

Social Sciences Research Centre AGM

8 December 2016

Room 333, 2nd Floor, Árus Moyola

In attendance: Dr Anne Cassidy, Dr Caitriona Clear, Mr Liam Farrell, Mr Martin Javornicky, Prof Mark Haugaard, Dr Mike Hynes, Prof Kevin Leyden, Dr Marie Mahon, Dr Lisa Moran, Dr Gerry Moran, Dr Judith O'Connell, Dr Martin Power, Prof Niamh Reilly, Dr Tony Varley.

Apologies: Dr Nessa Cronin, Dr Peter Cush, Prof Ricca Edmondson, Dr Maura Farrell, Dr Sheila Garrity, Dr John McDonagh, Dr Áine Macken-Walsh, Dr Lionel Pilkington, Dr Ruth Pritchard, Dr Eilís Ward.

Secretary's Report: Dr. Tony Varley (Joint Secretary, SSRC) reported how the SSRC now has 71 members and is home to three distinguishable strands of research: Smart and Liveable Cities and Towns; Critical Social Research; and Rural Communities and their Development. He went on to describe how the SSRC's new webpage, designed and maintained by Dr Mike Hynes, has attracted 1,055 visitors and 20,000 hits since its inception in the spring of 2016. Dr Hynes is also maintaining the SSRC's active twitter account that currently has 330 followers. The secretary went on to report how the five desks available in the SSRC's rooms in St. Declan's, Distillery Road are in full use; and how, during the year, all of the old computing equipment was removed from the SSRC's rooms in St. Declan's and replaced by five up-to-date computers. The secretary then described how an organising committee consisting of Dr Mike Hynes, Prof Kevin Leyden, Dr Judith O'Connell and Dr Tony Varley worked over the summer months in preparing for an SSRC conference titled 'Galway: Today and Tomorrow' that was held on 20 October in the auditorium of the ILAS Building (for details see <http://ssrc.ie/conference>). The conference, which attracted a good attendance and a fair bit of media interest, served the purpose of bringing some of the SSRC's

activities to the attention of the wider public. It also helped to begin the process of identifying a programme of social science research to be carried out in the city in the near future, some of which will hopefully be connected to Galway's 'City of Culture 2020' project. The Joint Secretary's reported was accepted by the meeting.

Election of new Board

-Chairperson/Director: Prof Kevin Leyden.

-Secretary: Dr Mike Hynes and Dr Tony Varley (joint secretaries).

-Treasurer: Dr Mike Hynes

-PRO: Dr. Judith O'Connell

-Ordinary Board members: Dr Anne Cassidy, Prof Ricca Edmondson, Mr Liam Farrell, Prof Mark Haugaard, Dr Áine Macken-Walsh, Dr Marie Mahon, Dr Gerry Moran.

Plans for 2017: Prof Leyden told the meeting that he has had recent discussions with the new Dean of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, Prof Cathal O'Donoghue, relating to a conference to be held in 2017 on the topic of Galway City's traffic problems. He also mentioned the possibility that a COST initiative he is participating in may decide to hold a conference on 'liveable cities' in Galway during 2017.

Prof Niamh Reilly addressed the meeting on a possible new research strand, to be linked to the SSRC, titled 'Equality and Diversity'. Possible specific dimensions to this 'Equality and Diversity' strand she identified would include gender equality, spatial equality and multiculturalism and religion. Some of the possibilities of seeking funding to research topics related to these themes were briefly discussed.

. Other speakers confirmed the relevance of 'equality and diversity' in their own

work. Dr Marie Mahon spoke of the geographers' interest in the spatial dimension of inequality; and Dr Martin Power referred to the huge rise in families becoming homeless in Galway City in the course of 2016.

The meeting very much welcomed Prof Reilly initiative and it was agreed that 'Equality and Diversity' should become a recognised strand of research within the SSRC. It was further agreed that 'Equality and Diversity' should subsume the current 'Critical Social Research' strand of research activity.

Dr. Tony Varley (Joint Secretary, SSRC)
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