



THE IRISH ACADEMY OF  
**ENGINEERING**  
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF GREAT CHANGE

## ACADEMY NEWS – Academy Northern Region meeting held in Belfast on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026

The spring meeting of the IAE Northern region was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 in the Board room of Catalyst Inc. in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast.

Catalyst Inc. is an independent, non-profit science and technology hub focused on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland.



The meeting was chaired by Jonathan Hegan who thanked Steve Orr for facilitating the meeting and the agenda included:

1. **Welcome** – Jonathan welcomed the attendees and in particular welcomed Academy past President Seamus McKeague and Executive member Tom Leahy (Past President & Special advisor) who travelled from Dublin. President Sean Finlay and Hon. Secretary Joe Harford joined by VC. Tributes were paid to Tim Corcoran our Treasurer and Chair of the Academy Infrastructure Standing committee who sadly passed away.
2. **Apologies** were noted.

3. **Update on Academy activities including the Academy's latest publications.** Tom Leahy reported on the highlights of the Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 including:

- Dervilla Mitchell joined Council
- The chairs of the 4 Regions (Northern, Southern, Western and the newly formed Eastern Region) now sit on Council. This should significantly improve two way communication within the Academy.
- This year will see a number of people stepping down from Council after serving 5 years since joining in 2021.
- This movement of people on Council was welcomed and will refresh our Council

Academy President Sean Finlay briefed the meeting on the launch of the Eastern Region, Launch of the accelerating Infrastructure report and action plan and presentation to the British and Irish Parliamentary Assembly(BIPA) on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026.

4. **Report on the Enterprise Fellowships & 'People and Place' Initiative with the Royal Academy of Engineering.** Gillian Gregg RAE briefed the meeting on possible future funding for Enterprise fellowships which would include applicants from the island of Ireland. Gillian also informed the meeting that the People & Place Ireland Report will be launched on 10<sup>th</sup> March in Clyde Road. Tom advised that Minister Jack Chambers will attend the launch of the report.

5. **Report on the progress with Arrangements for the Joint Conference with the Royal Academy of Engineering in November 2026 in Belfast.**  
**Euro Case 2026 conference** will be held in Belfast from 18-20 November 2026 in the Waterfront conference centre as joint RAE/IAE event under the MoU. Occasion will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the RAE. Gillian Gregg RAE and Tom Leahy IAE briefed the meeting on the arrangements. An oversight committee, advisory committee and 6 working groups are now in place. It is anticipated that invitations to speakers will issue in March and arrangements for key note speakers are progressing.

6. Report on:

- **Parsons Medal Award 2026** – John McCanny( Committee Chair) and Joe Harford have made recommendations to improve the process and the call for 2026 nominees will open in March 2026.
- **Standing Committees** – Tom Leahy reported that the **2026 action plans and publications** for the 3 Standing committees (Infrastructure, Energy and climate action, Enterprise, Innovation and Education) were now published on the home page of our website.
- In addition, the 2026 **IAE Regional calendar of events** is also published on the home page of our website.

IAE Regional Calendar 2026	Northern Region	Western Region	Southern Region	Eastern Region
Chair	Jonathan Hegan (Chair)	Padraic O'Donoghue (Chair)	Brendan Murphy (Chair)	Martin Hogan
Sec./Deputy chair	TBC	Gerard Hurley	John T Murphy	John Flanagan
Number on Committee	30	24	32	85 in region- Committee TBC
2026 calendar	12.02.2026 Meeting	24.02.2026 Site visit DELL Limerick and Joint Southern & Western Region meeting		Meeting on 18th November 2025 to identify options for creation of Eastern Region
	19.02.2026 Event (Sir Bernard Crossland Lecture)		28.04.2026 Meeting	Launch Event 8th January 2026 in Clyde Road with Briefing by Accelerating Infrastructure Task Force(AITF)
	11.06.2026 Meeting	TBC meeting	01.09.2026 Meeting and Site Visit(TBC)	
	8.10.2026 Meeting	TBC Meeting	24.11.2026 Meeting and event - Annual Christmas lunch	
	19.11.2026 - Euro CASE Conference in Belfast - Joint IAE/RAE event in Waterfront Conference centre in Belfast - Save the date			
NB - Dates may change - this is the version created on 3rd February 2026.				

7. **Recommendations for new Patrons-** Jonathan Hegan asked committee members to recommend potential new patrons.

8. **Recommendations for a Site Visit in Spring** – A number of possibilities were identified at the meeting and Jonathan Hegan(Chair) will progress.

9. **Nominations for Chair & Vice Chair for 2026/7** - Nominations for Vice Chair for 2025 were discussed and Fellows were asked to make direct contact with Jonathan Hegan. Both the Southern and Western Regions have vice chairs.

#### 10. AOB

Jonathan Hegan (Chair) briefed the meeting on the 2026 Sir Bernard Crossland (SBC) Lecture to take place on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026 in the Great Hall QUB. Jonathan Hegan has now been succeeded as Chairman of the SBC organising committee by Peter Quinn, former President of EI and a Fellow Member of the Academy.

Steve Orr briefed the meeting on the recent article from Inc. Magazine in the US that outlined MIT's Disciplined Entrepreneurship and the connection to Catalyst.

<https://www.inc.com/inc-custom-studio/disciplined-entrepreneurship-what-it-really-takes-to-build-a-business/91266847>

Inc. is one of the best-known US entrepreneurship-focused business publications.

There will also be a press release in the next few days reporting on DCU evaluation of a Catalyst Entrepreneurship programme, "*Hello Possible*", which is targeted at underrepresented entrepreneurs also based on the Disciplined Entrepreneurship methodology. Steve will forward that as soon as it is published.

**Summary** - There was a very good active discussion, which reflected the depth and detail of the work of the Academy and how Academy fellows live and deliver on the Academy mission of providing thought leadership in a time of great change.