercial director and Quinton Allen as a construction director in the eastern region.

John Curtin joined PJ Hegarty in 1990 as a graduate quantity surveyor. In 1997, he became the commercial manager and in 2003, was appointed to the position of regional director. He has been involved in many of its most prestigious projects, including landmark med-tech, design & build and PPP projects. He has a particular focus on training and development of surveying staff to chartered status and is very committed to industry activity. In 2011, he was involved in the merging of the Irish Auctioneers & Valuers Institute (IAVI) and the Society of Chartered Surveyors (SCS) to form the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI), becoming its first president. John Curtin commenced his new role at the beginning of the year.

Quinton Allen has over 20 years'



John Curtin, Commercial Director, PJ Hegarty & Sons.

experience and a proven track record in delivering large and complex projects across



Quinton Allen, Construction Director (Eastern Region), PJ Hegarty & Sons.

a broad range of sectors in the industry. **C**

Artists impressions of the Homeless Care CLG residential care facility in Naas.



JIGGINSTOWN HOUSE HOMELESS FACILITY ON TRACK TO OPEN IN EARLY 2021

Cleary Doyle Construction is progressing work on a new accommodation facility for young people at Jigginstown House in Bundle of Sticks, Naas, Co Kildare, for Homeless Care CLG.

Homeless Care CLG is a charity founded by local business people in 2014, following an appeal on national radio by a Naas-based social care worker to help young adults leaving State care at the age of 18 who have become homeless. The goal of the charity is to offer supported living accommodation and to teach life skills that will help young homeless people, primarily aged 18 to 25, to progress to independent living.

The scheme comprises the conversion of outbuildings to 12 studio apartments, and the conversion and extension of a farmhouse building into a communal centre and administration building to train the young homeless adults to live independently in the community.

In June 2015, the charity identified Jigginstown House as a suitable property



Ongoing work at Jigginstown House.



The contract signing for the Homeless Care CLG residential care facility at Bundle of Sticks, Naas. Standing, L to r: Paul Meskell, Carron & Walsh QS; Pat Lucey President, CIF; Tim O'Connell, Director, Homeless Care CLG; John Walsh, Moloney & Walsh M&E Building Services; and Denis Carron, Carron & Walsh QS. Seated, L to r: Ronan Clarke, Clarke Consultants; Brian Byrne, Cleary Doyle Construction; John Cradock, Chairman, Homeless Care CLG; and John Delaney, Clarke Consultants.

and applied for Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) funding. With funding approval for the conversion of the outbuildings and reroofing of the farmhouse, the property was purchased in September 2016.

Following surveying and an additional application, further CAS funding was applied for and approved in May 2017.

John Cradock, Chairman, Homeless Care CLG and Managing Director, John Cradock Ltd, says that Homeless Care CLG has granted a licence to an established charity for the management and running of the facility.

Brian Byrne, Joint Managing Director, Cleary Doyle Construction, says that despite Covid-19, the team has kept the project on track for handover to the client in November.

"We are delighted with the pace at which the project has progressed. This is very much down to the commitment of the team on site and the leadership shown by our site manager Vincent Henry," Brian Byrne says. "Every member of the team, from the design team to our own workers and

supply chain, is fully invested in the project, knowing that they are delivering quality accommodation that will make a real difference in people's lives."

John Cradock says that it has been a complicated process to get to this stage of the project.

"Homeless Care CLG is grateful for the CAS funding allocated by Government and the proactive approach of Kildare County Council. We are also delighted with the dedication shown by all the team members at Cleary Doyle Construction; Ronan Clarke of Clarke & Co Engineers and Architects; Carron & Walsh Quantity Surveyors; and Morley Walsh, Mechanical and Electrical Consultants, through a time that has not been easy for a lot of people.

"With the committed support of CIF, we plan to move to the next phase of the project in November, when we will refurbish and fit out the farm house administration building and extend the kitchen area. We intend to have the facility open by the end of the first quarter in 2021," John Cradock concludes. **C**

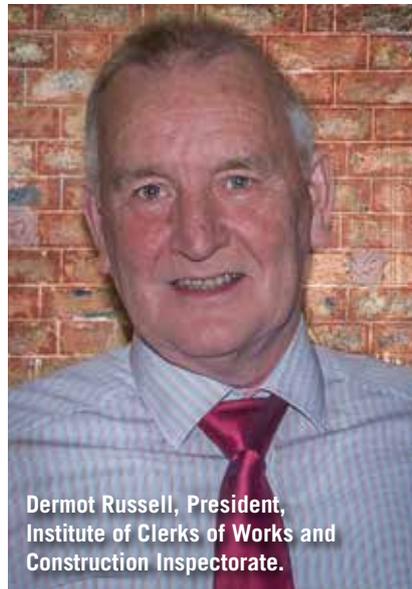
RETIRED TU DUBLIN LECTURER ELECTED PRESIDENT OF CLERK OF WORKS GLOBAL BODY

Dermot Russell, a retired lecturer from TU Dublin, has become the first Irish person to be elected president of the Institute of Clerks of Works and Construction Inspectorate (ICWCI).

The ICWCI is the professional body that supports quality construction through inspection. The Institute of Clerks of Works was formed in 1882, incorporated in 1903, and it became the ICWCI in 2009. It represents the professional and technical interests of clerks of works, construction inspectors and those of similar and equivalent duties worldwide.

Speaking about his election, Dermot Russell said, "I am proud and indeed privileged to take on the role of president of the ICWCI. This institute, established in its original form in 1882, has made significant contributions to the enhancement and standards of quality in construction throughout those years and continues to do so through the experience, diligence and dedication of our members."

"I wish to thank all those who put their



Dermot Russell, President, Institute of Clerks of Works and Construction Inspectorate.

trust in me to take on this important role, and I look forward to meeting and working with you all, within our professional

institute and across the industry, during my term in office."

Dermot Russell started his career as an apprentice carpenter/joiner in 1965 with John Jones Ltd, later Jones Engineering, where he progressed to become a site manager. He later spent 30 years as a lecturer in TU Dublin, Bolton Street, then DIT, before retiring in 2014.

He became involved with the ICWCI through his work in DIT, where the Construction Site Management Programme was offered as a post-apprenticeship career progression. When students of this programme graduate, they are also provided with the opportunity to sit the clerk of works examinations, and so the college for many years has had a strong link with the ICWCI. He maintained his involvement with the ICWCI Dublin Chapter following his retirement.

In closing, he says, "I am delighted to be in a position announce that the ICWCI management board has approved Dublin as the venue for its 2021 annual conference and AGM." **C**

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) in the UK recently released a report, 'Understanding Mental Health in the Building Environment', which will be of interest to Irish-based construction professionals and business managers.

The report includes statistics that 26% of construction professionals in the UK had experienced suicidal thoughts and 97% had experienced stress over the past year.

"Job insecurity, long hours, time away from families, lack of support from HR and late payments all contributed to the 'silent crisis,'" said Professor Charles Egbu, President, CIOB.

The CIOB report also highlights the role gender differences play in mental health in the industry. Female construction workers often have to work with poor or no toilet facilities and inadequate sanitary conditions, while men frequently feel unable to discuss their mental well-being due to 'hyper-masculine' expectations of how they should behave.

The CIOB produced this report to highlight the state of mental health in the industry and in doing so uncovered the silent crisis that affects many construction workers' day-to-day lives.

Speaking at the time of publication of the report about the added impact of Covid-19, Professor Egbu said, "We know that the coronavirus outbreak is affecting the way many of us live, work, and play, and in recent days it has become extremely difficult for individuals who are doing their best in extreme circumstances."

"Tackling mental ill-health is going to remain a significant challenge for the industry over the next few years, and we must work as a collective – involving industry, government, and professional bodies to make more fundamental changes and



Professor Charles Egbu, President, CIOB.

improvements to mental health provision."

The report calls on construction firms to do more to identify risks, improve awareness through training and events for staff, encourage more open discussion of mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, and provide specialist support services. Larger firms should also consider how they can support other businesses in their supply chain. **C**

To download a copy of the 'Understanding Mental Health in the Building Environment' report, visit www.policy.ciob.org

FOR YOUR DIARY

Helping you plan ahead

AUGUST

Monday 17th, 12:00pm GALWAY BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Monday 24th, Time TBC CORK BRANCH EXECUTIVE MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Brid Cody
Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

Tuesday 18th, 12:00pm MIDLANDS BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Wednesday 19th, 11.00am-12.30pm M&ECA GENERAL MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Jennifer Nisbet-Daly
Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: jnisbetdaly@cif.ie

Wednesday 19th, 3:00pm-5:00pm MBCA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Denise Tuffy
Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: dtuffy@cif.ie

Thursday 20th, 12:00pm NORTH WEST BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Friday 21st, 12:00pm DONEGAL BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Thursday 27th, Time TBC KERRY BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Brid Cody
Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, 2nd, Time TBC CIF SOUTH EAST BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Ronan O'Brien
Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: robrien@cif.ie

Thursday, 3rd, Time TBC CIF MID WEST BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Brid Cody
Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

Monday 7th, 4:00pm-6:00pm CECA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Denise Tuffy
Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: dtuffy@cif.ie

Tuesday 8th, 10:00am-12:00pm IHBA NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Cathy Gurry
Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: cgurry@cif.ie

Wednesday 9th, 1:00pm-3:00pm PTCM COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Denise Tuffy
Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: dtuffy@cif.ie

Monday 14th, Time TBC CORK IHBA MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Brid Cody
Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

Monday 21st, 12:00pm GALWAY BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Tuesday 22nd, 12:00pm MIDLANDS BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Tuesday 25th, 11:00am EXECUTIVE BODY MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Gillian Heffernan
Tel: 01 406 6016, Email: gillian@cif.ie

Monday 28th, 12pm NORTH WEST BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Tuesday 29th, 12:00pm DONEGAL BRANCH MEETING

Location: Online
Contact: Justin Molloy
Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

UPCOMING CIF CONFERENCES

Thursday, 1st October CIF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Location: Croke Park, Dublin, and online
Details: www.cifconference.ie

Tuesday, 10th November NATIONAL HOUSEBUILDING SUMMIT

Location: Croke Park, Dublin, and online
Details: www.housebuildingsummit.ie

Thursday, 19th November SOUTHERN REGION CONSTRUCTION SUMMIT

Location: Silversprings Hotel, Cork, and online
Details: www.southernconstruct.ie

Thursday, 26th November CIF HEALTH & SAFETY SUMMIT

Location: Croke Park, Dublin, and online
Details: www.cifsafety.ie

CIF TRAINING COURSES

Training Dates for August & September 2020 Live Training Webinars

AUGUST 2020 COURSES	CODE	DAYS	DATES	TIMES
CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 4009	2 Days	26th, 27th August	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF IOSH Managing Safety in Construction	MSIC 4011	5 Days	7th, 14th, 21st, 28th August, 4th September	9.30am – 4.30pm
CIF QQI Project Supervisor Construction Stage	PSCS 4014	3 Days	12th, 19th, 26th August	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF Project Supervisor Design Process	PSDP 4164	2 Days	24th, 25th August	9.00am – 5.00pm
Working With the Assigned Certifier – A Site Manager’s Approach	AC 4167	1 Day	25th August	9.00am – 5.00pm
Environmental Management for Construction	EM 4016	1 Day	24th August	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF Management & Inspection of Scaffolds	SI 4018	1 Day	31st August	9.00am – 5.00pm
Payment Process under the Construction Contracts Act 2013	PPCC 4171	Half day	19th August	9.30am – 1.30pm
CIF QQI Level 5 Safety Representative	SR 4165	4 Days	13th, 14th, 20th, 21st August	9.00am – 5.00pm
NZEB Briefing	NZEB 4169	1 Day	20th August	9.00am – 1.00pm
Temporary Work 2-Day Coordinator	TWC 4019	2 Days	27th, 28th August	9.00am – 5.00pm
Conflict Avoidance Management and Dispute Resolution Procedures	CAMD 4173	1 Day	12th August	9.30am – 11.30am

SEPTEMBER 2020 COURSES

CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 4022	2 Days	28th, 29th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF IOSH Managing Safety in Construction	MSIC 4024	5 Days	1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th September	9.30am – 4.30pm
Environmental Management for Construction Focusing on Land/Waste/Water	EMC 4027	2 Days	21st, 22nd September	9.00am – 5.00pm
Working With the Assigned Certifier – A Site Manager’s Approach	AC 4181	1 Day	10th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
NZEB Briefing	NZEB 4182	1 Day	17th September	9.00am – 1.00pm
Site Managers – A Practical Approach to Building Regulations	SMBR 4028	2 Days	29th, 30th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
Appointed Person	AP 4183	3 Days	3rd, 10th, 17th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
MS Power BI Workshop – Day 1 Power Query	PBW1 4206	1 Day	22nd September	9.00am – 5.00pm
MS Excel Introduction	MSEI 4200	1 Day	23rd September	9.00am – 5.00pm
MS Power BI Workshop – Day 2 Data Model & DAX	PBW2 4209	1 Day	24th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
Project Masterclass (Setting Up, Tasks, Dependencies)	MSP1 4215	Half day	28th September	9.00am – 1.00pm
Project Masterclass (Resources, Tasks, Views, Filters)	MSP2 4218	Half day	28th September	9.00am – 1.00pm
MS Power BI Workshop – Day 3 Creating Data Visualisations & Utilising Power BI in the Service	PBW3 4212	1 Day	29th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
Excel Advanced	MSEA 4203	1 Day	30th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF QQI Building Control Course – Part B & Part J – Fire Safety [1]	BCC 3966/5	1 Day	24th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF QQI Building Control Course – Part B & Part J – Fire Safety [2]	BCC 3966/6	1 Day	25th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
Project Supervisor Construction Stage	PSCS 4030	3 Days	14th, 21st, 28th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF Project Supervisor Design Process	PSDP 4032	2 Days	29th, 30th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
Temporary Work 2-Day Coordinator	TWC 4184	2 Days	7th, 8th September	9.00am – 5.00pm
CIF Management & Inspection of Scaffold	SI 4034	1 Day	25th September	8.30am – 17.00pm
Payment Process Under the Construction Contracts Act 2013	PPCC 4185	1 Day	22nd September	9.30am – 1.30pm
Adjudication	ADJ 4186	1 Day	30th September	9.30am – 3.00pm
Conflict Avoidance Management and Dispute Resolution Procedures	CAMD	1 Day	25th September	9.30am – 11.30am



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Japanese Knotweed Ireland Ltd are one of Ireland's leading specialists in the identification, surveying and removal Invasive Alien Plants Species (IAPS). Our team of specially trained and experienced operatives provide an efficient and professional service on each and every project so you can rest assured that your IAPS problem is in the best possible hands.



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- ✓ Construction Industry Federation Members
- ✓ National Irish Safety Organisation Members
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- Mapping and Management



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