

North Atlantic Forum (NAF) 2024

Our Conference Contributors



Jane Atterton is a Senior Lecturer at SRUC (Scotland's Rural College) and manager of the Rural Policy Centre, a research and knowledge exchange hub focusing on change in rural and island communities and economies, and policies and policy-making. Jane has a PhD in Rural Geography from the University of Aberdeen (UK) which focused on the geography of networking and embeddedness of businesses in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Jane has undertaken research for the European Network for Rural Development, Defra, the Scottish Government, the Rural Committee of the Swedish Parliament, Amazon UK and various third sector and community groups. Her current/recent research projects include: revisiting the persistent challenges facing rural and island communities; reviewing community wealth building approaches in rural and island communities (both part of the Scottish Government's Strategic Research Programme 2022-27); exploring poverty and financial hardship in rural Britain (Jane is co-author of the recently published Rural Poverty Today); and informing policy developments in Scotland relating to the application of a Rural Lens and the design of a Rural Delivery Plan.

Chief **Jasen Benwah** has been Chief of Benoit First Nation for 16 years and sits on the Qalipu First Nation Council. He has also been a member of the Indian Head First Nation and Port au Port Indian Band, and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians. He continues to be passionate about promoting Mi'kmaq language, culture, and heritage for Mi'kmaq people. He recently authored a series of books that preserve history, stories and knowledge of the region.

Laura M Brinklow is currently Co-ordinator of the Master of Arts in Island Studies (MAIS) program and Chair of the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, Dr. Laurie Brinklow is a writer, editor, and former book publisher, founding Acorn Press in 1993. Herself a 2007 graduate of UPEI's MAIS program, she has a PhD in Geography and Environmental Studies from the University of Tasmania. She teaches in the MAIS program at UPEI and is particularly interested in the power of place and story, and their impact on identity. She has published in several academic journals and books, is the author of two books of poetry, *Here for the Music* (Acorn, 2012) and *My island's the house I sleep in at night* (Island Studies

Press/Walleah Press, 2021), and co-editor of *The Bridge Effect: Critical Reflections in the Age of Technological Solutionism* (Island Studies Press, 2024). She is the Government of Iceland's Honorary Consul for Prince Edward Island and President of the International Small Island Studies Association (ISISA).

Dr Deirdre Byrne is qualitative mixed methods researcher who has a strong interest in health and society. Her Irish Research Council funded sociology-based doctorate was completed in 2016 and explored food in residential care settings and centred on the sociologies of food, childhood and home. Deirdre has also lectured in research methods and health & society on the Social Care and Early Childhood Care and Education. She is currently a Staff Researcher with the Department of Business and Social Science at ATU Sligo and has been successful in several EU funding applications.

David J.A. Douglas, Professor Emeritus, University of Guelph, Canada, has extensive experience in rural, regional and community development across most Canadian regions, parts of the EU, and other contexts (e.g. Indonesia, Iran, Ukraine, Pakistan). As former Director of a graduate school he taught community and economic development, regional development policy and planning, strategic planning and management, and planning and development theory. A facilitator, trainer, policy adviser and researcher he authored/edited four books, twenty-one book chapters, several journal papers, and technical reports. Current research and publishing encompass rural governance, regionalism and development, and community resilience. David is an active community volunteer.

Sheila Downer currently works with Memorial University's Harris Centre as the Strategic Northern Liaison. She also serves as the Vice-President of Northern Community Engagement with the University of the Arctic (UArctic). Sheila's education and 40-year background in regional economic development have provided a strong foundation and appreciation of the needs of coastal and northern communities. Her work has provided a strong background in understanding and addressing challenges of regional and sector development and has supported her experience in providing project partnership, regional network development and ICT services internationally. Sheila has worked as part of a team throughout Labrador to build local knowledge, skills and effective tools to support the way people live, work and do business in northern communities.

Ryan Gibson is rural researcher interested in issues of regional development, immigration/migration, economic development, and comparative rural policy. Ryan is the past president of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and the Canadian Community Economic Development Network. Ryan works as the Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development at the University of Guelph.

Rob Greenwood is Deputy Minister, Rural and Regional Development and Engagement, and Chief Economic Development Officer, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Prior to that, he served as Associate Vice President (Public Engagement and External Relations) at Memorial University, and he was founding Director of the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development. He also served as Principal Author of the 1995 Report of the Task Force on Community Economic Development, and he led the establishment of Regional Economic Development Boards in 20 Economic Zones. He also led a strategy for small-scale manufacturing, based on research under the North Atlantic Islands Program, and helped establish the North Atlantic Forum. He also worked in Saskatchewan leading the provincial economic strategy, and served as Vice President, Corporate Development, Information Services Corporation. Rob holds a Ph.D. in Industrial and Business Studies from the University of Warwick, England, which he attended as a Commonwealth Scholar and an Institute of Social and Economic Research Doctoral Fellow.

Kevin Heanue is an economist with over 30 years' experience working in the public, private and voluntary sectors. He currently leads Teagasc's (Agricultural and Food Development Authority) Evaluation Unit where he is responsible for the evaluation of Teagasc's research, advisory, education and organisational activities. Prior to joining Teagasc in 2006, Kevin taught and researched industrial and business economics in Dublin City University Business School and before that worked in the private sector as an economic consultant and strategist. In a voluntary leadership capacity, he is incoming Vice-Chair of the Social Finance Foundation, Chairman of Connemara West plc, and director of several other rural local development organisations. He is a member of the West Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee and was co-editor of the research report for the Irish Government's Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA). Kevin has a PhD (Economics) from Dublin City University and an MA (Economics) and BA (Economics & Sociology), both from University of Galway. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Lourdes University, Ohio, USA in 2018.

Andrew Jennings is Associate Professor in Island Studies at the Institute for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands. Andrew is based in Lerwick Shetland). He enjoys everything about life in this beautiful archipelago, from rowing in the local *yoal* team and taking part in the Fire Festival, to experiencing the wild Shetland weather. Living in Scotland's most northerly islands, with their Nordic cultural inheritance, inspires his research and his teaching. He is the programme leader on the MLitt Viking Studies, Island Studies, Orkney and Shetland Studies and Highlands and Islands Literature. Andrew has a particular research interest in the Early Medieval History of the Scottish Islands, with an emphasis on place-names and the Vikings. He wrote his PhD on 'Gael and Norse in Western Scotland c.795 to c.1000'. His other research interests include Island Studies, with a particular focus on the islands of the North

Atlantic and the Baltic, the history of the North Atlantic between the years 500-1200, Norse Mythology, Folklore of the Northern Isles, Gaelic Culture, and the history of Shetland.

Shauna McClenaghan is Joint CEO of Inishowen Development Partnership, the local development company in the Inishowen Peninsula, Donegal. She holds an MSc In Social Policy and Administration from University of Ulster, a Bachelors Degree in Social Science from UCD and a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Studies from Smurfit Business School (UCD). Shauna has a track record of 25 years in the delivery of social inclusion and rural development programmes, accessing funding from national and international funds, and strategically developing IDP into a key player in the social and economic landscape of the Northwest. The Values and Guiding Principles upon which she works are promoting community-led, sustainable local development built upon the values of integrity, connectedness, innovation, and inclusivity and her work is fundamentally about People, Place and Progress. She is actively engaged in the design and implementation of policies in the areas of Social Inclusion, Community Development and bridging bridges of collaboration across public, private, academic and community partners. As well as being a member of the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) she is also a director with SERI (Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland), and has been a director with the Alcohol Forum, Donegal County Childcare Committee and the Bunrana Credit Union.

Allen Meagher is the founding editor of *Changing Ireland W*: changingireland.ie, a not-for-profit national magazine based in Moyross, Limerick. The magazine is unique. Its readers are youth workers, community development workers, social justice campaigners, and agency/govt people. Since 2001, it has highlighted good practice, given people a voice and challenged us about development work. Allen has worked in newspaper groups across Ireland – north, south, east and west - and freelanced for RTÉ, the BBC, UTV, The Irish Times, Irish Examiner and other media outlets. He lived in The Gambia in the 1990s (while under dictatorship) where he taught local journalists. He has also reported from rural parts of Albania, Brazil and the Philippines. Allen taught journalism and sociology at UL, Mary Immaculate College and HSI.

Gabriel O’Connell is CEO of Monaghan Integrated Development since 2004. He has extensive practitioner experience in rural development, including in applying LEADER, smart villages and design thinking methodologies. In addition, Gabriel contributes to several local development networks including the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN), the European Smart Villages Forum and European Network for Rural Development. He is one of Ireland’s delegates to the European Rural Pact Coordination Group.

Brendan O’Keeffe is a human geographer and social scientist with a practitioner background in rural development. As an academic, he was a senior lecturer in geography and director of quality in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. He has also worked, in an advisory capacity, with public bodies and civil society organisations in several countries. Brendan has

considerable national and international experience in academic, policy and practitioner settings. He is an active volunteer with a number of community, environmental and cultural organisations.

Chris O'Malley is Vice President for Regional Development & Engagement at Atlantic Technological University. His career has included senior management roles in universities in Ireland, England and Wales, namely at DCU (Director of Strategic Development), at the University of Wales, Newport (Pro Vice Chancellor, Regional and International Development) and at the University of Worcester (Pro Vice Chancellor, Business and Development). Before joining DCU, he led the development of British Telecom's first European market strategy as Manager of the European Market Strategy team. He represented Dublin in the European Parliament, being a member of the Budget Committee and Economic Affairs Committee.

Chief **Rhonda Sheppard** is Chief of the St. George's Indian Band in St George's, Newfoundland. She is also an operator of a daycare business, having studied Early Childhood Education and Community Studies. She is also Lieutenant and Commanding officer of 194 Calypso Sea Cadets Corp., mother of one son, and advocate for culture, language, and tradition.

Linda Sice-Brogan is CEO of Galway City Partnership, and she has a strong track record in supporting and enabling community-led local development in both rural and urban areas. Prior to assuming her current position, in 2022, Linda was the social inclusion coordinator with Roscommon LEADER Partnership.

Tony Varley is a former lecturer in politics and sociology at the University of Galway and is now a member of the Social Sciences Research Centre at the same institution. His research interests lie mainly in the study of social movements, rural politics, and local development. Tony Varley has co-edited *A Living Countryside? The Politics of Sustainable Development in Rural Ireland* (Ashgate, 2009), *Integration through Subordination: The Politics of Agricultural Modernisation in Industrial Europe* (Brepols, 2013), and *Land Questions in Modern Ireland* (Manchester University Press, 2013). With the historian Tomás Finn he has recently finished co-editing a collection of papers based on the conference 'Rural Ireland: Ideals and Realities in the Twentieth Century' held in Galway to celebrate the donation of the Muintir na Tíre (People of the Countryside) archive to the James Hardiman Library, University of Galway. This collection of essays is to be published as *Inside Rural Ireland: Power and Change since Independence* by University College Dublin Press later in 2024.



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

