

Nations of Towns

The past, present and possible of towns in Scotland and Ireland

Joint webinar hosted by the University of Edinburgh (UoE) and University College Dublin (UCD)

8 March 2021 – 10:30-12:30 GMT

Zoom Link: Join Zoom Meeting ID: 671 3321 3692 Passcode: 431617

Miro: https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_IXRhksg=/

Introduction

Ireland and Scotland are nations of towns. In Ireland approximately two-thirds of the population live in or are dependent on a town (CSO and NIRSA, 2011), and in Scotland 70% live in towns and rural areas (2016 mid-term Census). Scotland and the island of Ireland have comparable populations and the nations are closely bonded by shared histories, cultures, challenges and potential. Towns play a critical role in the cultural, social and economic life of both nations, and will be key to a just transition to a post-pandemic, post-carbon and post-Brexit future. Our towns face multiple challenges that negatively impact on social cohesion, urban resilience, and the well-being of current and future generations.

There is a growing recognition of the need for research, creative thinking, knowledge sharing and collaboration to support towns and address challenges. Therefore, UCD Centre for Irish Towns (CfIT) and UoE Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) have formed a new collaboration, Nations of Towns, to work on shared challenges, for example through pooling of knowledge and experience, joint funded research projects, pedagogy and training. UCD and UoE signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) in 2018 to develop closer collaboration between both universities. It is hoped that Nations of Towns will be recognised as a new focus under this MoA. Today's event marks the initiation of this collaboration.

Aims of this webinar and workshop

The event aims to understand better:

- the common challenges facing our towns;
- the role of creative thinking and research in supporting the revitalisation of our towns;
- the opportunities/benefits of an 'Ireland-Scotland' collaborative approach, cross-border learning and additionality.

The event will therefore start to make the case for Nations of Towns as a new focus for the UCD/UoE MoA.

Output of this event

The findings of the workshop will contribute to the co-creation of

- a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on how the collaboration will operate and what it will aim to achieve / what form it might take;
- and a future knowledge exchange event to take place in autumn 2021.

This event is co-produced by Steven Earl, Iain Scott, Kelly McErlane of the UoE and Orla Murphy, Philip Crowe, Pauline Power and Caitriona Devery of UCD Centre for Irish Towns



Schedule & Format			
Time	Session	Speaker	Topic
10:30	Introduction to Session 1	Steven Earl	
10:40	Lightning Talks	Malcolm Fraser	The identity of Scottish and Irish Towns
10:50		Alison Harvey	The importance of collaboration to affect change in towns
11:00		Phil Prentice	Scotlands Towns Partnership
11:10		Robert Burns	The value of connecting research and teaching with work on the ground in towns
11:20		Leslie McAra	Edinburgh Futures Institute
11:30		Orla Murphy	UCD Centre for Irish Towns
11:40-11:45 Break			
11:45	Introduction to Session 2	Philip Crowe	Workshop format and aims
11:50	Breakout Rooms on Miro	4 breakout rooms facilitated by either Steven, Philip, Iain or Orla with assistance from Kelly, Pauline and Caitriona	Participants work together to consider , discuss and feedback on 3 questions.
12:20	Concluding session in main room	Iain Scott	Summary, Conclusion & Next Steps
12:30	Event Ends		

Event Format & Miro Protocol

The event will use a combination of Zoom and Miro.

Please note, the event will be recorded.

The first half will be on Zoom, moving to Miro for the workshop section.

Miro is a virtual whiteboard space that can be used to "pin-up" and share ideas, images, text etc., much as you would in a physical studio or workshop environment.

This Miro link will be issued to all Nations of Towns participants in advance of the workshop. Feel free to browse the content in advance, read the speaker bios, familiarise yourself with the programme and the workshop format.

You can work as a guest, or sign up to Miro to have your own profile, if you like.

For this workshop, we will use a single shared Miro Board, via 4 Breakout Rooms in Zoom. Each participant will be placed into one of the 4 "breakout rooms" by the facilitators. Each breakout room corresponds to one of the four Miro coloured frames that you will see. A facilitator is assigned to each of the rooms.

On entering the Miro Board please scroll and zoom to your own breakout room.

Each participant is assigned a column and can edit their own name and affiliation at the top of the column.

You will be taken through the 3 questions, plus a bonus question, by the facilitator and invited to add your own thoughts and answers on "sticky notes". The questions are:

Q1.

A. What common challenges do towns in Scotland and Ireland face in the coming years?

B. Are there any challenges which are specific to one nation and its towns?

Q2.

A. How might these challenges be addressed by creative thinking and research?

B. What are the key questions that need to be asked by research projects?

Q3.






A. What might be the benefits of an 'Ireland-Scotland' collaborative approach to towns research?

B. What different forms might that collaboration take?

Bonus Question:

Who else needs to be part of this conversation?

Participants	Affiliation & Role	Breakout Room
1 Iain Scott	UoE, Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA), Lecturer in Architectural Design and Management	1 - Facilitator
2 Orla Murphy	Assistant Professor, UCD APEP (Architecture), Co-Director UCD CfIT	2 - Facilitator
3 Steven Earl	UoE, EFI, Data civics, Societal challenges, Engagement and Innovation team	3 - Facilitator
4 Philip Crowe	Assistant Professor, UCD APEP & Civ Eng, Co-Director UCD CfIT	4 - Facilitator
5 Kelly McErlane	Administrative Assistant, UoE, EFI	Main Room
6 Pauline Power	Research Communications and IT Officer at Earth Institute	Main Room
7 Caitriona Devery	Research Manager, UCD Earth Institute	1
8 Malcolm Fraser	Director, Architect, Fraser-Livingstone Architects	2
9 Phil Prentice	CEO, Scottish Town Partnership	3
10 Alison Harvey	Programme Manager, Heritage Council, Ireland	4
11 Lesley McAra	Professor, UoE, Director of EFI, Assistant Principal for Community Relations	1
12 Francisca Lima	UoE, ESALA, Landscape Architecture	2
13 Robert Burns	Director of Service, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Co	3
14 Suzanne Ewing	UoE, ESALA, Prof of Architectural Criticism. City, culture and society	4
15 Killian Doherty	UoE, ESALA, Architecture and Urbanism	1
16 John Brennan	UoE, ESALA, Rural and sustainable design	2
17 Laura Harty	UoE, ESALA, Lecturer in Architectural Design and Detail	3
18 Gordon Masterson	UoE, EFI, Centre for future infrastructure, Chair of future infrastructure	4
19 Jarmo Eskelinen	Executive Director, Data-Driven Innovation Initiative	1
20 Jenny Elliot	UoE, EFI, Edinburgh Living Lab, Smart places lead	2
21 Margaret Petrie	UoE, Institute for Education, Community and Society, Community Resilience	3
22 Joshua Ryan-Saha	UoE, EFI, Director of Travel tech cluster, Tourism	4
23 Tim Cresswell	UoE, School of GeoSciences, Human Geography	1
24 Alan Anthony	Chair of Revo Scotland, Threesixty Architecture, Author 'A Vision for High Street Regeneration'	2
25 Justin Synnott	UCD Research and Innovation	3
26 Aparajita Banjaree	Research Fellow, UCD School of Business	4
27 Alan Mee	Assistant Professor, UCD APEP (Urban Design)	1
28 Paula Russell	Assistant Professor, UCD APEP (Planning)	2
29 Karen Keaveney	Assistant Professor, UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science (Rural Development)	3
30 Sarah Cotterill	Assistant Professor, UCD School of Civil Engineering (Water Systems)	4
31 Robert Manning	Assistant Professor, UCD Smurfit School of Business	1
32 Pádraic Carroll	Assistant Professor, UCD School of Civil Engineering (Transportation Engineering)	2
33 Emer O'Boyle	Director of UCD Art in Science	3
34 Derry O'Connell	UCD APEP (Planning)	4

Speakers & Facilitators	Photo	Bio
Malcolm Fraser		<p>Malcolm Fraser is an Edinburgh architect whose work spans from award-winning homes, placemaking and cultural renewal and the care and renewal of historic buildings and towns, to advising Government and advising and empowering communities. His work in Edinburgh and elsewhere, promoting regeneration through bottom-up cultural renewal, led to an invitation to lead the Scottish Government's Town Centre Review which, reporting in 2013, sought to bring life and investment to Scotland's urban centres. He currently sits on Scottish Government Housing Supply and Delivery Groups, assists in new, carbon capturing and healthy building initiatives and contributes to Land and Planning Reform initiatives, including with the Common Weal lobby group, whose Board he sits on.</p>
Alison Harvey		<p>Ali Harvey MSc BSc (Hons), PG Dip PM is a Programmes Manager with a background in planning and economics and she has 22 years' experience of setting up /running collaborative regeneration programmes in Ireland and the UK. Ali initiated/set up the all-island Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) in 2005, wrote the first IWTN Action Plan 2006–2008, which secured funding of €4m. She set up the award-winning Landscape Character Assessment CPD Training Course 2009-2011 with 10 no. professional institutes in Ireland and the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia, Spain. Ali is author of the award-winning Community-led VDS Toolkit, 2012 and is a member of EirGrid's National Advisory Group (NAG). Ali set up the CTCHC Programme in 2016, which is included in Ireland's Programme for Government, (2020), and has 70+ partners and 15 member towns. There is a substantial waiting list of towns wanting to join the CTCHC Programme. Ali also co-ordinates the new CTCHC Podcast Series, which was launched in November 2020.</p>
Phil Prentice		<p>Phil Prentice is Chief Executive Officer of Scotland's Towns Partnership, the national body tasked with delivering the regeneration, repurposing and reinvention of our high streets and cities centres. www.scotlandstowns.org. He is also the National Programme Director for Scotland's Improvement Districts www.improvementdistricts.scot, a Director of the UK High Streets Task Force – www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk – and Project Lead for www.lovelocal.scot “My role is to drive sustainable change through collaboration and partnership. Town and City Centres are clearly back on the political agenda and with the right policies to rebalance, they can be drivers for climate change, living, inclusion and the well being economy.”</p>
Robert Burns		<p>Robert Burns is a Director of Service and part of the senior management team within Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, with responsibility for the management and delivery of infrastructure and climate action-related projects. He has led on the Council's response to Covid-19 with mobility interventions and adaptation of the public realm, including village upgrade projects in Blackrock, Dundrum, Dalkey and Glasthule, involving the removal of traffic lanes, enhanced public space and installation of cycling facilities. Robert was also the project manager for the new Coastal Mobility Route, which is a 2-way, 5 km cycle route, between Blackrock and Sandycove, which was built within a 3-month period during Covid. He has a wide interest in the fields of transportation, mobility, town and village renewal and climate action. Robert has a breadth of knowledge and experience across transportation, civil and environmental engineering, with experience in the private, semi-state and public sectors.</p>
Lesley McAra		<p>Prof. Lesley McAra is Assistant Principal Community Relations at the University of Edinburgh and Director of The Edinburgh Futures Institute, a new inter-disciplinary centre aimed at harnessing the revolution in data, digital and artificial intelligence for social benefit. One of the largest ever investments made by the University, EFI brings together the arts, humanities and social sciences with data science, to drive solution-focused thinking on a range of key societal challenges: an approach to knowledge production and curation characterised by ethical co-design and undertaken in partnership with government, industry and the wider community. Lesley's is Co-Director (with Susan McVie) of the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, a longitudinal programme of research on pathways into and out of crime for a cohort of 4,300 young people. In 2013, she was joint winner (with Susan McVie) of the Howard League for Penal Reform Research Medal which celebrates high quality research from 'new thinking' and 'radical researchers' who have changed penal policy and practice. This was followed in 2016 with the Chancellor's award for research impact which honours colleagues at The University of Edinburgh whose outstanding research has made a demonstrable contribution to society. She was awarded a CBE, in the New Year's Honours List 2018, for services to Criminology.</p>

Steven Earl



Steve is part of the Data civics programme, and engagement team within the Edinburgh Futures Institute. Both focus on helping bring new knowledge, understandings, and perspectives to places, communities, and services. Currently exploring the use of participatory futures to develop community responses to global challenges (SDGs). His background is in multi-stakeholder facilitation and collaborative innovation. He also the Director of two community charities within Edinburgh, Wellspring Scotland and Tribeparty.

Orla Murphy



Orla Murphy is an architect, lecturer in UCD School of Architecture Planning and Environmental Policy and co-director (with Philip Crowe) of UCD Centre for Irish Towns (CfIT). Orla's practice and research is focused on rural Irish towns, their cultural identity and morphology, and the relationship between people and place. As a former recipient of the Arts Council's Kevin Kieran Award, Orla published her research on towns in TOWN: Origins, Morphology and Future in 2012. In 2018, Orla along with five colleagues co-curated Free Market, the Irish Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, with an exhibition that explored the past, present and future of public space in Irish towns. The exhibition toured to four towns: Castleblayney, Macroom, Mountmellick and Killmallock in 2019. Orla co-presents the RTÉ documentary series Building Ireland, now in its third series. She lives in Westport Co. Mayo and continues to advocate for towns as thriving people-centred urban places.

Philip Crowe



Dr Philip Crowe is Assistant Professor in Climate Responsive Design at the UCD School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy, and the UCD School of Civil Engineering. Philip is co-chair of Innovation and Social Enterprise at the UCD Earth Institute, and a co-director of the nascent UCD Centre for Irish Towns. He is also co-founder of Space Engagers, a social enterprise and research collective. In recent years, Philip has completed a number of reports for the Heritage Council and Housing Agency on vacancy datasets and programmes for town centre revitalisation, and he was co-author of the synthesis report for the Irish Government's Town Centre Living Initiative: Six pilot towns. Philip studied architecture at the University of Edinburgh and holds a MSc in Applied Carbon Management from the University of Glasgow. His PhD, which revisited the work of Patrick Geddes in Dublin (1911-1914) as a precedent for understanding what urban resilience might mean in practice, is from the UCD School of Landscape Architecture. Philip was Director of Sustainable Design at M.CO (Dublin) from 2003 to 2012.

Iain Scott



Iain is an ARB registered architect with 26 years of experience of practice in the UK and Asia. He presently works on selected individual projects. He has been a design tutor at Edinburgh College of Art and ESALA since 1996 and was Director of the Master of Architecture at ESALA from 2011-14. Iain is also an experienced researcher within ESALA. Previous projects include 'Mobility, Mood and Place', a cross-disciplinary research project investigating the relationship between older people and the built environment, which included academics from University of Edinburgh, Kings College, London and the University of York. More recent projects include the 'Present Voices, Future Lives' Exhibition & Workshop Project awarded by the Scottish Government and Architecture & Design Scotland. The project was commissioned to engage people from across Scotland on the draft vision and principles for a new policy for housing in Scotland (Housing to 2040). A report on the project will be published by the Scottish Government in 2021 in tandem with the new housing policy.
