

**CIPD Ireland Annual General Meeting  
Online 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

<b>In attendance 49 members including</b>	
Niamh McNamara (Chair)	Mary Connaughton
Joyce Rigby Jones	Meg Lynch
Josephine Butler	Jacinta O'Rourke
John Kennedy	Lindy Mooney
Orla Maher (Incoming Chair)	Ciara Compton (Hon Secretary)

**Agenda**

- **Welcome by the Chairperson**
- **Approval of the Minutes of the previous annual meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023**
- **Chairpersons Address**
- **Election of Officers**
- **AOB**
- **Close**
- **Smurfit Westrock Case Study**

**1. Welcome by the Chairperson**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **2. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes from the previous annual meeting, dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023, were issued earlier to members for review. The minutes were proposed by Josephine Butler and seconded by Joyce Rigby-Jones.

## **3. Chairpersons Address**

The Chair provided a brief report of the CIPD's activity and influence in Ireland for the period from 1 July 2023 until 30 June 2024. CIPD aim to continuously build an influential community of experts on people, work and change – united by a common goal to make work better, led by the highest standards of professionalism and supported by a professional body that provides world-class learning, resources and a sense of community.

This past year amplified the challenges facing the people profession. Our agenda has been dominated by acquiring the right resources and transforming ways of working to deliver the business strategy. The impact of generative artificial intelligence, the need to invest in workforce capability and the drive to address sustainability have moved centre stage. While the economy and labour market continue to grow, the accommodation and housing crises are having an impact on the workforce.

This environment has helped to keep the people profession centre stage both in decision-making and leading change, as well as in people operations, with a focus on creating a culture that is fit for the future, accounting for more diverse workforces and more agile ways of working. CIPD know from their research that the people function made a valued, strategic contribution to organisations and has instilled practices that are clearly linked to business outcomes.

As CIPD continue to promote the vision of Championing better work and working lives, the National Committee has worked with its Director Mary Connaughton and the CIPD team in Ireland to develop the membership, engagement and services for CIPD members in Ireland, and on growing our voice and influence.

**Valuing membership**

During 2023/24 CIPD Ireland focussed much of its activity on keeping the profession up to date with good practice and ongoing developments. They developed resources and put more emphasis on expressing the value of membership. The team delivered a range of online and face to face events, with organisations like Salesforce, Kerry Group and ESB kindly hosting events. The many excellent webinars included showcasing our award-winning entries, hybrid working, building skills. A number of face-to-face events brought members up to speed on employment law developments, also addressing topics such as digital transformation and talent management. An amazing 4,000 delegates registered for CIPD Ireland events throughout the year, both online and in person.

The Regional Series continued, with each region bringing members relevant current content on the changing landscape. This included leading change, AI transformation, biometrics, sustainable wellbeing, flexible and hybrid working, legal developments, talent management, and through these achieved a great reach right across the country. I would like to thank the members of all the CIPD Regional voluntary committees who designed and delivered these regional events and provide important ongoing development for members.

A number of online forums for shared learning also took place to discuss emerging issues and potential solutions and contribute to our policy agenda. CIPD plans to grow engagement through HR forums in the year ahead and the invitation is open to members to express interest.

### **Building professionalism**

With the growth in recognition on the contribution of the people profession, there is a lot of interest in HR as a career. The team continued to engage with the 17 educational centres and students on the programmes accredited by CIPD.

The growing interest in the profession was reflected in the growth in student numbers in the year (EOY: 946 students) CIPD increased the number of touchpoints and engagement with the students as well as regular communications with the tutors/lecturers. In general communication campaigns (via newsletters, new membership update and social media) were enhanced to grow awareness around membership benefits and value. All students are now given free access to our excellent global student conference, a great learning opportunity.

### **Member benefits**

During the year, promoting the added value of CIPD membership saw growing use of the CIPD's new Learning Hub, which has many excellent free self-managed programmes for members.

CIPD began working more closely with different people teams across a variety of organisations to better support their professionalisation agenda, bringing recognition and credibility to their work. They announced a partnership with the Irish civil service to benchmark their HR practices and build a professional standards framework for HR capability with them. This work is going well and will continue into 2024/25.

CIPD Ireland finished the year with 5378 members, very much in line with last year, and have targets to grow that in the current year.

### **HR Awards to recognise excellence in HR**

CIPD were delighted to again hold the ANNUAL CIPD HR Awards to recognise excellence in HR across our membership and profession. The CIPD Ireland Awards ceremony held in February, was the culmination of a robust peer review judging process. They were pleased to see the variety of organisations and initiatives, and the judges commented on the increasingly high standard of entries, and winners. As a profession we are demonstrating much more comfort with reporting analytics and impact, and positively influencing business outcomes. For the first time, there was awards for Digital leadership and Excellence in HR consulting / strategic partnerships. On the day, under the magic of Katherine Thomas, there was great excitement at the booked-out ceremony in the Mansion House, now attracting many business leaders along with their HR teams. There was a great atmosphere, lots of learning and networking.

I am very proud of the distinctiveness that these awards create amongst the HR community in Ireland and CIPD Ireland are the credible established leader of quality and excellence in a HR awards market which has become saturated by commercially driven alternatives.

The entries for the 2025 Awards are now open.

### **Annual Conference**

A highlight of the year was the annual conference in May in the RDS, one of the biggest in recent years. It brought together so many thought leading perspectives on Leading positive change.

Bringing together over 500 attendees, 55+ speakers, 30+ exhibitors it received very positive feedback. The conference provided valuable insights into the future of work, emphasising the importance of AI, sustainability, leadership, culture, talent management and equality. The conference underscored the critical role of HR in driving positive change and ensuring organisational resilience and adaptability. Coming together as a profession was exciting, building a shared learning community and supporting each other. Thank you to our speakers and sponsors for their contribution in making the conference a resounding success.

The next Annual Conference is 15 May 2025.

### **Sustainable HRM Skillnet**

2024 is our second year of funding for a **Sustainable HRM Skillnet** to develop capability and frameworks on how manage the workforce in more sustainable ways. While protecting the environment has to percolate all we do, as a profession we don't drive the organisation strategy on this, but we do need to own how we create a sustainable workforce, ensure they are more employable and net better off from working in our organisations. We heard you needed to know what levers to pull, how to support people, and how to measure (report) progress. And thanks to Skillnet funding and our Skillnet network members, there were a series of workshops with experts and case studies to upskill HR on the 'S' in ESG, and the publication of the Sustainable People Practices framework at the annual conference was a significant contribution to the profession.

### **Seminars**

In the past year CIPD also responded to the attention required on compliance and wellbeing through two significant one-day seminars. The seminar on Employment Law addressed the wide array of employment law changes from both the legal and practitioner perspectives. With a raft of new changes, there was lots of discussion on flexible and remote working, gender pay, independent contracting, and implications of AI. Our Wellbeing seminar brought together thought leadership on wellbeing along with case studies, how to design work and jobs that enhance wellbeing, the need to address psychosocial risks, integrating wellbeing through the employee lifecycle and effective tools to engage leaders and embed a culture of wellbeing.

## Raising our profile

Though the year, CIPD in Ireland continued to deliver leading benchmarking research about and for the profession. The **HR Practices in Ireland** survey in conjunction with University of Limerick confirmed a significant step up in Irish workplaces with talent top of the agenda. With a shortage of skilled workers, talent management and leadership development were increasing challenges. We identified concerns around absenteeism and mental health linked to volume of work and work pressure. Addressing these issues has to be core of where we put our attention as a profession.

The **Pay and employment practices** survey in conjunction with IRN highlighted how employers were addressing reward issues, what was happening around benefits, and indicated a greater capacity to pay increases than anticipated. It included interesting trends the benchmarks the development of employee policies across the employee lifecycle.

We appreciate everyone's participation in our surveys, as that support gives us valuable information, which we can then share with you, and use to influence policy makers. The reports are all on our website.

## Technology and AI

Generative AI and Chat GPT was not on our agenda 12 months ago, and it is now central to so many conversations. We have to think about the implications for the people profession, what is our role, how do we ensure people-centric decisions around its use, the job and skills implications, and how we ensure transparency and compliance. During the year we explored this through our events, resources and shared our views at policy forums.

## Public policy and voice

We have continued to build dialogue with government departments and agencies. During the year CIPD Ireland publicised our research findings and contributed to discussions on flexible and hybrid working, AI and impact on jobs and workplaces, upskilling and gender pay reporting.

Throughout the year, CIPD Ireland achieved a lot of high profile media work with CIPD

commentary on radio, television, newspapers and online. We try to get our voice out there on your behalf, and provide education on our point of view. Key topics addressed included skill shortages, gender pay gap reporting, hybrid working, equality and inclusion, resourcing and the future world of work.

The CIPD Ireland team further raised our profile through expert contributions to a number of external conferences and public sector forums.

Our social media has been proactively managed by team and has delivered increasing levels of engagement throughout the year. We welcome your ongoing support and engagement with us on social media

### **Governance**

The CIPD Ireland CLG has now been in existence for 3 years. Alison Hodgson remains Chair of the Board. Joyce Rigby Jones and Angela Attah, CIPD company secretary are the other Board members.

### **The National Committee**

The National Committee, which includes all the Regional Chairs, met five times over the year to progress the CIPD agenda in Ireland. The Chair extended thanks to the National Committee who supported her and the CIPD team over the last year. In addition, the Chair thanked Mary Connaughton and the team for their leadership as the CIPD continues to go from strength to be the trusted voice of the profession at a national level.

## **4. Election of Officers**

The committee comprises 13 members - including Chairs of the 6 Regional committees, who are nominated locally. These are Anne Phelan (South East); Charlie Dineen (South), Lavina Duggan (Midwest), Noreen Joyce (West), Ciara Compton (North west) and Emma Woods (Midlands). I'd like to thank them for their contribution to the National committee and their strong commitment to supporting the development of members locally. Thanks too to Caroline Holohan, Lisa Mulvihill and John Gerety who have stepped down as regional chairs for their support and insights over the past year.

I'd also like to thank our student representatives Ijeoma Nkwonta who provides the student voice into our deliberations.

This year we have no one retiring from the National Committee, so we just have some change of roles to formalise.

Orla Maher from ESB, who took on the role of Vice Chair during the year, will now move into the role of Committee Chair. Niamh Mc Namara will move into the role of Vice Chair. The election of Officers was proposed by Josephine Butler and seconded by John Kennedy.

The second recommendation to this meeting is to re-appoint John Kennedy, Alison Hodgson, Joyce Rigby Jones and Derek McKay as ordinary members. The re-appointment of Officers was proposed by Rachel Nolan and seconded by Joyce Rigby Jones

Rachel Nolan and Katherine Whyte were appointed National Committee members last year for a two-year period so remain in place.

The Chair announced that the National Committee agreed to reconstitute a Regional Committee for the Eastern Regional – Dublin and surrounding counties and stretches to Cavan and Monaghan. John Kennedy has kindly offered to Chair this committee. We have several nominations, but anyone still interested can get in touch with one of the team. This group will meet shortly to plan its ways of working

## **5. AOB**

Meg Lynch presented the CIPD priorities for 2024/2024 and program of events for 2024/2025.

Mary Connaughton closed the meeting by thanking the CIPD team, the National Committee and the Regional Committees for their support during the year. She thanked Smurfit Westrock for their presentation of their case study noting they were worthy winners of the CIPD Learning and Development award during the year. She thanked all the speakers and said she looked forward to meeting everyone at future events.

**Meeting Closed**

**Attendees:**

Jacinta O'Rourke  
Lindy Mooney  
Ana Barbosa  
Meg Dunphy  
Niamh McNamara  
Mary Connaughton  
Elaine Hayes  
Adriana Berges Munoz de Alba  
Deirdre Cregan  
Ciara Compton  
Maher. Orla (People and Sustainability)  
Lisa Hogan  
Karen Roberts  
Sherrell  
Brian McGann  
BUTLER Josephine  
Catherine Bannon  
Aakarshna Keshri  
Susan Nicholson  
Leslie Akers  
Sheryl A.  
Conor Dunne  
Joanne Payne  
Rukaiyat Adebola Adetunji  
Celine Maguire  
Kelly Looker  
Rachel Nolan  
John Kennedy  
Tierney, Deirdre  
Sharon Conlon  
Daragh O'Mahony | National Broadband Ireland  
Grace Walsh  
Noreen Joyce  
Bridie Killoran  
McGoldrick, Lisa  
Paul Peake (Defence)  
Jamie Maher  
Ann-Marie Hughes  
Andrew Cameron  
Joyce Rigby-Jones  
David Keane  
Slattery, Alexandra

Abeo Mohammed-Tunde  
Fitzgerald, Kieran  
Rachel Doherty  
Maeve Devery  
Radina Walsh  
Nia Coogan  
Jacinta Gray  
Marion Courtney  
Shriya Agarwal  
Sharon Conlon  
Luisa Hernandez  
Martin, Breda  
Andrea Harvey