



I'M ALLERGIC TO ROMANCE
JOANNE McNALLY
MAGAZINE



SCOTLAND v IRELAND
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Signs of change New road speed limits

Cork County Council workmen change road signs in Union Hall, Co Cork, yesterday as the speed limit on local roads changed from 80km/h to 60km/h in an attempt to reduce the number of road deaths.

How are my local roads affected?: **Conor Pope**, page 3

Photograph: Andy Gibson



Growing up in a new Irish suburb

ROSITA BOLAND WEEKEND



Chris O'Dowd
'Hollywood felt very far away'

MAGAZINE

Jennifer O'Connell
Lessons of a new EV owner



OPINION

Sharp rise in vacant Dublin properties

More than 14,500 vacant properties identified across county, new figures show

A fifth of the buildings have been vacant for more than four years with many derelict

OLIVIA KELLY
Dublin Editor

More than 14,500 homes and commercial properties are vacant across Dublin, with 4,000 lying empty in the city centre, new figures obtained by The Irish Times show.

More than one fifth of vacant buildings are long-term vacant – defined as being unoccupied for more than four years – with many now derelict or at substantial risk of falling into dilapidation and ruin, according to the figures supplied by An Post's

data company GeoDirectory.

The analysis of vacancy levels across Dublin city and county at the end of the third quarter of last year shows that 5,746 commercial properties, 2,126 mixed-use premises (generally buildings with ground floor shops, restaurants or offices, and flats above) and 6,641 homes were vacant.

GeoDirectory identified just over 12,000 vacant properties across the capital at the end of the second quarter of 2023, indicating vacancy levels in Dublin have increased by more than

20 per cent in just over a year. Most vacant properties – 63 per cent across the capital – are now unoccupied for one to two years. These may include newly built homes and offices yet to be occupied, or can signify delays in the sales process for second-hand properties. However, 23 per cent of buildings are now vacant for more than four years.

In-depth street-level data for the city centre post codes of Dublin 1, 2, 7 and 8 – broadly defined as the area within the Royal and Grand canals – has facilitated mapping of the extent, type and duration of vacancy in the heart of the city.

Commercial
Of the 4082 buildings in this area half are commercial, with one third residential and just over a quarter (27 per cent) mixed. The highest number of vacant buildings are in Dublin 2, at almost 41 per cent, but three quarters of

these are commercial.

More than half of the empty properties with flats above commercial units are in Dublin 1 – a total of 610 – with particular concentrations around the city's largely Victorian shopping streets of Parnell Street, Talbot Street, Capel Street and Dorset Street.

The almost 1,000 empty homes, which include new apartments as well as second-hand homes, show an even spread across the city's four post codes.

More than 700 of the empty properties in the four post codes have been vacant for more than four years. While not all of these buildings are derelict, they are at increased risk of dereliction.

Dublin City Council's Derelict Sites Register includes about 60 properties in the city centre. However, the council has "active open files" on several hundred more properties in

the area it is currently assessing for entry to the register, many of which overlap with the GeoDirectory list of properties vacant more than four years.

Cold comfort

GeoDirectory managing director Dara Keogh said residential vacancy rates across the city and county, were in fact low at just 1 per cent, but conceded that was cold comfort to those looking for a home.

"There is a level of vacancy necessary for a functioning housing market, so that figure for vacant residential isn't very high at all; in fact it's too low, but if you're someone who wants a home, it may not be a figure you're happy to be seeing," said Keogh.

However, he said the high level of commercial vacancy in Dublin 2 and in mixed buildings in Dublin 1 was indicative of an exodus of companies from "old-

er style" Georgian and Victorian buildings to new "brighter more eco-conscious offices".

If this continued, it risked more city centre buildings becoming long term vacant or derelict, he said.

➔ **Dereliction in Dublin, page 7; Twenty buildings and sites that tell the story of Derelict Dublin: pages 8-9**

Goal's work hit by Trump aid funding freeze

MARTIN WALL

The aid agency Goal, which received more than €100 million in funding from the giant US government humanitarian organisation USAid in 2023, has said its operations in some countries have been hit by the freeze in spending ordered by the Trump administration in Washington.

However, it said that despite the funding restrictions, it had

received waivers which, for example, will allow it to continue its work in Syria where it has a large operation.

Accounts show that between 2022 and 2023 USAid provided Goal with funding of more than €200 million. Goal's annual report for 2023 describes USAid as its "largest donor".

The report said Goal received €103 million "which equates to 54 per cent of the total portfolio". In 2022, Goal received €113 mil-

lion from the agency. Separately, the Government also has a partnership arrangement with US-Aid concerning some projects in Africa.

Malawi programme

The Department of Foreign Affairs said it was talking to a range of other groups and the government of Malawi to ensure a programme – which had USAid involvement – continued to improve food security and nu-

trition in rural areas in the African country.

The Trump administration put in place a 90-day freeze on funding provided by USAid to assess its programmes, although spending on some projects was permitted to continue.

Those seeking to draw down further funding must submit requests for waivers. However, Reuters reported last night that staff reductions at USAid mean there were no personnel to process such requests.

"There's no one to do it. It's total chaos out in the field and here, with contractors, recipients, mission partners. Everything has stopped," said US congresswoman Lois Frankel, the top Democrat on a subcommittee that oversees spending on foreign aid.

➔ **How will Trump's cuts to US foreign aid hit Irish charities? Page 10**

Weather

A cold, dry and bright start to the day before showers spread from the east. A cool day with highs of 4-7 degrees

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Garda: The disappearance of a mother of two from Co Meath has been upgraded to a murder inquiry: page 4

World News



Middle East: Hamas have announced the names of three Israeli hostages to be released today in exchange for Palestinian prisoners: page 11

Business Today

PTSB: The bank plans to cut about 300 jobs this year after receiving a strong level of applications for a voluntary redundancy scheme: page 18

Construction: Clúid Housing says it will cost €20 million to rectify defects in its apartment stock: page 18

Sports Weekend

American Football: Croke Park will host a regular season NFL game between the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Green Bay Packers this year

Gaelic Games: Tributes have been paid to former Dublin goalkeeper and manager Paddy Cullen who has died



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