

### Auctioneers report 9% fall in house values for Q1 2009

A member survey by the Irish Auctioneers & Valuers Institute (IAVI) has confirmed that value of residential property has dropped by an average of 8.7% nationwide in the first three months of the year.

Conducted amongst IAVI members nationwide, this survey shows that the values of residential property in Dublin declined by an average of 5.6%. In Munster, values dropped sharply by an average of 12%. Meanwhile, in Leinster and Connaught/ Donegal, values decreased on average 8.5% and 7.5% respectively.

According to Simon Ensor from the Residential Panel of the IAVI National Council, "These results are based on the experience of our members on the ground and are consistent with the findings of our 2008 annual survey.

"It is true that the speed of the depreciation has taken some of our members by surprise, but anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a strong belief that prices have reached, or are very close to the bottom. If there is further depreciation, it is likely to result in an over-correction, which would quickly cause prices to rebound to current values.

"With interest rates down to lowest levels combined with significant falls in house prices, a level of affordability has come back into the market that has not been experienced since the mid-1990's.

As a result, it could be an opportune time to avail of the exceptional value currently available," he said.



To review the survey statistics see page five



Edward Carey, hands over the chain of office to new IAVI President, Aine Myler

### Annual General Meeting

The AGM took place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April and was well attended.

During the meeting Aine Myler was inaugurated as President for 2009/10.

Aine's Presidential Address has been circulated with the National Council Newsletter and will be included in the summer issue of The Property Valuer.

### Revenue Commissioners, Letting and Managing Agents and Data Protection Act *Important Response from Data Protection Commissioner's Office*

In response to a written query of February 17<sup>th</sup> last from the IAVI, the office of the Data Protection Commissioners, on April 27<sup>th</sup>, has confirmed that where the normal return of information by agents to Revenue in respect of landlords under Section 888(2)(d) of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1967 combined with Section 894 of that Act, has not been made in respect of certain properties known to have been let or managed by the agents acting on behalf of a non-resident landlord, it is reasonable for Revenue to approach those agents seeking such information in respect of their clients.

However, regarding Revenue's request for the PPSN numbers of agents' clients, the Data Protection Commissioners response states:

"While the Office of the Revenue Commissioners is entitled to process the PPSN, any conferring of the responsibility to collect PPSN details onto private sector entities requires a specific basis which has not been confirmed to this Office. Currently agents would not be expected to be holding and storing the PPSN of clients other than where the agent is duly appointed or deemed to be so designated further to Section 1034 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. While all landlords are required to register with the PRTB and must provide their PPSN in conjunction with that registration (which the agents may be handling on their behalf), this would not permit the

agent to store that information within their files as to do so it would have to be a designated body under the relevant Social Welfare legislation.

The only exception to this that this Office can identify is where the agent is appointed, as I have outlined above, to make a tax return on behalf of a non-resident landlord. Accordingly, we will be advising the Revenue Commissioners that broad requests for the PPSN of all landlords from agents in this context requires a specific legislative basis to, in turn, allow agents to request this data in the first place. This Office would be concerned if agents, in the absence of such a basis, were currently in a position to supply Revenue with such data other than in the narrow circumstances related to non-resident landlords.

We have taken this opportunity to remind the Office of the Revenue Commissioners that data controllers need to be satisfied that they only release personal data to third parties in compliance with the Data Protection Acts. It is prudent for organisations therefore, to request a specific legal basis from any public sector body which approaches it for personal information.

We have been advised by Revenue that it was an oversight on their part not to reference the specific basis for this particular request and they have undertaken to ensure that this will not happen again".

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## Bond & Licence Renewals for 2009/10

### REMINDER!

As the legislation to empower the Property Services Regulatory Authority has not yet been enacted members are advised that renewal of Auctioneers' Licenses this year will be through application to the District Court as heretofore.

If you have not already done so, unless you are using the IAVI collective scheme (available only to participating IAVI Member Firms in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway), and have initiated the renewal process you must contact your Solicitor immediately to commence the renewal procedure. Likewise, you must contact your Insurance Company to renew your Bond.

### GOLF OUTING

An IAVI Golf Outing 2009 took place on 24<sup>th</sup> April at Mount Juliet Golf Club, Co. Kilkenny.

It was organised by Daphne Kaye & Ken MacDonald. Although the weather was somewhat inclement the 24 participants who travelled from all parts of the country enjoyed it immensely. The golf was preceded by lunch in the clubhouse and followed by dinner & prizegiving.

The course was in magnificent condition. The prizes were sponsored by the Irish Independent whose representative Paul Muldoon participated in the golf.



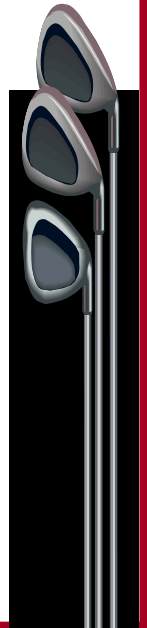
Pictured left to right are Paddy Jordan, Daphne Kaye and Ken McDonald

The outright winner was Paddy Jordan, followed by Sean Donnellan, Philip Guckian, Liam Hargaden, Andrew Cremin, Brian Farrell, John Younge and Peter Wyse.

The leading ladies player was Maeve Cantwell.

Nearest the Pin was Brian Farrell and the Longest Drive was by Philip Guckian.

It is hoped that this rejuvenated event on the IAVI calendar will be played annually and certainly the facilities and course at Mount Juliet have set a high standard to follow.



### HOW TO CUT COSTS – MEMBERS' TIPS

#### We asked members for their ideas on cost saving in these belt-tightening times.

Three members responded with their ideas which we reproduce below. If any other members have ideas that they would like to share with fellow members please email [valerie@iavi.ie](mailto:valerie@iavi.ie)

#### Tom Kane, McNally Handy, Dublin

Some cost saving measures - tried and tested.

- Reduce contract cleaning to three days per week rather than the normal five.
- Ensure timers on heating system are working and take 30 minutes off each end of the working day.
- Ensure heating system is off at weekends, but bring system on 30 minutes earlier on Monday morning to reheat building.
- If you are an O2 customer, use the free O2 to O2 free mobile calls offer.
- Make full use of 30 day credit on all invoices.
- Seek a rent rebate/credit of three months from landlord if premises leased.
- Change from ESB to Airtricity or Bord Gais for cheaper electricity.

#### Patrick O'Farrell, O'Farrell Auctioneers, Carlow

As my background is IT and particularly telecoms I have investigated and implemented some cost saving telecom systems.

It is necessary to have decent broadband services but that is probably in place in most offices now and these measures are more suited to smaller organisations.

Fax services: we maintain a separate phone line purely for the fax machine, as most fax based communication has migrated to

email, retaining a specific line for fax was becoming expensive (line rental c. €25 per month). To get around this we signed up for Blueface fax-to-email service and had the phone line ported to their service. When someone now dials our old fax number, Blueface answers the call and converts the fax to an email which is then sent to our office. This costs €5 per month (or €49 per annum if paid in advance), significantly cheaper than the old phone line rental (€25 x 12 months).

Outgoing phone calls: I purchased a VOIP (voice over broadband) phone (cost €240 but there are cheaper ones) and now make all local and national calls via this phone using our broadband line. Call costs are significantly cheaper, about one third of eircom rates for local and national and only about 2c per minute for international to most countries.

So far it's been successful and works perfectly— [www.blueface.ie](http://www.blueface.ie) has more technical details.

Another cost saving measure is to use online banking to eliminate most cheque payments.

#### Paul Lafferty, James Cleary & Sons, Roscommon

For all internal printing we are using the back (unprinted) sides of old brochures.

They fit in printers and photocopiers for jobs such as copies of forms to go on files, emails that need to be printed out, drafts of documents, taking notes on site for valuations, bank valuation forms etc.

If more than one printer or photocopier in the office, one can be filled with used paper for internal use and one with new paper for external uses.



## PROPERTY BYTES

### CPD Seminars & Courses May - June 2009

**Topic:** **BREAKFAST BRIEFING SESSION.  
Update on the Office, Retail and Industrial  
Markets**

**Date:** Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00am  
**Venue:** IAVI, 38 Merrion Square, Dublin 2  
**Fee:** Free for members. Non-members €20.  
**CPD Hours:** 1½ (Category A)  
**Speakers:** Roland O'Connell FIAVI,ASCS MRICS, Savills  
Laurence Brennan FIAVI,ASCS MRICS, Savills  
Nigel Healy, FIAVI,ASCS MRICS, Jones Lang  
LaSalle

*The following points will be covered:*

#### Office

- Increased supply in all areas
- Falling demand in all areas
- What happens next?

#### Retail

- Continued downward pressure on retail sales
- Vacancies appearing on high streets and in shopping centres
- Resultant pressure on values
- Back to tenant's markets?

#### Industrial

- The Past
- Supply/Demand and adjusting values
- The Outlook

**Topic:** **BREAKFAST BRIEFING SESSION.  
Update on the Residential Market and  
Development Land**

**Date:** Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June at 8.00am  
**Venue:** IAVI, 38 Merrion Square, Dublin 2  
**Fee:** Free of charge to members. Non-members €20.  
**CPD Hours:** 1½ (Category A)

**Speakers:** Simon Ensor, FIAVI, Sherry FitzGerald  
James Meagher, FIAVI, HT Meagher O'Reilly  
Fergus Keogh, Treasury Holdings Ireland

*The following points will be covered:*

#### Residential Market

- Market trends in 2009
- Have we hit the bottom?
- When are we likely to see the return of capital appreciation?

#### Development Land - from a Developer's Perspective

- Market Movements
- Development Decision Making Process
- Future Trends

#### Development Land - from an Agent's Perspective

- Development Land - the ultimate variable!
- Land owners options
- Back to The Future?

**Topic:** **RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS  
A Market Update and Avoiding the Pitfalls**

**Date:** Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June - (Registration at 5.30  
Seminar commences at 6.00pm sharp)  
**Venue:** IAVI, 38 Merrion Square, Dublin 2  
**Fee:** Free of charge to members. Non-members  
€20.  
**CPD Hours:** 1½ (Category A)  
**Speaker:** Fergal Hopkins MIAVI BSc (Hons)

*The following points will be covered:*

- Current Market Update
- Regulatory Authorities and Framework (to cover Residential Tenancies Act and PRTB)
- Potential Pitfalls

To book any of the above seminars please see details and booking form on [www.iavi.ie](http://www.iavi.ie) or email [noel@iavi.ie](mailto:noel@iavi.ie)

## Apply Now for IAVI Courses

Business for many property professionals is very quiet at the present time. It makes good sense for principals and employees to use the quiet period to upgrade their property qualifications. The best way of doing this in a business setting is to do one of the IAVI property programmes.

In partnership with the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), the IAVI run two part-time programmes in property studies.

One is a four year part-time honours degree programme, the IAVI/DIT BSc(Hons) in property studies.

The other is a two year part-time Higher Certificate in property studies. Lectures for both courses are held on fourteen Saturdays from October to May at the DIT Bolton Street. There is also an induction day at the end of September. Students also do project work, work based learning and attend locally arranged tutorial groups.

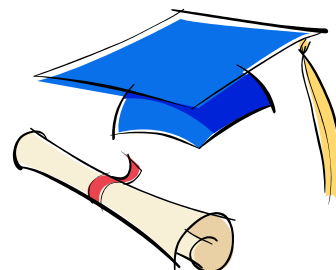
Successful completion of the Higher Certificate course provides the academic requirement for application for associate membership of the IAVI.

Successful completion of the BSc(Hons) course provides the academic requirement for application for Membership of the IAVI. The BSc(Hons) in property studies is also accredited by the Society of Chartered Surveyors.

The annual course fee for both the courses for the current (2008-09) academic year was €2,950 and it is hoped to keep the fee for 2009-10 as close as possible to this level. Income tax relief may be claimed on the fee.

**Applications are now invited for both courses.**

Anyone interested should contact the IAVI education department, in writing at 38, Merrion Square, Dublin 2, by telephone at 01-6611794 or by email at [education@iavi.ie](mailto:education@iavi.ie)



## MARKETING YOUR WEBSITE

A 2004 study by the National Association of Realtors indicated that 74 percent of consumers begin the home buying process online and 75 percent expect their agent to be internet-savvy.

While the need for a user-friendly website is now standard and that the percentage of consumers going online to search for property has increased over the past five years, the business of promoting your website, your 'virtual shop window', both online and offline, has become increasingly important to its success.

A well designed, user friendly and content rich website can be an excellent marketing tool. However, if prospective clients do not know about it or do not have a reason to visit it, its use can be significantly diminished.

There are several methods of promoting your website.

The simplest include promoting its address on your stationery, marketing materials, advertisements and signage.

The old property adage of 'Location, Location, Location', is just as pertinent to the web as it is to a property. Several members are undertaking reviews of their websites with a view to optimizing them for Google, advertising online with pay-per-click programs and actively encouraging prospective clients to visit their websites regularly by publishing local property market reports and sharing other relevant information on email newsletters, blogs and online forums.

The purpose of these 'push marketing' tactics is to drive traffic to their websites, to develop relationships with prospective clients over time, to build their database of contacts and to encourage enquiries.

There are in excess of approximately 80 million websites and a key challenge of any website promoter or advertiser is to cut through the fragmented online media market that currently exists. Many agents advertise properties on the online property portals which are very successful at listing properties on a national level and driving enquiries. However, many property transactions occur at a local level and your website can become a key channel for promoting your local market knowledge, expertise and services to prospective clients.

An email newsletter is a virtual 'flyer' and it can be an inexpensive way of promoting your business and website. This can be a simple email that is sent out regularly to a database of all of your contacts containing some local market news or information and a listing of your 'properties of the week', for example. Email newsletters are an informal way of keeping in contact with people you have done business with in the past and may also serve as a re-introduction to people you have lost regular contact with. Your email newsletter may be forwarded to other people and you can build up a sizable database of contacts as a result to whom you can further promote your services and properties.

If you do not currently track the visitors to your website, Google offers a free Analytics package that will tell you how many visitors you are getting to your site, which pages are the most



popular, how many views certain properties are getting and how long people are staying on your website. This information will give you a strong indication of how well your website is performing and what services people are clicking on (Sales, Lettings, BER etc). Furthermore, you can present your website as a fully functional marketing channel to new clients and keep them informed with information based on your analysis of the website traffic.

Ensuring that your website is well located on the web, via its ranking on search engines such as Google (which has 90% of the Search Market) can be another effective way of driving traffic to your website. There has been a lot of talk about Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) which essentially seeks to improve the number and quality of visitors to your website from search engine results ie. Getting visitors to your website from Google.

There are two primary ways that your website can be listed on Google. The search results on the left hand side of the Google page are called 'Organic or Natural' results while the search results on the right hand side of the page are called 'sponsored or paid-for' results. Ensuring that your website is ranked highly in the 'natural' listings is a continual process of optimization whereas your website can appear almost immediately in the top 'sponsored' links, if you are willing to pay for the clicks that your website receives from that positioning. Research shows that about 67% of users tend to click on the 'natural' search results over the 'sponsored or pay-per-click' links. However, combining both 'sponsored' links while improving your ranking on the 'natural' listings can be a useful strategy, if relevant to your business.

### Tips for optimising your website for 'natural' search results on Google

- Update your website regularly by publishing new content on your homepage or on a blog (Articles, Local Market Updates, News, Tips).
- Make sure that your website has been submitted to the relevant search engines (Google etc) and complies with their best practice guidelines.
- Ensure that the pages on your website contain key words and phrases relevant to your business that a user is likely to search Google for ie. West Cork Property for example. (Include text that mentions the services your company offers, the locations that you sell/market property in, the property sectors that you specialise in etc). Please note that if your links are images or buttons as opposed to text, Google will not 'see them' or pick them up.
- Include a description of your services in the page title (The blue bar at the top of your browser).
- Link to other websites that are relevant and have a high ranking on Google.
- Install Google Analytics (free) and review traffic to your website regularly.



## IAVI Residential Property Survey Q1 2009

New Urban Homes - % Change in value Q1 2009					Repub-	Northern
	Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Dgl	lic of Ireland	Ireland
2 bed town houses	-4.6%	-8.3%	-9.5%	-6.8%	<b>-7.4%</b>	-8.0%
3 bed town houses	-5.1%	-5.8%	-10.3%	-6.1%	<b>-6.7%</b>	-6.7%
3 bed semi	-3.6%	-7.0%	-10.1%	-6.7%	<b>-7.1%</b>	-6.3%
4 bed semi	-1.8%	-9.8%	-10.0%	-7.2%	<b>-7.9%</b>	-7.8%
4/5 bed detached	-2.4%	-9.8%	-11.9%	-7.6%	<b>-8.6%</b>	-5.5%
1 bed apartment	-6.3%	-11.6%	-11.9%	-7.3%	<b>-9.6%</b>	-12.8%
2 bed apartment	-7.6%	-10.7%	-12.1%	-6.8%	<b>-9.6%</b>	-12.5%

Second-hand Urban Homes - % Change in value Q1 2009					Repub-	Northern
	Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Dgl	lic of Ireland	Ireland
2 bed town houses	-5.4%	-7.8%	-8.8%	-8.8%	<b>-7.4%</b>	-6.3%
3 bed town houses	-5.8%	-7.3%	-10.0%	-10.0%	<b>-7.9%</b>	-7.5%
3 bed semi	-6.0%	-5.8%	-10.0%	-7.4%	<b>-7.0%</b>	-6.6%
4 bed semi	-5.3%	-7.4%	-10.7%	-5.9%	<b>-7.3%</b>	-5.8%
4/5 bed detached	-5.3%	-11.8%	-12.9%	-8.5%	<b>-9.8%</b>	-4.5%
1 bed apartment	-5.6%	-8.6%	-12.9%	-8.5%	<b>-8.5%</b>	-14.3%
2 bed apartment	-6.5%	-8.5%	-13.1%	-7.6%	<b>-8.6%</b>	-16.0%

New Rural Homes - % Change in value Q1 2009					Repub-	Northern
	Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Dgl	lic of Ireland	Ireland
3 bed detached bungalow	-6.6%	-7.9%	-13.4%	-8.3%	<b>-9.4%</b>	-5.0%
4 bed detached bungalow	-6.6%	-7.8%	-14.0%	-7.0%	<b>-9.2%</b>	-7.5%
3 bed detached house	-9.7%	-8.0%	-14.4%	-8.3%	<b>-9.9%</b>	-5.6%
4 bed detached house	-9.7%	-9.1%	-14.8%	-7.5%	<b>-10.3%</b>	-6.0%

Second-hand Rural Homes - % Change in value Q1 2009					Repub-	Northern
	Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Dgl	lic of Ireland	Ireland
3 bed detached bungalow	-4.5%	-8.9%	-10.6%	-8.6%	<b>-8.9%</b>	-9.3%
4 bed detached bungalow	-4.3%	-9.1%	-11.9%	-7.5%	<b>-9.1%</b>	-10.1%
3 bed detached house	-6.5%	-9.1%	-10.4%	-7.7%	<b>-8.9%</b>	-9.1%
4 bed detached house	-1.9%	-8.2%	-12.9%	-8.1%	<b>-8.9%</b>	-7.4%
Traditional Cottages	-4.7%	-8.0%	-14.0%	-7.8%	<b>-9.2%</b>	-3.0%
Period house on good grounds	-2.2%	-7.7%	-12.0%	-3.8%	<b>-7.1%</b>	-5.0%

Rental Properties - % Change in value Q1 2009					Repub-	Northern
	Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Dgl	lic of Ireland	Ireland
	-6.8%	-6.4%	-9.0%	-4.5%	<b>-6.8%</b>	4.4%