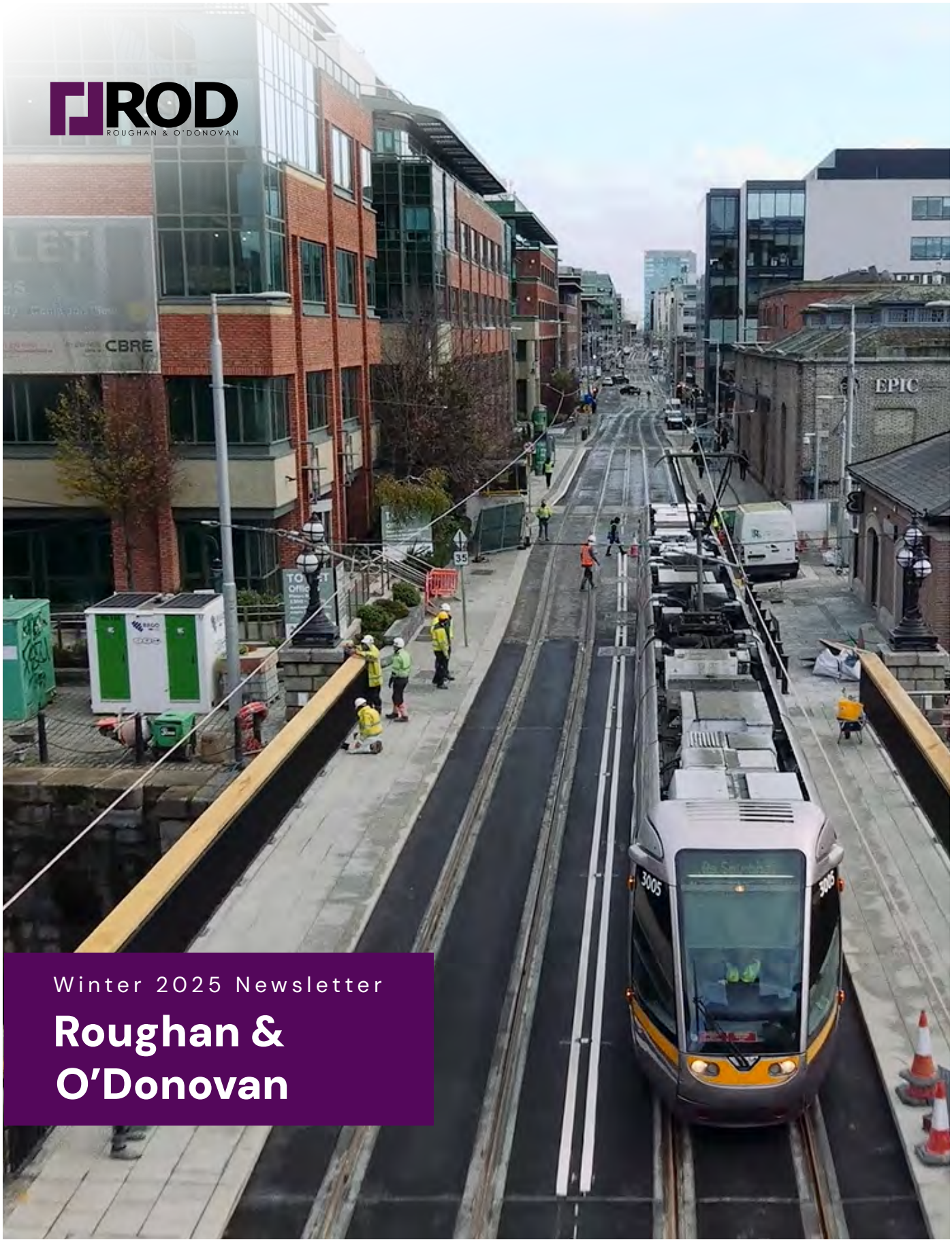


ROD
ROUGHAN & O'DONOVAN

Winter 2025 Newsletter

Roughan & O'Donovan

Foreword

By Marc Jones

Welcome to our Winter 2025 newsletter During the summer, we relocated our headquarters in Sandyford from Arena House to The Chase, a modern, energy-efficient office building in the heart of Sandyford Business Park. We had been in Arena house for 25 years, and the office held many memories. When we moved into the building in 2000, the workspace felt remarkably generous, particularly when compared with the modest, converted house in Foxrock which was our previous home, and we wondered if we would ever fill it. In committing to a long lease, our former directors, Derry Roughan, Joe O'Donovan and Garry Smyth, demonstrated their confidence in the company's future, which proved well founded because it wasn't long before the office was full. For our current crop of directors, the move to the Chase marks a similar commitment, and we look forward to creating many new memories in our new South Dublin HQ.

Our Buildings team continues to support our clients in delivering critical pieces of residential, recreational and healthcare infrastructure for the communities they serve. They are front and centre in the delivery of much-needed housing projects across Ireland, as reported in articles on our recent appointment as civil and structural technical advisor on three Fingal County Council schemes and our sensitive delivery of housing at Convent Lands in Portlaoise, Co Laois. The opening of Baldoyle Sports Hall and Community Centre, a circular building under a curved green roof - and an exemplar of sustainable design - is discussed in another article. Also noted is the successful completion of St Vincent's community nursing unit in Mountmellick, Co Laois and the team's continuing support of the Health Service Executive's decarbonisation journey. In this issue, our Environmental team highlights the many pressing environmental issues we face as a society, including the alarming decline in our water quality and the impact of biodiversity loss. They also celebrate the great success of our annual sustainability month, which saw record levels of engagement with its packed schedule of activities, which were designed to educate, encourage a reconnection with nature and, of course, promote a bit of fun.

The ROD Research and Innovation group played a central role in EUROSTRUCT 2025, a conference showcasing cutting-edge research from across Europe and held in Ireland for the first time this year. We delivered presentations on the development of bridge construction over the centuries, with a focus on a low-carbon future; our groundbreaking research into the use of artificial intelligence in asset management; and our collaboration with University College Cork aimed at generating bridge digital twins to better understand their response to changing climate and traffic demands.

Our Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) group's work on the Cooperative ITS pilot for Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has concluded with positive results by introducing technology that can improve road safety and influence driver behaviour. The pilot facilitated direct communication between TII's operators in the motorway operations control centre and road users via roadside and cellular technology. With vehicle integration on the horizon, it won't be long before alerts are delivered directly to the dashboard, and we are proud to have contributed to this emerging technology.

In recent years, there has been increased focus on the delivery of major public transport projects, not least with the BusConnects programme, which will improve bus systems, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure across several major Irish cities. Together with our joint venture partner, Clandillon Civil Consulting, we are delighted to have been appointed by GMC Utilities Group for the first design and build scheme from Liffey Valley to the City Centre. Design is progressing apace, site works have commenced, and we are working towards making travel safer, smoother and more reliable for west Dublin's commuters.

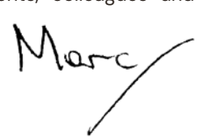
We all want to see good infrastructure projects delivered for the benefit of our communities, and it is great to see projects going beyond planning to detailed design, tender and construction.We were pleased to see contracts signed for the Maynooth Eastern Ring Road in October, and work has already commenced on site. Our Contract Administration Group is providing Employer's Representative and Site Supervision services for the construction and handover stages. This will open up significant development lands adjacent to the route. We are separately providing engineering services for planning to the largest of these sites - underlining the effectiveness of such transport investment in enabling housing development. This year saw the formation of the Irish Government's Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce, which includes experts at the frontline of infrastructure development. This Irish initiative is similar to the UK's established Transport Acceleration Unit and recently published 10-year Infrastructure Strategy. Infrastructure development needs to keep pace with economic and population growth, and we have, unfortunately, seen delays to many projects over the years. We welcome the extensive consultations the taskforce has conducted with key stakeholders over the past several months and the recent publication of the Irish Government's Accelerating Infrastructure Report and Action Plan. With that in mind, our article on the opening of George's Dock Bridge provides an example of how collaboration and commitment to delivery across multiple organisations achieved the safe and environmentally responsible replacement of this critical piece of road and rail infrastructure in the centre of Dublin in just three months. This project underscores the significant benefit of designers and contractors working together from the start.

We continue to bolster our resources, welcoming new members to the team across our four offices. We are particularly pleased that many of our new recruits have previously completed student placements with us and, with a positive first experience of ROD, have decided to continue their careers with us. Our graduate programme is going from strength to strength, and we are delighted to share with you the experiences of four graduates, three of whom have recently completed site placements on some of our most significant infrastructure projects and one of whom is working within our environmental team. We are also pleased to advise that Engineers Ireland has once again extended our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Accredited Employer status for the maximum three-year period. The value of CPD is a recurring theme in this edition of the newsletter, with several articles highlighting our team members' personal and professional development journeys during various stages in their careers.

ROD signed up to the ACEI and CIHT Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Charters some time ago, and I am delighted to confirm that, in recognition of our commitment to embedding diversity, equality and inclusion in our workplace culture, we recently achieved the Investors in Diversity bronze accreditation with the Irish Centre for Diversity. This is another important step in our EDI journey, and we look forward to continuing our work with the Irish Centre for Diversity and supporting our teams to reach their full potential.

Inspired by our late friend and Chairman, Harry Meighan, who always made time to join in activities outside the office, I took great satisfaction in spending an afternoon with our team on Sandymount beach as part of our annual effort to assist the local community in keeping this stunning natural amenity free of litter. Meanwhile, our team in Otley recently participated in a "Green Team Away Day", organised by Leeds City Council, which involved coppicing and wreath making near Roundhay Park.

Best wishes to all our clients, colleagues and friends for 2026.



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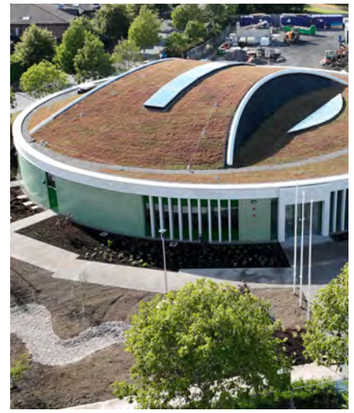

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Environmental

Sandyford Office Move

Article by Michelle Harvey

Úna Cotter, Patrick Ryan, Costanza Mariotti, Cian Ó Cathasaigh and James Brindley in The Chase

In March 2025, ROD signed a lease on a new office in The Chase building on Arkle Road, Sandyford, marking the end of our long tenure at Arena House. It was not an easy decision to relocate our headquarters; Arena House had played an important role in our company history, with the late Derry Roughan and Joe O'Donovan having signed a 25-year lease on the building back in 1999 - a signal of their confidence in the company's future.

To support the next phase of our journey as a company, our Board of Directors felt a more modern and sustainable office was required and, following extensive research in the south Dublin area, The Chase was identified as the most suitable for our needs. A lengthy period of engagement with lawyers, landlords and agents followed, during which our move team, comprising Anthony Mulligan, Barry Corrigan, Ciarán Downes, Gary Selby, Lewis Feely, Lisa Dunne, Seán Kennedy and me, worked closely with VHA Architects to develop various office layouts and designs suitable for our short and longer-term needs.

In mid-May, a 12-week fit-out commenced, with Ardmac appointed as main contractor. In the fortnight preceding

our move, the majority of our Sandyford-based staff worked remotely, allowing our IT team and the office solutions provider, Bizquip, the time and space to package and move our IT equipment, furniture etc. to the new office. Our move team excelled under the pressure of the tight timeframe, welcoming staff into the new office on the target date of Monday, 25th August.

The new office features a boardroom, two meeting rooms, two multi-purpose rooms, two collaboration spaces for staff, a storage/drying room, and a PPE room. The feedback from both our team and visitors to the new office has been very positive, with the bright and generous space, the larger canteen and the new, high-end coffee machine singled out for particular praise. We are also delighted to observe an increasing number of our staff choosing to cycle or walk to work due to the improved shower and changing facilities in the office.

We would like to thank VHA Architects and M&E Consultants, SCC Ltd, for their design efforts and our contractors, Ardmac, for their great work in ensuring an on-time fit out.

Emergency services at the scene of a fire on Georges Dock, IFSC. Photograph: Collins

George's Dock Emergency Luas Bridge Replacement

Article by Marcin Nikonwicz

On 19th August 2025, a fire broke out under the bridge between the inner and outer docks at George's Dock, Dublin 1. The bridge was damaged beyond repair, causing disruption to road and light rail transport. ROD and JONS Civil Engineering Ltd. (JCEL) were engaged on an emergency Design and Build basis by TII to replace the bridge as early as practicable to restore connectivity and to ensure that Luas light rail system could resume service to the Point.

On 1st September, ROD met onsite with JCEL and TII to, discuss options. Initially, the team considered replacing only the bridge deck, exploring an option that maximised the use of precast construction and a precast W beam deck with reinforced concrete slab. Early analysis showed this option was not feasible due to the increased dead loads when compared to the original steel girders and concrete deck slab.

The preferred alternative was a single-span, piled integral bridge, providing a clear span of 18.2m and a total width of 11.6m. This option offered two important benefits: it eliminated the need for bearings, joints and abutment galleries and enabled the bridge to be constructed without impacting the adjacent historic walls.

The highly constrained site presented a significant challenge for the project team. During construction, numerous existing structures needed to be maintained and protected, leaving limited space between the existing dock walls and the original bridge foundation for the installation of the bridge piles. ROD's geotechnical team overcame this by using extensive historical ground investigation data from nearby projects and probing carried out by the piling contractor to inform the design of the foundations, which used 7 No. 600mm diameter, 12m-long continuous flight auger (CFA) piles per abutment.

Test tram crossing bridge

Within a week of deciding to proceed with the integral bridge design, the first design package, including pile setting-out and reinforcement details, was delivered to JCEL. The first pile was installed just three days later. This momentum continued across subsequent design packages for the beams, pile caps, diaphragms and deck slab, ensuring timely delivery of construction information.

The volume of existing services added to the complexity of the project, with the bridge accommodating 55 various diameter service ducts within the verges and below deck. To minimise impact beyond the bridge extents, we undertook multiple surveys to validate reinforcement detailing in the bridge supports. Meanwhile, to preserve the appearance of the original structure, we reused as many of the above deck elements as possible, retaining, refurbishing and reinstating the parapets, granite kerbs, and paving slabs on the new bridge.

The bridge was complete by the end of November and the project was delivered thanks to an incredible level of collaboration between TII, JCEL, the specialists involved, and our own design team, which facilitated the smooth flow of information for design, construction and approvals.

Pictured L-R: Cathal Masterson, TII Director of Commercial Operations, Anne Shaw, Chief Executive Officer at the NTA, Lord Mayor of Dublin Ray McAdam, Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien and Ben Dwars, the CEO of Transdev Dublin Light Rail at the re-opening of the restored Luas bridge at Georges Dock in Dublin

ROD Research makes its mark at EUROSTRUCT 2025

Article by Robert Corbally

Joe Kelly and Robert Corbally

This year's EUROSTRUCT Conference – hosted for the first time in Ireland – brought together the leading minds in structural engineering from across Europe. Held in the Royal Marine Hotel in Dún Laoghaire and organised by University College Dublin, the three-day event (2nd – 5th September) showcased cutting-edge research, thought leadership and innovation in the quality control of bridges and structures.

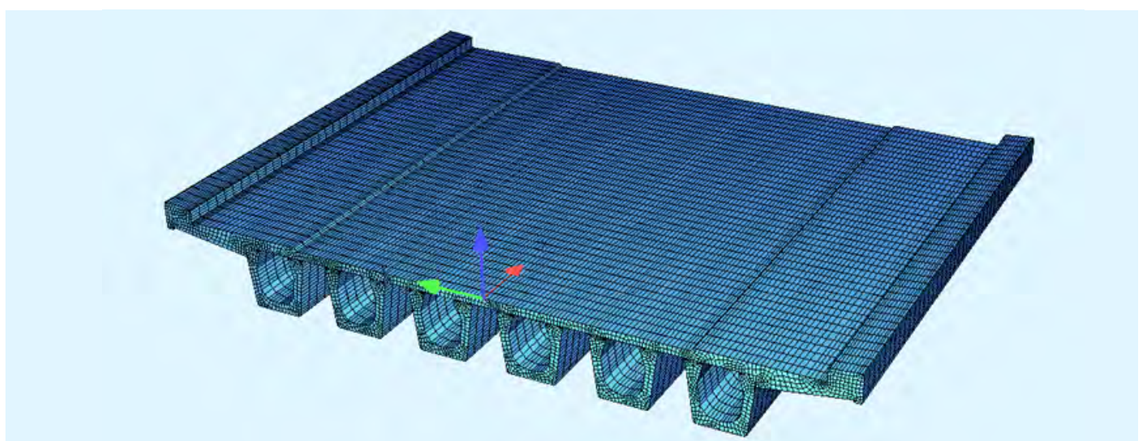
ROD played a prominent role in the event, with Director Joe Kelly delivering a keynote address that charted the evolution of bridge construction in Ireland, from ancient timber and stone spans to the steel and concrete structures that shape our modern transport networks. The climate crisis formed a central theme in Joe's address, as he urged the conference attendees to revisit the wisdom of the past to build a more sustainable future. Joe used the example of masonry arch bridges to illustrate his point, noting that these enduring, sustainable structures, which were once a vital part of road, rail and waterway infrastructure, have fallen out of favour in recent decades, with modern construction inclined towards more carbon-intensive steel and concrete girders, which do not possess the longevity of their masonry arch counterparts. Principal Engineer, Robert Corbally, delivered a presentation on the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the road sector. Robert drew upon the groundbreaking research ROD recently conducted on behalf of the World Road Association (PIARC) to discuss how AI is reshaping asset management, predictive maintenance and decision-making across transport networks – a topic that generated lively discussion among the attendees.

Ghazaleh Yousofizinsaz, a PhD researcher at University College Cork (UCC), showcased the ROD-UCC research project, PRODIGI, which seeks to create calibrated digital twins of existing bridges to better understand their response to changing climate and traffic demands. Her presentation, "Calibration of a Probabilistic Digital Twin for Management of a Prestressed Beam and Slab Bridge," demonstrated how digital twin technology can revolutionise bridge monitoring and lifecycle management.

The conference concluded on a high note for ROD, with Graduate Engineer Ella Traas receiving the prestigious Paul Cahill Memorial Award for her outstanding paper, "Wind-Induced Lateral Response of the Queensferry Crossing: Insights from Long-Term SHM Data". Ella's achievement speaks to the engineering talent among the next generation of engineers at ROD, and we look forward to seeing her career develop with us in the coming years.

Probabilistic Digital Twins for Bridges

Article by Ciarán Hanley & Ghazaleh Yousofizinsaz (UCC)



Extract of digital model of N7 bridge

PRODIGI (Probabilistic Digital Twins for Bridges) is an ROD-University College Cork (UCC) collaboration that seeks to create calibrated digital twins of existing bridges to better understand their response to changing climate and traffic demands. In so doing, it hopes to advance the digitalisation of bridge management.

Funded by Construct Innovate, Ireland's National Research Centre for Construction Technology and Innovation, the project is establishing the feasibility of a scalable Probabilistic Digital Twin (PDT) that integrates real-time sensor data, structural modelling and probabilistic assessment methods to enhance traditional Structural Health Monitoring (SHM) techniques and optimise predictive maintenance strategies.

By introducing an innovative approach to bridge management, the project aims to set new standards for predictive, data-driven maintenance, supporting ROD's position at the forefront of digital innovation in civil engineering. A fully calibrated PDT enables hazard simulation and scenario planning through probabilistic analysis, allowing for predictive and proactive maintenance planning and ensuring the resilience of Ireland's national infrastructure in accordance with objectives set out in the National Planning Framework (2025), the National Development Plan (2025), and the Climate Action Plan (2025).

The project team combines ROD's and UCC's expertise in bridge engineering, risk-based asset management, SHM, probabilistic modelling, and data analysis, to deliver an outcome-oriented research programme that produces a practical tool for owners and operators of bridges and civil engineering structures. To date, the project has focused on creating a calibrated PDT of a test-bed structure: Brownsbarn Bridge on the N7 at Citywest (a structure that underwent ROD-led rehabilitation works in 2010). The response of the bridge to test loading, measured through strain gauges, has been replicated in high-fidelity 3D structural models. Following the successful calibration of the model, load simulations are underway to establish the reliability of the bridge under increasing traffic and climate demands. In parallel with the numerical testing of this model, the scalability of the PDT is being assessed to establish its deploy-ability to other bridges across Ireland's road and rail network.

Joe Kelly, director of ROD's Research and Innovation Group, commented: "ROD is delighted to be collaborating with UCC on the adoption of cutting-edge probabilistic digital twin technology, as it will enable us to advise our clients on more advanced, data-driven approaches to infrastructure management, allowing them to reap the benefits of improved safety, enhanced sustainability and reduced costs."

ROD Associate John Collins becomes ICE Fellow

Article by Roberta Keaney

John Collins.

Congratulations to our colleague, John Collins, on achieving Fellowship status of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the highest grade of membership awarded by the Institution, and an honour bestowed on those who have made a significant contribution to the field of civil engineering and society. John said: "I am very proud to be a Chartered Civil Engineer and to be using my knowledge and skills to affect peoples' lives in a positive, sustainable manner. In becoming a Fellow of the ICE, I hope to provide an example of what can be achieved in our industry and continue to tackle some of the most challenging issues facing our transportation infrastructure today."

As lead of ROD's UK bridges team, John has worked on a range of technically challenging projects across the UK, including leading our input to various works on the Humber Bridge and on road and rail bridges across a variety of materials and structural forms, and providing input on Herring Bridge in Great Yarmouth. He has also been involved in several major schemes in Ireland, including the N5 national road in Mayo and Roscommon and DART+ West in Dublin. In recognition of his work on the Forth Road Bridge (amongst other schemes), he received the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) Young Engineer of the Year Award in 2016.

John is an advocate of sharing knowledge in a formal manner as a way of advancing the engineering discipline and ensuring that knowledge becomes part of the historical record. In addition to authoring several technical papers and regularly presenting at conferences, he was co-author of CIRIA C764 Defects in Hidden Bridge Components (2017) and is currently co-authoring an update to the widely used CIRIA Bridge Detailing Manual. John is a member of the International Association For Bridge And Structural Engineering (IABSE) British Group Executive Committee and sits on the certification board of the Steel Construction Certification Scheme. He is also a member of the Welding Institute.

John takes an active role in initiatives aimed at raising the profile of the engineering profession, believing passionately in the importance of developing an engineer's technical skills and turning specialist knowledge into qualifications. In addition to advancing the development of ROD's graduate and chartership support programmes, he is the administrator of our ICE training scheme and has worked as a Supervising Civil Engineer since 2020.

ROD achieves Investors in Diversity bronze accreditation

Article by Roberta Keaney

Back row (L-R): Barry Corrigan, John Daly, Cristina Tanasie, Deirdre Neff, Chidinma Nwanja and Marc Jones. Front row (L-R): Havin Arslan Gursoy, Mark Glaysher, David Torrado, Ciaran Downes and Samira Islam

ROD has been awarded the Investors in Diversity Bronze Accreditation by the Irish Centre for Diversity. The award recognises our efforts at building a strong foundation in the areas of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and our commitment to championing inclusivity, ensuring equity and treating everyone with respect.

We appreciate that developing a diverse workforce is fundamental to attracting and retaining top talent, driving innovation, and maintaining strong relationships with our clients, partners and stakeholders. Indeed, we have always believed in having an open culture, where different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are celebrated. As we mark this important milestone, we look forward to continuing our work with the Irish Centre for Diversity and to supporting our teams to reach their full potential.

Investors in Diversity is Ireland's premier FREDIE (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Engagement) accreditation. The programme recognises existing efforts and supports the journey of continuous improvement by providing a holistic and structured framework to transform practices and culture. Investors in Diversity Bronze Accreditation recognises ROD's historic and ongoing work in this area.

Baldoyle Sports Hall and Community Centre opens to the public

Article by Nicholas McCann

Tuesday 30th September saw the official opening of Baldoyle Sports Hall and Community Centre – an energy-efficient, circular building nestled within Racecourse Park, Dublin 13. Developed by Fingal County Council, the centre will serve as a vibrant hub for the local community, where young and old can enjoy a wide range of recreational, educational and sporting activities.

The facility provides approximately 1,000m² of flexible space, with a three-court sports hall positioned centrally and four large, multi-purpose rooms wrapped around on all sides. A curved steel frame creates a dome-like shape on the roof, which features a sedum build-up as part of the sustainable drainage design scheme. The circular plan form facilitates the spatial flow of the park landscaping around the building and minimises unsupervised spaces.

The single-storey building mirrors the design of the Meakstown Sports Hall and Community Centre in Lanesborough Park, Dublin 11, which won the Tourism and Hospitality Project of the Year award at the Irish Construction Industry Awards 2025. It was delivered by the same integrated design team, comprising Henchion Reuter Architects (design lead); ROD (civil and structural); Dermot Foley Landscape Architects; Matt O'Mahony & Associates (M&E); and Walsh Associates (QS). Vision Contracting Ltd was the main contractor on both schemes.

Work commenced on-site in May 2024 and was completed in September 2025.

A building that blends sympathetically with its parkland setting

The scale and height of the building required careful consideration due to its parkland setting. To soften the impact of the new building profile, the team adopted a curved roof geometry and minimal structural depth for the 16m span roof. This was achieved through the adoption and careful arrangement of a series of straight steel portal frames, with careful consideration of the portal frame geometry and the rafter-roof deck interface.

The building has a continuous, single-storey façade expression on all sides, substantially reducing its volumetric presence within the park. It external form is completed in glazed green bricks with a pre-cast concrete parapet.

The centre is encircled by footpaths providing extensive interconnectivity with future pedestrian networks in Fingal County Council's masterplan for the development of the area. Touch-free water fountains, cycle parking and extensive landscaping and planting enhance the experience of pedestrians and cyclists visiting the park and community centre.

A considered approach to construction

Construction consisted primarily of blockwork walls and reinforced concrete columns. An in-situ reinforced concrete roof slab was designed to allow for openings for vertical services and to incorporate a curved steel roof section above the ball court in the centre of the building. The curved steel section of the roof supports roof lights that provide plenty of natural light to the ball court below and a metal deck that accommodates a green roof system.

Varying ground conditions required the development of a below-ground piling system to provide a robust foundation system for the facility. The system was formed by precast reinforced concrete piles, in-situ pile caps and precast ground beams.

Sustainability

To minimise its net carbon footprint, a sustainable design approach that included minimising the structural depth of the roof slab to reduce the volume of concrete required was developed. A green roof, permeable and grasscrete paving, and localised attenuation basins in green areas were among several sustainable drainage measures incorporated into the design to offset the impact of the new building on the local environment.

Supporting the HSE on it's Decarbonisation Journey

Article by Kate Ballance

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has engaged ROD to provide civil, structural and environmental engineering design services for three regional decarbonisation pathfinder projects across Ireland, namely the South, Dublin North-East and West regions. The South region comprises three sites: Wexford General Hospital, Clonakilty Community Hospital and Áras Slainte in Cork City; Dublin North-East comprises three campuses: Lusk Community Nursing Unit in north County Dublin, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda and Beaumont Hospital in Dublin 9; and The West Region comprises two sites: Sligo University Hospital and Plunkett Community Nursing Unit in Boyle, Co. Roscommon.

ROD is playing a pivotal role in transforming these HSE campuses, improving not only environmental standards, but patient wellness, working collaboratively with our design team members, who include architects, project managers, energy consultants and M&E engineers,

The HSE has an extensive estate spanning all areas of the country, with approximately 2,500 sites and 4,500 individual buildings, equating to almost 1.8 million sqm of floor area. Through the implementation of the Pathfinder Programme, it aims to identify a decarbonisation pathway for existing healthcare facilities at 10 representative sites across Ireland, including acute units, residential, mental health and disability facilities, offices and day services.

The project goals are to:

- Improve energy efficiency by 51%
- Reduce carbon emissions by 50%
- Retrofit buildings to achieve 'B' Building Energy Rating (BER) by 2030
- Provide a clear pathway to achieving net zero carbon emissions

ROD has been particularly busy in the South and Dublin North-east regions:

South Region

Construction at Clonakilty Community Hospital started on-site in August 2025, with Cahalane Brothers Ltd as the main contractor. The works are scheduled to be completed in March 2027. They include fabric upgrades, solar panel installation and the construction of a new energy centre for heat pumps and associated plant.

At Wexford General Hospital, the main decarbonisation works are still at pre-planning stage. Advance window replacement and solar panel packages are being tendered, however, to provide an interim operational carbon benefit while the remaining design elements are being progressed.

At Áras Slainte - a concrete office building constructed in the 1970s, a programme of concrete investigation and repair works to the building's façade is being developed. The repair works are significant to the overall decarbonisation strategy, as they will facilitate the implementation of fabric and service upgrades to the building while avoiding the embodied carbon costs that would be associated with reconstruction.

Dublin North-East Region

The first phase of construction at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital is now complete. The hospital campus houses a series of buildings built in the 1940s and added to over the years. Works included the addition of a modular building that will serve as a temporary ward in the centre of the campus. Phase 2 will begin shortly to include fabric upgrades to the walls, roofs, windows and doors; the installation of solar PV panels; M&E upgrades; and the addition of a new heat pump location to the north of the campus. The upgrade works include the addition of new equipment to the existing hospital. The placing of new equipment required a comprehensive assessment of various structures on the campus due to the constrained nature of the site.

At Lusk Community Nursing Unit, construction stage works began in September 2025. The civil and structural works comprise the installation of solar panels, the addition of an ESB substation to the north-west of the campus, and civil diversion works.

The proposed works at Beaumont Hospital are at pre-planning stage, with fabric upgrades, door and window replacements, and the installation of solar panels among the upgrades envisaged.

St Vincent's CNU Reaches Completion

Article by Laura Fernandez Vila

Aerial photograph of construction

In October 2025, a 50-bed Community Nursing Unit (CNU) was completed on the site of St Vincent's Hospital, Mountmellick, Co. Laois. The circa €25m facility provides single occupancy en-suite rooms for those in need of residential care. It is compliant with the spatial regulatory requirements of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) National Standards for Residential Care Settings for older people in Ireland. ROD provided civil and structural engineering design services for the development in collaboration with Scott Tallon Walker Architects; Hayes Higgins Partnership (M&E); FCC Fire Cert Ltd; Catalyst (Assigned Certifier); and O'Reilly Hyland Tierney & Associates (QS). The main contractor was Duggan Brothers Ltd.

The scheme involved the redevelopment of the entire hospital campus and included demolition of existing structures, diversion of existing site services, refurbishment of the existing building where the new and existing buildings connect, reconfiguration of the entrance and roadway, landscaping and all associated drainage and site services. Enabling works, including the construction of a car park at the front of the campus and the installation of a fire-fighting water storage tank, had been carried out in 2020.

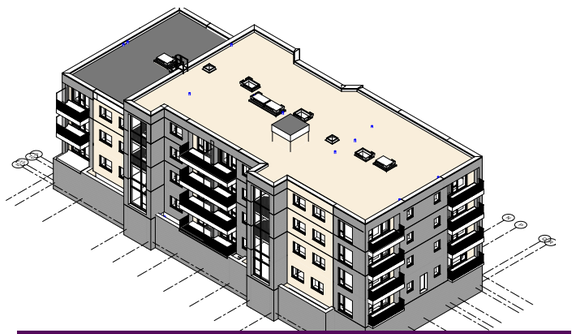
The new building features a two-storey, reinforced-concrete frame with flat slab construction, providing flexibility for the distribution of building services. The substructure comprises precast piles connected by in-situ pile caps and reinforced ground beams. Additional structures, including entrance canopies and balconies, are built on steelwork frames. A pleasant, welcoming environment was created for residents, with landscaped green spaces and footpaths surrounding the new facility. Site works encompassed the construction of a new entrance, establishing a separate access road for maintenance operations and the provision of additional mechanical plant buildings to accommodate the upgrades of existing mechanical systems.

The project followed BIM (Building Information Modelling) processes in line with standards jointly defined by the design team members during the early project phase. This ensured consistency and coordination from preliminary design through to the construction stage of the project. To facilitate design coordination and the generation of project deliverables, a federated BIM model of the new facility was produced. The model will support future operations and the maintenance of the facility.

Technical Advisor Role for ROD on Three Fingal County Council Housing Schemes

Article by Aoife O'Keeffe

REVIT model of Woodside



REVIT model of The Cross

Fingal County Council has recently appointed ROD as civil and structural technical advisor on three housing schemes in north County Dublin: The Cross, Blakestown Road, Mulhuddart; Woodside, Swords; and Park Road, Lusk. The appointment will allows us to build on our ongoing work for the Ccouncil on the Holywell and Seatown Road housing developments in Swords, which are under construction and due for completion in 2026.

Background

The Cross, Woodside and Park Road schemes form part of Fingal County Council's three-year capital programme, which will run from 2026 to 2028. The programme encompasses an investment of €1.43bn, over €880m of which is allocated for housing, €264m for infrastructure schemes, and the remainder for tourism, cultural developments, environmental, climate action and sport.

All three schemes will be delivered through design and build (D&B) contracts to fast track the provision of much-needed housing under the Housing for All programme. The proposed developments will be expected to meet Fingal County Council's Development Plan's themes of healthy placemaking, climate action, social inclusion and high-quality designs. As the council's civil and structural technical advisor on the schemes, ROD will provide performance specifications to enable the themes to be met while encouraging the successful contractor to provide innovative solutions, where possible. Tenders are expected to be issued in early 2026.

The Cross

This project comprises a single apartment block housing 30 units, including 16 one-bed units and 14 two-bed units. The development is located over an underground car park on the site of the former creche 'Scallywaggs,' at the junction of Blakestown Road and Huntstown Way in Mulhuddart. The development will fully utilise the available space to achieve the maximum density.

Woodside

This project comprises 34 residential dwellings, including 24 apartments in a four-storey block and 10 two-storey houses, on a site measuring approx. 0.57 hectares. The development will provide high-quality housing in a rapidly developing environment and will replace an existing single cottage on the site. In addition to the main access from the R106, new pedestrian links will be provided to Clifford's Lane to ensure permeability for local residents in accordance with best practice.

Park Road

This project comprises 32 residential dwellings, including 20 duplex apartments and 12 houses. Ten additional two-bed, universal design units will be provided within the ground floor units of the duplex blocks. The development will be phased to allow construction of new vehicular access from Park Road and pedestrian and cycle access from Palmer Road, integrating it into the local community.

Parametric design for buildings: A Europengineers Design Sprint

Article by Laura Fernandez

Europengineers Design Sprint in Liége

During the summer, Nicholas McCann and I attended an Interdisciplinary Design Sprint in Liège, Belgium, that brought together young professionals from seven Europengineers member companies: Setec, Aronsohn, Basler & Hofmann, Schüßler-Plan, Salfo & Associates, Bureau greisch and ROD. The theme of the design sprint was parametric design for buildings.

The hosts of the event, Bureau greisch, began the design sprint with a presentation outlining the type of projects they deliver, which range from long-span bridges and high-rise buildings to tunnels and canals. They emphasised their use of parametric design and the improvements in design efficiency it provides. This was followed by a visit to the construction sites of the Montefiore Institute restoration and the Haute École Charlemagne campus extension - two Bureau greisch designed projects in Liège city centre. While there, we walked through the iconic Liège-Guillemins railway station, one of the most important railway hubs for high-speed trains in Belgium, also designed by Bureau greisch.

The workshop element of the design sprint was focused on implementing parametric design to optimise the structural design of a multi-storey, city-centre building. Working together, the group developed a strategic workflow, suitable for most building types, that could refine the design and coordination processes. By developing algorithms on parametric software, the workflow could be adapted to suit various project criteria and to generate design outputs to feed into the overall design strategy and form the basis of a working project solution.

The aim of the challenge was to demonstrate how parametric tools can support the preliminary stages of the design process. We were given several fixed constraints, including the site area and orientation of the building, minimum surface area, ground conditions and pre-determined wind loadings. Using a cutting-edge parametric modelling tool, we set up a workflow to explore various frame configurations and their implications according to measurable outputs, including cost, material consumption and associated carbon emissions. By altering the variables, such as material type, grid spacing and building footprint dimensions, we determined the feasibility of the different solutions.

The design sprint provided an excellent overview of the capabilities of the parametric design approach, demonstrating how, with an appreciation of the design constraints and objectives and appropriate care, it can optimise the preliminary stages of the design process. It also highlighted the importance of collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork to understanding the design inputs and outputs required by each discipline and mapping out the tasks be completed at each stage in the design process.

Reflecting on the event, ROD Director, Lewis Feely, said: "In providing a forum for our emerging leaders to foster relationships with their European counterparts and develop innovative solutions to highly technical challenges, the design sprint highlights one of the many benefits of our membership of Europengineers."

Convent Lands: Preserving the Past and Building the Future in Portlaoise

Article by Kieran O'Riordan and Marian Blaj

Design model of development

In 2018, ROD was engaged by Sophia Housing to provide civil and structural engineering services for the redevelopment of the Presentation Convent and Sacred Heart National School lands in Portlaoise, Co. Laois. Our design partners are OBFA Architects, Austin Reddy and Company (QS), Lotts Architecture and Varming Consulting Engineers (M&E). The scheme aims to balance the preservation of Portlaoise's architectural heritage with the delivery of modern, sustainable housing. A new park and public realm will make the site permeable and connect with the wider vision for Portlaoise - a walkable town.

The development comprises:

- Construction of a 50-unit residential development at the site of the primary school and adjacent grounds and buildings;
- Alteration and refurbishment of the school and convent buildings;
- Demolition of ancillary buildings and prefabs;
- Construction of a three-storey apartment block to replace the ancillary buildings to the south-west of the site; and
- Construction of a five-unit terrace and three-storey apartment block to replace the prefabs to the north of the convent.

The southwest block was completed and handed over to the client at the end of February 2025, as part of a phased handover. This approach enabled families in need of homes to move into the finished units as early as possible. The completion date for the overall scheme is the end of 2025.

The Presentation Convent

The Presentation Convent is situated in Portlaoise town centre and forms part of a larger complex of community buildings on Church Avenue. The convent was established in 1824 and was later extended into adjoining buildings, including a historic stone tower that dates from 1548. Further extensions were added in the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

The Sacred Heart National School

The Sacred Heart National School is one of a group of buildings to the south of the convent building. The original national school dates from c.1880. A new block and wing were added c.1930.

Flood resilences measures

The stage one cost plan and Part 8 planning application were submitted in early 2020. The stage one and stage two flood risk assessments identified that portions of the site were within flood zones A and B (one-in-a-100-year and one-in-1,000-year flood events). Consequently, ROD's water team undertook a stage three detailed flood risk assessment, including a 1D/2D hydraulic model of the River Triogue catchment within Portlaoise, to confirm the effects of extreme fluvial flood events in the existing and post-development scenarios. As a result of our analysis, the preliminary layout of the building was amended to ensure minimal impact on flow paths and flood water displacement within the floodplain. A structural solution for the building was devised that saw the finished floor level supported 1.5m above ground level by a series of concrete fins that will allow water to pass under the building during a one-in-a-1000-year event.

Construction

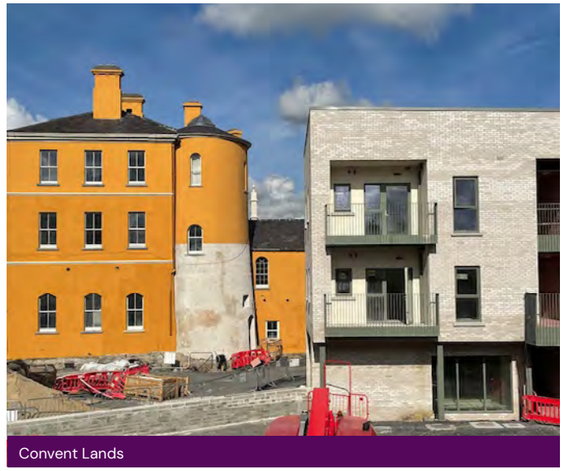
To improve the programme, the main contractor, Bretland, proposed the use of precast construction in lieu of masonry. This resulted in an intensive review period at the beginning of the construction stage, which saw ROD work in close collaboration with Bretland's sub-contractors/manufacturers, Taranto Ltd Piling and O'Reilly Precast .

Sustainability

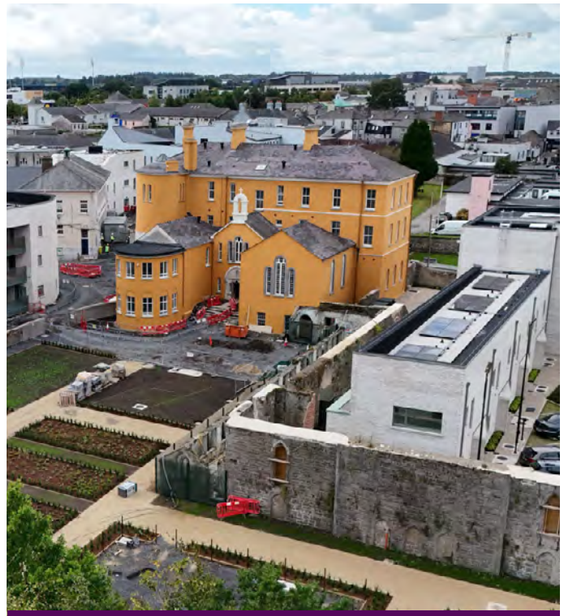
The refurbishment of the convent and school buildings was key to achieving the project's sustainability goals, although preserving the architectural features, particularly the plaster cornices and lath-and-plaster ceilings of the convent, and the structural elements, such as the timber joists and kingpost trusses, posed significant challenges for the redesign of the structural elements. Meanwhile, the requirement for the investigative works to be carried out during the construction stage added further complexity to the project.

The timber specialist, Gordon Knaggs & Associates, was appointed by the client to survey all the existing timber inside the convent building. Decayed timber was removed and cut well back into visually sound material for restoration. In areas where the existing timber joists were fully compromised, several options for floor support were explored, including the use of anchored timber plates. To conduct a feasibility assessment, the contractor appointed an anchoring specialist to carry out high-level tests on the mixed limestone and brick walls. ROD compiled the results into a statistical distribution to evaluate whether the walls could accommodate the design loading. As this method did not provide sufficient reliability, the team adopted the more robust solution of using wall pocket details instead.

By combining the sensitive restoration of the convent and school buildings with innovative structural solutions and flood resilience measures, the project has created a lasting community asset that provides homes for families and strengthens the sense of place in the heart of Portlaoise.



Convent Lands



Convent Lands

Three ROD Graduates Share their Experience of Working on Site

Article by Aoife O'Sullivan, Pawan Rana and Tilly Skidmore

Aoife O'Sullivan | Narrow Water Bridge Project

I joined ROD's graduate programme in August 2024, after completing a BAI in Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering at Trinity College Dublin. My first placement was with the Water team, and seven months later, I moved to site on the Narrow Water Bridge project in Omeath, Co. Louth.

During my six months on site, I spent the majority of my time shadowing the resident engineers, from whom I learned a great deal about the practicalities of site works. I'm a naturally chatty person, and everyone was great at answering my questions, especially the foreman and site engineers. I got to know the two members of Louth County Council's project team with whom I shared an office, ROD's site administrator, the contractor's site engineers and quantity surveyors, and their graduate engineer, who showed me some setting out, how to do a slump test and how to make concrete cubes for testing. An unexpected highlight was meeting An Taoiseach Micheál Martin when he came to review progress on site in June.

I saw a lot of concrete being poured for various parts of the project, including the bascule bridge abutment, where I saw the base slab and the first two levels of the walls being steel fixed, shuttered up and poured. I saw the installation of the prefabricated wingwall units, and the assembly of the precast navigation tower units. The tower will house a new navigation beacon (i.e. port entrance light), which will be used by ships to align with the navigation channel through Carlingford Lough. I was also fortunate to see some drainage works, from start to finish, including the installation of large storm sewer pipes.

Tilly Skidmore | N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge Road Project

I graduated with an MEng in Civil Engineering from Newcastle University in 2023 and joined ROD's graduate programme later that same year. I spent my first 18 months rotating through the technical teams in our Leeds office, and my final six months on the N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge Road Project, which involves an upgrade of the N5 national primary route between Ballaghaderreen and Scramoge in Co. Roscommon.

As a member of ROD's site supervision team, I was responsible for updating site diaries, keeping records of plant and labour, and attending testing and inspections of different works elements of the project, including drainage, pavement, ducting, structures, earthworks and vehicle restraint systems. I worked under the guidance of ROD's experienced team of resident engineers, who shared their considerable knowledge and experience of highway projects with me.

During my six-month placement, the works on site advanced apace. I was fortunate to see great progress in the construction of many principal structures, including the completion and opening of an overbridge and piling at two of the river bridges. I also saw the installation of precast concrete units for several agricultural underpasses and culverts, and a significant amount of drainage, ducting and pavement works being undertaken. Prior to attending any site works, I made sure to review the relevant design drawings and standard details, which strengthened my appreciation of how designs are constructed.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the project. The weather was surprisingly good, and ROD's site supervision team, led by Project Resident Engineer Luke Duffy, was hugely supportive, patiently answering my endless questions.

Pawan Rana | Waterford City Public Infrastructure Project

I joined ROD's graduate programme in September 2024, after completing an MSc in Earthquake Engineering and Infrastructure Resilience at the University of Bristol in 2021. My first placement was with the bridges team, and six months later, I joined the site team on the Waterford City Public Infrastructure Project.

As an Assistant Resident Engineer, my core responsibilities include regularly reviewing the contractor's Environmental Monitoring Plan and ensuring the registers for concrete cube and road pavement test results are up to date. Through these tasks, I've gained valuable insights into how digital tools and technologies are used to monitor a project's environmental impact and how construction quality is maintained through rigorous testing and inspections. I participate in monthly meetings with the contractor, focused on quality, environmental compliance and traffic management. The traffic management meetings are particularly engaging, as they involve coordinating with multiple stakeholders, including the client, contractor, fire brigade and ambulance services, to minimise traffic disruption during construction.

A highlight of my time on site was witnessing the lift of the Sustainable Transport Bridge steel superstructure sections using an 800T sheerleg crane - an operation which required high precision, strong team coordination, and strict adherence to safety protocols. Similarly, at the nearby Access Infrastructure site, I saw how reinforced earth/concrete retaining walls and pre-stressed precast concrete beam bridges were built on site with utmost precision, accuracy and safety. For the flood defence works, it was interesting to see the installation of sheet piles using a heavy vibratory pile driver, where achieving precise vertical and horizontal alignment was critical. When I apply for chartership in due course, I am sure my experience on-site will be invaluable.

C-ITS Pilot Pushes Boundaries of Traffic Management in Ireland

Article by Ciarán Carey

In late 2024, TII's Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C- ITS) pilot project concluded with ROD-AECOM submitting the pilot Evaluation and Assessment Report to the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). The report assessed the positive impact C-ITS delivers in terms of driving behaviour and the benefits it offers in terms of improving road safety, increasing traffic efficiency by reducing congestion and optimising flow, and enhancing society through reduced environmental impact. It provided TII with a solid foundation to further develop and expand C-ITS in Ireland, with the potential to reshape our driving experience into the future.

C-ITS improves road safety, traffic efficiency, and driver comfort by enabling road users and operators to share information and coordinate actions through digital connectivity. It enables simple event notifications, such as traffic jams, hazardous locations, and weather conditions, to be transmitted directly to drivers in a way that allows users to be informed, not distracted.

The Pilot Project

Our pilot project (in collaboration with TII, Swarco Ireland and Kapsch TrafficCom) involved designing, procuring, installing, testing, operating, and evaluating C-ITS services on the motorway network around Dublin and some key interconnecting roads. Launched in February 2024, it was one of the earliest C-ITS systems in Europe to be integrated with a live traffic management system.

The pilot helped TII to:

- understand the improvements connected vehicle technology could offer in terms of road user safety, traffic efficiency and the environment;
- assess whether connected vehicle technology could satisfy the needs and expectations of its users; and
- prepare government and industry for the future roll-out of connected vehicle technologies.

As part of the pilot, over 900 volunteers received messages from operators at TII's Motorway Operations Control Centre relating to incidents, journey times, and safety - via in-vehicle equipment or a mobile app. Structured questionnaires were used to gather feedback from the volunteers, 77% of whom reported that the C-ITS warning messages influenced the way they drove. Participant responses included:

- "It made me more aware of what I was approaching and to be more vigilant in my driving."
- "Reduced speed when prompted and chose correct lane when indicated."
- "Knowing what's ahead or if roadworks are on my route means I can choose a different route"

Benefits for the network

At present, when operators in the motorway control centre become aware of incidents on the network, they implement appropriate response plans, such as adjusting variable message signs and lane control signals, using TII's Network Intelligence Management System (NIMS) i.e. an adaptive computer system that allows TII to provide an integrated road management service to road users. However, the C-ITS pilot enabled dissemination beyond fixed infrastructure, greatly expanding its reach through direct communication with the driver via C-ITS roadside and cellular technology. In so doing, it helped push the boundaries of what is possible in future traffic management in Ireland, shifting how we think about road safety and traffic management - from isolated to connected, and from infrastructure-heavy to intelligence-driven.

The technology is designed so that EU-compliant C-ITS environments enable vehicles anonymously broadcast data in a secure manner. Various data such as location, direction, and speed provide insights into network operations, while safety-critical messages that can be picked up by roadside units and other vehicles not only inform the operator, but provide near instantaneous warning to vehicles about what is happening ahead (e.g. emergency braking).

ROD-AECOM's data analysis platform leveraged this data to carry out detailed analysis in line with international best practice to understand how participants responded to receipt of the various C-ITS message types.

While the C-ITS pilot used in-vehicle equipment and a mobile app to communicate directly with participants, C-ITS technology is increasingly being integrated into vehicles, meaning messages from road authorities can be received directly to the vehicle dashboard. With nearly 2 million C-ITS-enabled vehicles on European roads today, the potential for future enhancements is significant, and ROD-AECOM is excited to be at the vanguard for the implementation of this technology.

ROD appointed Designer for BusConnects D&B

Article by Eoin Ó Catháin

View of Thomas Street, Dublin

ROD, in joint-venture with Clandillon Civil Consulting (CCC), has been appointed as Designer to GMC Utilities Group Ltd. (GMC) for the first BusConnects Dublin Design & Build project to progress to construction. The Contract for the Liffey Valley to City Centre scheme was signed by GMC in July and design work started in earnest the next same month. Advance works and surveys started on site in September, and construction is due to commence in December.

The 9.2km scheme will significantly enhance travel by public transport by providing bus priority as well as improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along its length. This access corridor is currently characterised by traffic congestion and, while there are existing bus lanes on parts of the route, buses and cyclists compete for space with general traffic for most of the journey, making it less attractive for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. The works involve extensive pavement reconstruction and widening, pedestrian and public realm enhancements, utility and service diversions, tree planting, public lighting and electrical works, traffic signalling and ducting, and miscellaneous ancillary works.

The design programme to permit the early construction start is ambitious, and required a rapid mobilisation of resources from both ROD and CCC. We are pleased to be working collaboratively, with extensive cross-pollination of various knowledge, techniques and efficiencies, drawing on the specialist knowledge of both companies. Similarly, we are working hand in glove with our contractor client, with multiple parallel lines of communication to optimise the speed of delivery. A core project management team across the three organisations is responsible for quality control, change management, and programme optimisation. The project management team also manages the interfaces with the client and the client partner appointed to manage the design and construction process.

The ROD-CCC joint-venture will provide a team of Designer's Site Representatives to assist the GMC project team and oversee construction. We look forward to working in collaboration with the various stakeholders, not least Dublin City and South Dublin County Councils, to deliver a successful scheme, of a high quality, to an aggressive programme, and with minimal disruption during construction.

Contractor appointed for Maynooth Eastern Ring Road

Article by Daire Ó Riagáin

Back row L-R: Kevin Kane, Senior Executive Engineer KCC, Celina Barret Kildare co co, Daragh Conlan, Senior Engineer KCC, Dáire O Riagáin

Front row L-R: Brendan Wyse, Clane-Maynooth MD,Sonia Kavanagh Chief Executive, Kildare County Council, Victor smyth, MD John Cradock Ltd, Alan Wright, Director John Craddock Ltd.

Construction has commenced on the Maynooth Eastern Ring Road following the execution of the main construction contract by Kildare County Council and John Cradock Ltd. in October 2025. The project is programmed for completion within an 18-month period.

The scheme comprises a 1.5km single carriageway road, incorporating two new junctions at tie-in points with existing roads and access provisions for future development lands in-between. It will connect the R148 Old Dublin Road and the R157 in the north to the R405 Celbridge Road in the south. When complete, this strategic link will complete a ring route around the eastern side of Maynooth, alleviating traffic congestion in the town centre, facilitating planned development along the route, and improving connectivity to educational facilities and residential areas along the Celbridge Road.

The roadway includes pedestrian footpaths and dedicated cycle lanes, which will connect to existing walking and cycling networks, including the Royal Canal towpath. The principal structure along the route is a new bridge crossing of the Royal Canal and Dublin-Sligo Railway, approximately 40m in length and designed as a fully integral precast concrete system. To ensure it sits harmoniously with the surrounding sensitive environment, the bridge will be faced with masonry. Noise attenuation measures will be implemented along approximately 600 metres of embankment on the approaches to the bridge.

The scheme is jointly funded by Kildare County Council and the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF). LIHAF facilitates targeted investment in enabling infrastructure to accelerate the delivery of housing on strategically designated lands. The project will support sustainable urban residential development by enabling the construction of approximately 1,000 additional housing units in Maynooth.

ROD was appointed to provide technical consultancy services for the project in February 2018. Our appointment covers all stages of the project from feasibility through to handover. During the first two years of our appointment, we undertook constraints and route selection studies of routes to the east of Maynooth town, which were assessed in accordance with the Common Appraisal Framework. The Route Selection Report was published in May 2019, and Kildare County Council's approval of the Part VIII Planning application followed in July of the same year. The Compulsory Purchase Order was submitted for approval in December 2022, and An Bord Pleanála conducted an oral hearing in May 2023. Planning consent and approval for the scheme were granted in January 2024, following which ROD completed the detailed design and prepared the tender documentation for the main construction contract.

The main construction contract was procured under a restricted procedure, with award based on 40% price and 60% quality criteria. In May 2025, tenders were received from six contractors, and on completion of the tender assessment process, a letter of acceptance was issued to John Cradock Ltd. in October 2025. ROD is now providing the Employer's Representative and a team of site-based supervision personnel to administer the contract through the construction and handover stages.

Welcoming the commencement of works on the scheme, Sonya Kavanagh, Chief Executive of Kildare County Council, said:

> "This will be a fantastic addition to the area, and one that will improve the daily lives of the people of Maynooth, the surrounding areas and commuters alike. Major projects such as this are a priority for Kildare County Council, and we look forward to working in partnership with John Cradock Ltd. to deliver it."

N56 Letterilly to Kilraine Phase 2 Project reaches completion

Article by Gerard Ward

N56 Letterilly to Kilraine Road Phase 1

We are pleased to report that the N56 Letterilly to Kilraine Phase 2 Project was successfully completed in late 2025, significantly improving road safety along a 2.6km long section of national secondary road on the southern outskirts of Glenties town in Co. Donegal. The project represents the final section of the 28km N56 Dungloe to Glenties Road Project, which was developed by Donegal County Council as part of a TII pilot project to upgrade low-traffic volume, bog rampart roads along the west coast of Ireland.

The project was based on a Type 3 single carriageway design and included provision of a combined cycleway/footway facility, repair and strengthening of the N56 road, minor alignment improvements and a new regional road junction layout at the southern end. In addition to improving safety for road users, the project enhances accessibility, boosts economic activity in the northwest region and provides a valuable recreation/tourist amenity for the local area.

ROD-AECOM Alliance's involvement in the project dates back to late 2022 when we were appointed by Donegal County Council. Our commission included a due diligence review of the draft tender documents, management of the tender phase, contract administration, site supervision services, design support and PSDP services.

The due diligence and procurement phases were completed in 2023, and construction work began on site in August 2024, with Fox Building & Engineering Ltd as the contractor and Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS) for the works. ROD Director Daire Ó Riagáin led the project team, with ROD Technical Director Patrick Grennan carrying out the role of Employer's Representative. I was the senior resident engineer on site, managing the site supervision team of Liam Keeney and Jimmy Kerrigan during the construction phase.

The project is located within the West of Ardara/Maas Road Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the highly sensitive Owenea Freshwater Pearl Mussel Catchment. A design solution for the section within the Owenea Catchment was necessary due to the stringent ecological requirements of the riverbed habitat for freshwater pearl mussel and to prevent any negative impact on the habitat and the species itself. The scheme design therefore featured minimal earthworks because planning approvals prohibit large-scale excavation of peat material in the Owenea Catchment. Instead, a combination of pavement overlay and inlay was used together with safety barrier upgrades and improvements to the existing drainage, footpath and cycle track network.

The site team put the experience they had gained from supervising the N56 Letterilly to Kilraine Phase 1 scheme to good use on the project to ensure the contractor complied with the strict environmental commitments contained within the planning approval. Meanwhile, our environmental team carried out regular site inspections in addition to providing toolbox talks to the site supervision team.

ROD-AECOM Signs Contracts with Meath County Council for N52 Grange to Clontail Road

Article by Daire Ó Riagáin

Pictured (L-R): Meath County Council Chief Executive Kieran Kehoe, ROD's Iwona Formanowska and Daire Ó Riagáin, Cathaoirleach Cllr Wayne Harding and AECOM's Eoin Greene

On 17th November, ROD-AECOM Alliance signed contracts with Meath County Council to provide detailed design, tender, construction and handover stage consulting engineering services for the N52 Grange to Clontail Road scheme. Commenting at the contract signing with Kieran Kehoe, Chief Executive of Meath County Council, ROD Director Daire Ó Riagáin said "We are delighted to be working with Meath County Council on the delivery of the N52 realignment scheme. The scheme will not only improve regional connectivity and road safety but bring lasting benefits to local communities - reducing travel times, supporting economic growth, and enhancing access for pedestrians and cyclists."

The N52 is recognised as a key National Secondary Route, connecting the northeast to the southwest and serving major towns including Dundalk, Ardee, Kells, Mullingar, Tullamore, Birr and Nenagh. It is the key link between the M1/N1 near Dundalk and the M7 at Nenagh, intersecting several major roads, including the N2, M3, N4, M6, N80 and N65.

The proposed scheme involves the design and construction of a 4.8km Type 2 single carriageway between Grange and Clontail. The road will feature a 7.0m wide carriageway with a 0.5m hard strip on each side, flanked by grass verges. A shared pedestrian / cycle path will run along the southern verge, providing a connection from the Boyne Valley to Lakelands County Greenway near the southern end of the scheme. In addition to the main road infrastructure works, the scheme includes accommodation works, fencing, landscaping, surface water drainage and attenuation systems, as well as other associated ancillary infrastructure.

The scheme will improve road safety by upgrading the road alignment and junctions to meet current design standards, reducing the number of private accesses, lowering collision risk and providing safer conditions for all road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists.

Public Consultation held for Donabate Distributor Road Phase 2

Article by Richard Spencer

Emerging Preferred Route Corridor

In October 2025, the Donabate Distributor Road Phase 2 scheme reached a significant milestone with the publication of the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor and its presentation at a public consultation in the Shoreline Hotel, Donabate. The scheme involves the upgrade of the existing R126 Hearse Road from the Donabate Distributor Road Phase 1 through to the M1 Lissenhall Junction. In addition to improving the existing substandard road geometry and enhancing road safety, it will improve public transport access to Donabate and Portrane, ease traffic congestion at Lissenhall Junction and provide active travel facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Our project team joined representatives from the council at the public consultation to discuss the project objectives, answer queries, and give the local community an opportunity to highlight any concerns and identify potential opportunities. Drawings with key constraints, design options, the emerging preferred option and next steps were displayed for attendees, who included local residents, businesses, stakeholders and interested parties. The event was well attended, with landowners playing a crucial role in discussions by sharing their perspectives on the positive and negative aspects of the scheme.

Seventeen corridor options were developed and progressed through the Option Selection process in accordance with the Transport Appraisal Framework (TAF) and TII Project Appraisal Guidelines (PAG). Following the Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment, the 17 options were reduced to six, which went forward to the detailed Project Appraisal Matrix, where a Transport Accessibility Assessment (TAA) and Economic Appraisal were undertaken in accordance with TAF to identify the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor.

The next stages of the project development will refine the emerging preferred option through the preliminary design and environmental assessment stages. When complete, the scheme will significantly improve access, road safety and active travel provision on the Donabate - Portrane Peninsula.

Mayo Trade School Students Visit N5 Road Project Site

Article by Roberta Keaney

Construction works at N5 National Primary Road between Ballaghaderreen and Scramoge

Last October, we were delighted to welcome students from a new trade school in Balla, Co. Mayo to the N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge Road Project, one of the largest civil engineering projects underway in Ireland. The school "Is Féider Linn" (which translates "We Can") provides young adults with a practical route into skilled trades, providing them with the training and real-world experience necessary to succeed. In their first year, students are given a taste of eight different trades: carpentry, mechanics, plant machinery and groundworks, plumbing, steel fabrication and welding, 3D modelling, business administration, and hospitality and catering. In the second and third years, students choose one of these in which to specialise.

ROD's Senior Resident Engineer on the scheme, John Duggan, took the students through every aspect of the project and the different trades involved in its delivery. He also shared insights from his 20+ years of experience in the industry.

We wish the students well in their endeavours and look forward to seeing them working on our major civil engineering projects in the future.

ROD Senior Resident Engineer John Duggan presenting to students on site

ROD and the Beach Cleaners

Article by Niamh Moore and Emeline Lafortune

Emeline Lafortune and Aymen Rzigui pictured with their litter pickers and collection bags on Sandymount Strand.

During the summer, a group of volunteers again set out from ROD for Sandymount Beach in Dublin armed with litter pickers, protection gloves, high-visibility vests and collection bags. Their aim: to support the significant community effort to keep this beautiful, natural amenity free from litter so it can be fully enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. Our Sustainability Committee chose this particular location for ROD's annual clean-up evening because it falls within the South Dublin Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA). It also holds special significance for our team as we are currently working on several projects in the area, including the Point Bridge and Tom Clarke Bridge Widening, the Dodder Bridge and various projects in Dublin Port.

Arriving at their starting point at Sandymount Beach, our volunteers were encouraged by the sight of a relatively clean beach - testament to the frequent clean-up efforts of local community groups, environmental organisations and Dublin City Council. They then split into two teams, with the first team travelling north towards Dublin Bay and the Poolbeg Chimneys, and the second team travelling south towards Merrion Gates and Blackrock.

Our teams focused their efforts on retrieving the hidden litter within the large boulders along the strand, around the Sandymount baths and in the hedges and carparks in the surrounding environs. While some of the rubbish was trapped below heavy boulders and therefore irretrievable, they nevertheless managed to fill their bags with bottles, wrappers, cans, paper, discarded items of clothing and various pieces of scrap plastic that had been broken down by the sea. Satisfied with their evening's work, our volunteers then headed to The Merry Cobbler, a friendly pub and restaurant in Irishtown, where they were treated to some well-earned refreshments.

Our beach clean-up highlights the importance of both individual and collective actions in preserving our natural environment. Our thanks to Dublin City Council, who provided the all-important protection gloves, collection bags, collection bag holders and litter pickers.

Fatima Quadri, Samira Islam, Louise-Marie Lanaud and John Daly pictured picking up litter on Sandymount Strand in Dublin.

Sustainability Committee Hosts Scavenger Hunt with a Difference

Article by Jane Stafford

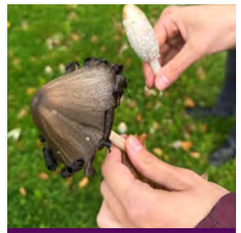
On 7th October 2025, our Sustainability Committee kicked off Sustainability Month at ROD with a BioBlitz (Biodiversity Blitz) co-hosted by our ecology team. A BioBlitz is an event in which participants find and record as many plant and animal species as they can over a short period of time. The BioBlitz was designed to test the wider ROD team's knowledge of ecology and to encourage staff to reconnect with nature. With many of us spending our working day at computers and then going home to spend even more time on our phones, laptops, TVs, and iPads, switching off our digital devices and finding time for nature has never been more important.

The data collected by our Dublin and Cork teams was submitted to the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC), which collects, manages and publishes data on Ireland's biodiversity to better understand and assist with its protection. In addition to documenting wildlife resources and monitoring and recording changes over time, it frequently feeds into desk studies of environmental reports, including Environmental Impacts Assessment Reports and Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports. The data collected by our UK team in Otley was submitted to iNaturalist.com, a website that uses species records submitted by users to contribute to scientific data repositories around the world.

After a briefing presentation, our participants headed 'into the wild' to explore the grassy verges, hedgerows and amenity areas around their respective offices. Using field guides, online guides, apps and a 'cheat sheet' featuring urban flora and fauna, they identified and recorded the plants, animals and fungi they came across.

Sandyford Office Findings

I led the Sandyford office group, and I am pleased to say that we found a far greater number of plants in bloom than expected, including Herb Robert (Geranium robertianum), Yarrow (Achillea millefolium), and Gorse (Ulex europaeus). We also recorded a variety of invertebrates, including a Honeybee (Apis mellifera) spotted pollinating some ornamental plants near the office, and a fourteen-spot Ladybird (Propylea quattuordecimpuncata). Ladybirds are an important predator of aphids, i.e. small insects that suck the sap from plants, compromising their health and growth.



A mature (left) and young (right) Shaggy Inkcap mushroom

Woodford Office Findings

Ecologist Mark Gilligan led our Woodford group. They found Scott's Pine (Pinus sylvestris), one of three conifer tree species native to Ireland and the UK [the others are Yew (Taxus baccata) and Juniper (Juniperus communis)]. The group also found two edible species of mushroom: Horse Mushroom (Agaricus arvensis) and Shaggy Inkcap (Coprinus comatus). They were the only team to record no invasive species.

A Red Kite in flight

Otley Office Findings

Graduate Engineer Bailey Thoresby led our group in Otley. They observed various plant species, including important food sources for wildlife in the autumn and winter months, such as Ivy (Hedera sp.), Holly (Ilex aquifolium), and Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia). They recorded various birds, including the Goldcrest (Regulus regulus), which is the smallest species of bird in the UK and Ireland, and the Red Kite (Milvus milvus), which is slowly making a comeback after being re-introduced in Ireland (where it had become extinct) and the UK (where it had come close to extinction). This bird of prey can be recognised by its pale head, reddish body and forked tail.

Maidenhair Spleenwort growing in crevices in a stone wall

Cork Office Findings

Graduate Ecologist Brónagh Barnes led the group from our Cork office. They observed several interesting plants, including Maidenhair Spleenwort (Asplenium trichomanes), which they found growing in crevices in a stone wall, and Pineappleweed (Matricaria discoidea), which gets its name from its distinct pineapple scent. They also recorded black-headed Gulls (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) foraging along the River Lee, which runs outside our office.

Protecting and Improving our Water Quality

Article by Brónagh Barnes

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently published a report on the condition of over 4,000 surface water bodies and 514 ground water bodies in Ireland between 2019 and 2024. The report shows that just 52% of our surface waters are in satisfactory ecological health, defined as being in either good or high ecological status. This has disimproved from the previous assessment period of 2016 to 2021, when 54% of these waters were in satisfactory condition. The decline is driven by run-off associated with agriculture and urban environments, land drainage and poorly treated sewage.

Rhyacophila sp. and Ecdyonurus sp. recorded in the Mell Stream,Drogheda

ROD's ecology team attended a freshwater ecology training course in Cork during the summer of 2025. The course covered various biological water quality survey methodologies, such as Q-values, which indicate the average water quality, and Small Streams Risk Score (SSRS), a risk assessment to identify rivers at risk of failing to achieve a 'good' water quality status. The course also covered the survey methodology for White-clawed Crayfish and Freshwater Pearl Mussel, two species protected under Annexes II and IV of the EU Habitats Directive.

The methodologies covered in the tutorials were put into practice during the fieldwork elements of the course. These included biological water quality sampling at various sites in the River Blackwater catchment and surveying Freshwater Pearl Mussel and White-clawed Crayfish. White-clawed Crayfish caught during the survey were transferred to holding tanks at Fota Wildlife Park, adding to the stock of healthy crayfish to be reintroduced to sites free of crayfish plague in the future.

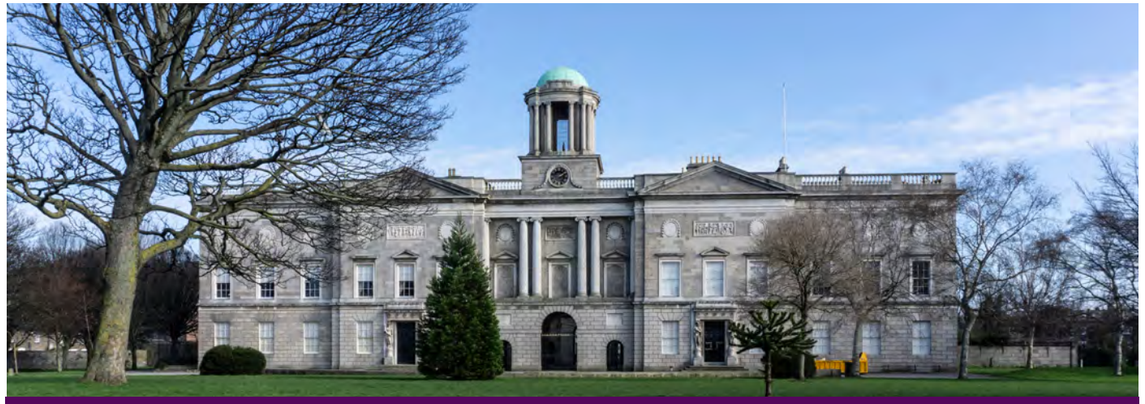
Our team had the opportunity to put their new skills to work straightaway on a residential project in Co. Louth, undertaking macroinvertebrate surveys and water chemistry sampling in the Mell Stream, a tributary of the River Boyne. Aquatic macroinvertebrates (crustaceans, worms, and other arthropods visible with the naked eye) are ranked according to their sensitivity to pollution, and the assemblage of macroinvertebrates in a watercourse therefore gives an indication of water quality. The results of our surveys provided a baseline for water quality, which can be used during the construction phase to ensure it is not affected by the works.

In conjunction with the NTA and Dublin City Council, ROD has separately commissioned the largest multi-annual survey of macroinvertebrates, flora and fauna along the Royal Canal between Kilcock and the River Liffey to inform the analysis of various major transport projects in Dublin, including DART+, Metro, and the Royal Canal Greenway.

Ecologist Evan Browne surveying in the Mell Stream, Drogheda

Keeping up to date with Changing Legislation at King's Inns

Article by Victoria da Silva Pereira and Gemma Rothwell



The Kings Inn in Dublin. An independent educational training body for the legal profession

As part of our environmental group's continued efforts to track evolving employment and planning law, ROD Principal Environmental Consultants Victoria da Silva Pereira and Gemma Rothwell along with Senior Environmental Consultant Laura Lynch recently completed the Advanced Diploma in Environmental and Planning Law at King's Inns, Dublin. The course is designed for professionals working with planning applications, strategic infrastructure, planning enforcement, development plans, waste management and climate resilience. Delivered by experts in the legal, academic and consultancy fields, it provides insights into current and emerging planning legislation and case law. While the 22-week course covered a wide range of modules, the topics of most relevance to Victoria, Gemma and Laura's work at ROD were: Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, Strategic Infrastructure Developments, planning applications and appeals, judicial reviews, nature conservation and maritime planning.

During the tutorials and Q&A sessions, Victoria, Gemma and Laura enjoyed informative discussions with the other course participants, who included engineers, architects, planners, construction managers and local government officials. The key learnings they took from the course included: updates in relation to recent case law findings; the importance of conducting regular legal research; how to apply legal principles to a variety of relevant scenarios; how to solve legal problems; and how to communicate legal arguments effectively.

The course has added relevance in the current context of the enactment by the Oireachtas of the Planning Act 2024, which consolidates and revises the law in relation to planning and development in Ireland.

Environment Ireland Conference

Article by Lauren Delaney and Gráinne Donlan

Environment Ireland Conference

On 9th October 2025, Graduate Environmental Scientists Gráinne Donlan and Lauren Delaney attended the Environment Ireland Conference, organised by Environment Ireland, in Croke Park, Dublin. The conference brought together over 200 industry professionals from the environmental policy, sustainability, biodiversity and climate action sectors for a day of open discussion on the future of Ireland's environment.

The day began with an address by the Minister of State for the Marine Timmy Dooley TD, who discussed what Ireland's near future will look like in terms of marine conservation and offshore energy generation. He was joined by experts in international water policy development: Veronica Manfredi of the European Commission, Julie Thompson of Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, and Professor Robbie McDonald of the UK Office for Environmental Protection.

The conference featured a wide range of parallel sessions highlighting the most pressing environmental issues facing Ireland today, including sustainability, climate, circular economy, resource management, biodiversity, water and planning. The biodiversity session, for example, explored the alarming decline of insects in recent years, with changing land use and intensive agricultural practices identified as the main drivers of biodiversity loss.

The importance of teaching children to appreciate nature, so they can play a role in nature conservation, was emphasised by Maura Brennan of the Acorn Project and Mark Nolan of Biodiversity in Schools. According to Mark, studies have found that children aged 8-18 in the United States spend between four and nine hours per day on screens and an average of only four to seven minutes per day outdoors, excluding commutes and sports - figures that should shock us all.

The speakers at the parallel session on water quality emphasised its overall decline in recent years, highlighting that, despite a significant decrease in severe pollution events in Ireland compared to 30 years ago, there has been a rise in moderate pollution events. This means we are inhibiting freshwater ecosystems nationwide, rather than causing localised damage, which is causing us to lose freshwater species at a faster rate than saltwater and terrestrial species.

Seventy-five per cent of Ireland's river networks are classed as small streams, which are particularly vulnerable to pollution. The acid-neutralising capacity of these streams is reducing, resulting in poor oxygen levels and impacting on freshwater populations. To combat this, An Fóram Uisce, the statutory body concerned with water quality, is carrying out research to advance thinking and policy development related to water quality, water services and the management of water resources. Meanwhile, Uisce Éireann has developed its Water Services Strategic Plan 2050 to guide its long-term strategy, with its key objective to meet the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive by working collaboratively with stakeholders.

The life of an Environmental Graduate at ROD

Article by Emeline Lafortune

Aldabra giant tortoise on a beach in the Seychelles

I was born in the Seychelles - an island nation where the environment shapes national identity and daily life. Growing up, I was surrounded by outstanding natural beauty and biodiversity, and inevitably developed a deep interest in environmental protection. When I understood that human development often comes at an environmental cost, I decided to make sustainability my focus, pursuing a BSc in Environmental Science and Sustainability at Keele University in the UK, followed by a MSc in Environmental Policy at University College Dublin.

I joined ROD as a graduate environmental scientist in May 2023, a role that involved preparing and coordinating environmental appraisal documents for infrastructure projects across Ireland. Over the past two years, I have contributed to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening and Scoping Reports; Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs); Options Selection Reports; Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs); and SEA monitoring reports. In addition to developing my skills in GIS work, I participated in site surveys for Fáilte Ireland's National Tourism and Environmental Monitoring Programme 2023, which brought me to several stunning locations, including Keem Bay on Achill Island and Malin Head on the Inishowen Peninsula.

Since joining ROD, I have been involved in a wide variety of projects, including the Dingle Peninsula Visitor Experience Development Plan, the Ancient Destination and Experience Development Plan, the N26 Ballina Bypass Phase 1 and the Dundalk Bay to Carlingford Greenway. Recently, I have taken on more project management responsibility, acting as the primary point of contact for our sub-consultants on the N58 Foxford Transport Project and collaborating closely with the project engineers.

Entering a new work environment, especially in a field so deeply rooted in European environmental law and Irish engineering guidance, was daunting at first. However, the mentorship at ROD has been a defining part of my graduate experience. The senior members of ROD's environmental team are generous with their time, sharing not just technical knowledge but also practical advice and encouragement. Cross-disciplinary collaboration with environmental scientists, planners, ecologists and engineers has also deepened my understanding of the full project lifecycle.

Continuing professional development is actively encouraged at ROD, and over the past two years, I have participated in training courses and attended online webinars and presentations delivered by the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP), formerly known as IEMA; the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM); and Europengineers. I have also attended the Environment Ireland Conference and the Women in STEM Summit. These learning opportunities have helped me to grow my network, reconnect with former classmates and professors, and stay informed on evolving practices and policies.

Reflecting on the past two years, what stands out most for me is how much I have been able to grow, not just as an environmental scientist, but as a professional in the field of environmental and engineering consultancy. I have developed a stronger sense of where I can make an impact, and I feel motivated to keep learning, contributing and exploring new directions within the field. At ROD, I have found a place where my passion for sustainability aligns with meaningful work, and that's something for which I am incredibly grateful.

Emeline Lafortune and Claire Cable of ROD

ROD engages with the Register of Ground Engineering Professionals

Article by Paul Kissane

Aerial Shot of the A6 The Creagh

Over the past two years, ROD Associate Paul Kissane has been acting as committee liaison between the Engineers Ireland Geotechnical Society (GSoI) and the Register of Ground Engineering Professionals (RoGEP), whose member organisations also include the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the Geological Society of London (GeolSoc), the Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining (IOM3) and the Institute of Geologists of Ireland (IGI). This gives Engineers Ireland members access to a specialist register of geotechnical professionals, specialists and advisers across the UK and Ireland. Engineers Ireland's access to RoGEP was made possible by retired ROD Technical Director Fintan Buggy during his tenure as chair of GSoI.

There have been dramatic changes in the landscape of engineering standards in the UK and Ireland over the past five years; changes that are influencing the field of geotechnical works and increasing the importance of engineering competence as part of designs. This competence is indicated by inclusion on the RoGEP. The application process for inclusion on the register requires that Professional-level members be chartered and have adequate technical knowledge and experience to implement appropriate techniques on projects. For the higher grades of Specialist and Adviser, candidates need to also demonstrate the ability to manage and/or take responsibility for geotechnical designs and risks. Geotechnical risks can be subjective or complex depending on the ground conditions, the works proposed, and the sources and types of information available.

The RoGEP committee has representatives from a wide range of industries, including contractors, design consultants and client bodies, covering general transportation (highways/rail), geotechnical specialist, engineering geology, piling, dams and mining. The scale of this infrastructure is generally a lot larger in the UK, which also has geographical variables including areas of abandoned coal works, chalk bedrock or expansive soils, for example, which are less prevalent in Ireland. There are also more reservoirs, railways and underground tunnels, and urban developments frequently include deeper basements.

While the overall number of RoGEP members is approximately 1,300, the Irish contingent represents about 50 people, demonstrating how niche this part of the industry is in Ireland, and how valuable links with larger organisations in other jurisdictions are. Some of the experience gained by Irish engineers and construction companies active in the UK also influences new approaches to standards, specifications and works for investigations, earthworks and foundation designs adapted for use in Ireland. Examples of this include the Engineers Ireland Specification for Ground Investigations, 2nd Edition, which is currently under review by GSoI following revisions made to the UK 3rd Edition published in 2022.

New Recruits

Rachel Whent

Rachel joined ROD as a graduate engineer in October. She recently completed a ME in Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering at University College Dublin (UCD), during which she completed an eight-month internship with Arup. Now working with our water group, Rachel is looking forward to contributing to projects and developing her skills. In her spare time, she loves swimming, surfing and hiking.

Brónagh Barnes

Brónagh joined our team as a graduate ecologist in June and is based in our Cork office. She is a graduate of University College Cork (UCC), where she earned a BSc in Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences in 2025. Brónagh spent two summers working as a warden at a Little Tern colony in Louth, her home county. In her spare time, she enjoys playing traditional music, baking and spending time with family.

Cian Ó Cathasaigh

Cian joined ROD as a graduate engineer in September. He is working with our research and innovation group and gaining experience in programming and data manipulation. During his time as a student on the ME in Engineering with Business at UCD, he undertook a student placement at ROD, working on a diverse range of projects, including the Humber Bridge and the enhancing Motorway Operation Services (eMOS) Programme. In his free time, Cian enjoys watching and playing all sports, particularly GAA.

Gráinne Donlon

Gráinne joined ROD as a graduate environmental scientist in July. She is a graduate of Dublin City University (DCU), where she earned a BSc in Environmental Science and Technology in 2023. Prior to joining ROD, Gráinne spent a year working in the environmental health & safety sector. She loves hiking, painting and anything to do with the sea, including paddleboarding, swimming and surfing.

Matilda Monthe

Matilda joined ROD as an assistant accountant in September. Originally from Botswana, she relocated to Ireland at the age of 17 to pursue her studies and later graduated with an honours degree in business. Since then, she has been building her career in the accounting sector while continuing her professional development. Matilda enjoys cooking, playing video games (Fortnite) and travelling.

Jack Houze

Jack joined on our transportation team as a transport planner in June. Prior to joining ROD, he spent two years working as a transport modeller in London. Jack holds an MSc in Geospatial Data Analysis from UCD and a BA in Geography from UCC. Originally from Tipperary, he has a keen interest in local history and enjoys reading, cooking and playing the guitar and banjo.

Lauren Delaney

Lauren joined our team as a graduate environmental scientist in June and is based in our Sandyford office. After graduating with a BSc in Environmental Science from the University of Limerick, she completed a PgDip in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing at UCC. Lauren is happiest when outdoors and enjoys hiking, windsurfing and falling off horses.

Costanza Mariotti

Costanza undertook an eight-month student placement at ROD in 2024 and is back with us again, this time as a graduate engineer with our transportation team. Costanza was born and raised in the Italian Alps, completed her high school education in Australia, and then returned to Europe for her third-level studies. She earned a BSc in Civil Engineering at HZ University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands and an ME in Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering at UCD. Costanza is a passionate CrossFit athlete and coach at Setanta CrossFit in Dublin, and in her spare time, she loves exploring new places.

Raymond Byrne

Raymond joined our buildings group as a design engineer in June. He spent the past four years living and working in Vancouver, British Columbia, before returning to Dublin in May 2025. Raymond has been working as a structural engineer since 2018 and has been involved in numerous small and large-scale restoration and new build projects in Ireland and Canada. In his free time, he enjoys snowboarding, surfing, rock climbing and motorcycles.

Úna Cotter

Úna joined our transportation group as a graduate engineer in September after graduating with a MAI in Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering from Trinity College Dublin. No introductions were required on her first day, as she had previously completed two students placements at ROD, one in June 2023 and the other in January 2024. Úna keeps herself busy with numerous crafts and competes in women's and mixed Ultimate Frisbee tournaments with her Dublin-based teams, Flame and Jabba the Huck.

Patrick Ryan

Patrick joined our bridges group as a graduate engineer in October, having previously completed a student placement with us as part of an ME in Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering he was undertaking at UCD. During his student placement, he contributed to a variety of projects, including Tay Lane Bridge, Adare Bypass and Leixlip Road Wall. Patrick is a keen footballer and enjoys running, playing traditional music and making piña coladas.

Natalie Adams

Natalie joined ROD as an office administrator in September and is based in our Otley office in Leeds. In addition to being an experienced administrator, Natalie has also worked as a customer services executive for a confectionary company. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, calligraphy and various other crafts.

Anthony O'Connor

Anthony O'Connor joined ROD as an assistant resident engineer on the Waterford City Public Infrastructure Project in September. He is already familiar with the scheme, having worked on the project site for us last year as part of a student placement. Originally from Waterford, Anthony is enjoying watching the city growing and changing in real time. He holds an ME in Engineering with Business and a BSC in Civil Engineering from UCD. In his spare time, Anthony enjoys playing GAA, soccer and long walks on the beach.

Alessandro Tasselli

Alessandro first came across ROD while undertaking an MEng in Civil Engineering at the University of Leeds (UoL). During his term as president of the Civil Engineering Society, he and his structural dynamics professor were trying to secure greater industry involvement. It was through this that he first encountered ROD, who offered` mentorships and site visits to students. Impressed by the company's eagerness to support the next generation of engineers, Alessandro joined ROD's graduate programme in October. In his free time, he enjoys reading, weightlifting and evening rides on my motorcycle.

Cian Ivory

Cian joined our transportation team as a trainee technician in September, after completing the Leaving Certificate exam in June. In addition to working at ROD, Cian is studying part-time for a BE degree at TU Dublin. He is enjoying learning from the more experienced technicians in our Sandyford office, and in his spare time, he loves the going to the gym and boxing.

Cian Egan

After completing the Leaving Certificate exam in June, Cian joined ROD as a trainee technician with our bridges team. He is looking forward to gaining industry knowledge at ROD while undertaking a part-time BE degree at TU Dublin. When he is not working or studying, Cian enjoys travel, going to the gym and spending time with family and friends.

ROD's CPD Accredited Employer status extended to 2028

ROD's status as an Engineers Ireland Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Accredited Employer has been extended for the maximum reaccreditation period of three years.

The Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer standard is a national CPD accreditation best-practice framework designed to improve the competence levels of engineers and technical staff and deliver tangible benefits to organisations that commit to best practices in their choice of learning and development initiatives.

Speaking at the parchment presentation at our headquarters in Sandyford this week, Engineers Ireland CPD Associate Director, Aidan O'Flaherty, said:

"Congratulations to Roughan and O'Donovan Consulting Engineers on once again receiving the maximum three-year accreditation following its recent CPD Audit by Engineers Ireland. At the audit, the audit panel were impressed by the robust and comprehensive CPD structures, practices and initiatives in place, but even more so by how engineers and technicians felt they had a strong say in their professional development with strong support from management to learn and grow." "Roughan and O'Donovan clearly delivers when it comes to CPD best practice for its staff," he added.

In the last 12 months, our team has grown to over 250, we have relocated our headquarters to a larger, more sustainable office in Sandyford, and we have opened a new office in Cork. Against this background of expansion and development, investment in the continued development of our CPD strategy has become more important than ever before.

5 minutes with Madalin Bunda

As a high-school student in Romania, a career in civil engineering was not part of my plan for the future. My intention was to study electrical engineering in university and become a telecoms engineer. Fate intervened, however, when - as a contingency - I took the entrance exam for the Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest (UTCB) and received an offer of a place on its five-year undergraduate programme. With no guarantee of receiving another offer, I accepted my place and haven't look back since.

The civil engineering programme was challenging. In the first three years, I studied highways, railways, structures and geotechnics amongst other subjects, and in my last two years, I specialised in bridges. During my final year, my dissertation supervisor told me about a job opportunity in Lisbon with a company looking to set up an office in Romania. The role involved learning how the business in Lisbon operated and using that knowledge to develop the business in Romania. I was offered the position and moved to Lisbon in 2008, excited by the opportunity to live in a new country and to grow as a person and as a professional. It was a wonderful experience, not least because I met my now wife while taking evening classes in Portuguese at a local school. When I returned to Romania in 2009, the company got into financial difficulty, unfortunately, and I found a new job with a local, growing company, Irimat - a consultancy specialising in the delivery of complex infrastructure projects, such as the 148km national road 67C, known as the "King's Road," located in the Parang Mountains, with the highest point of the road situated at 2,145m above sea level.

In 2016, I felt the need to expand my horizons once again and moved with my family to the UK. I got a job with Jacobs in Leeds and spent the next three and a half years working on their smart motorway projects. In 2018, I became chartered with the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE).

In 2020, I joined ROD's team in Otley, drawn by the idea of being part of an established company expanding into a new market. I was impressed by the scale and diversity of ROD's projects in Ireland and felt that ROD's then UK Director, Jim Thorpe, would be a great mentor for me. My first project was the N61 Ballymurray to Knockcroghery project in Co. Roscommon, where I contributed to the design of an upgrade to a 15km section of the N61 National Secondary Route. I subsequently joined the project team on the N60 Breaffy Active Travel and Safety Measures Scheme, which ROD has taken from Phase 2 (options) through to Phase 5 (detailed design). As the Project Engineer on the scheme, I initially reported to Jim as the Project Director, but I gradually took on more responsibility, and in addition to working on the design, I began looking after the project financials and communications with external parties. The project has been an excellent learning opportunity for me, and I am looking forward to seeing the scheme go to site in the coming months.

At present, I am primarily working on active travel schemes involving reconfiguring town and village centres to facilitate new cycle provisions, retrofitting of footpaths, bus stops, parking areas, and controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossings. While Ireland is a step ahead of the UK in terms of active travel, I notice it featuring more prominently in the UK frameworks currently coming to market - driven, in part, by efforts to meet our carbon emission reduction targets. I am currently working as the project engineer on the N5 Active Travel Scheme, which has been divided into four distinct schemes, the most interesting of which is the Tulsk to Rathcroghan Project in Co. Roscommon. It will provide a cycling/walking link from Tulsk village to the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex, a candidate UNESCO World Heritage Site boasting over one hundred recorded monuments.

Closer to home, I am engaged on the Williams Bridge Project in Wales. It aims to replace the existing bridge, which will need to be dismantled and rebuilt as a lifting bridge, to enable navigation to resume along the section of the Montgomery Canal between Llanymynech and Arddleen – with benefits for both people and nature.

I am impressed by the professionalism of staff in ROD and I also appreciate how friendly and approachable everyone is when socialising at company events. It is great to see how relaxed the junior members of the team are when chatting to their senior managers; it is so different to my experience as a young engineer in Romania all those years ago.

Gallery

1. **2025 Excellence in Road Safety Awards**
Pictured receiving the Technology Category Award for the eMOS Data Fusion Pilot Project are (L-R): Gabriel Jacobson and Olga Gonzalez of Valerann, Andrew O'Sullivan of TII and Robert Corbally of ROD. Photo credit: European Road Safety Charter.

2. ROD UK Leeds City Council "Green Team Away Day,"
Featured coppicing and wreath making near Roundhay Park, are (L-R): Michael Chung, Madalin Bunda, Suzie Golding-Lynch, Bailey Thoresby, Alessandro Tasselli and Natalie Adams.

3 UCD Engineering Graduates Association
ROD Director Aonghus O'Keeffe pictured presenting the Roughan & O'Donovan Prize for the best final year civil engineering thesis to Sarah Nasr at the UCD Engineering Graduates Association Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, 5 November 2025. Image courtesy of UCD Alumni.

4. CIHT Yorkshire & Humber Annual Dinner and Awards 2025
Pictured at the CIHT Yorkshire & the Humber Annual Dinner and Awards 2025 are (L-R): Michael Chung, Aonghus O'Keeffe, Suzie Golding-Lynch, John Paul Rooney and Rob McCartney.

5. Pizza & Paint Social Committee Event:
Pictured at ROD's first ever "Pizza & Paint" night in the Sandyford office canteen is Katie McLoughlin, who together with Fatima Quadri brought almost twenty staff through a live tutorial of a Bob-Ross-inspired landscape in acrylic on canvas.

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