

Sustainability, circularity, energy efficiency

Lighting ticks all the Net Zero and wellbeing boxes

With lighting now recognised as having a major role to play in realising Ireland's Net Zero objective, *Building Services Engineering* recently caught up with Gavin Edwards (below), newly-elected Chair of Lighting Association Ireland (LAI), to examine the contribution lighting can make by way of energy savings, sustainability, circularity and wellbeing.

These, in fact, are the core issues which will underpin Gavin's tenure over the coming two years. They also reflect the Association's pivotal platforms established under previous Chairs Gearóid McKenna, Paul O'Connor and Gabriel Byrne.

Gavin has 30 years experience in lighting and is currently Sales Manager, Fagerhult Ireland. He is one of the LAI founding members and has already played a significant supporting role in its development to date.

"While I'm now Chair," says Gavin, "the real strength of the LAI lies in the fact that it functions very much as a collective. The 30 plus membership is extremely proactive and constantly contributes ideas and suggestions that become strategic objectives for the LAI Steering Group to implement.

"As the voice of the lighting sector in this country, LAI actively engages with all other construction-related associations, professional bodies, Government Departments and statutory authorities.

It also has a number of assigned delegates who sit on industry forums, committees and advisory groups.

"Further afield, LAI is a member of LightingEurope where it is comprehensively represented

on various technical committees that contribute to the formulation of EU regulations at EU policy-making level."

The current *Strategic Roadmap of LightingEurope* demonstrates the ever-increasing growth in the value of light to society. In this process, energy efficiency is supplemented with light for sustainability and with light for wellbeing. Together with European regulators, LAI – along with LightingEurope – aims for more intelligent lighting systems, increased renovation rates, more human centric lighting solutions, and circular economy thinking in relation to lighting. Apart from products and controls, design, installation and commissioning must also be considered.

Gavin continues: "It is essential that lighting solutions comprise properly-designed, holistic systems that incorporate project-specific lighting components, sensors and controls. They must also be installed as per the design brief.

"Critical to achieving this is education and the dissemination and sharing of all relevant information and supports. Hence, the very active LAI Education Committee with Paul O'Connor at the helm. Under his direction LAI has a dynamic education programme comprising seminars, workshops and technical presentations that are open to all engaged in lighting. An additional bonus is that they are presented within the Engineering Skillnet framework and so the cost to participate is significantly subsidised.

"From an industry overview, heating and cooling invariably tops the priority list, whether it is new-build or renovation. These are undoubtedly key areas to address but lighting is equally important, especially when it comes to energy efficiency, sustainability, circularity and wellbeing. Architects, engineering consultants, contractors and building owners now recognise this but it is also time for Government bodies and the regulatory authorities to do so." ■



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