

CONFERENCE 2020

# MINDSET TO ACHIEVE



THE  
GALMONT  
HOTEL & SPA

Lough Atalia Road, Galway  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February



## Conference Content

The Irish Hotels Federation will host **Mindset to Achieve**, the 2020 Annual Conference and Showtel Exhibition at The Galmont Hotel & Spa, Lough Atalia Road, Galway, from Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February to Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Join us at the many social events and networking opportunities throughout the conference and check out great supplier deals and opportunities at Showtel.

Last year was a year of mixed performances on the back of a significant slowdown in overseas visitor growth. The VAT increase is having a real impact on cash flow, net revenues and capacity to reinvest in the sector. Members are also reporting significant pressure from rising business costs.

While the outlook for the Irish economy remains positive, our sector faces a number of pressing challenges around BREXIT, weakening UK consumer sentiment and wider uncertainty throughout the global economy. We expect tourism performance to moderate further in 2020 with implications for the sector as a whole. Government economic policy has a vital role to play in ensuring our sector is well-positioned to address these challenges and achieve long-term sustainable growth. This will be a key area of discussion at our conference in relation to the next Programme for Government.

Our sector is focused on achieving sustainable investment in our people and product while embracing innovation and responding to changing market conditions and evolving customer requirements. It is in this context that the theme of the 2020 IHF Conference is: **Mindset to Achieve**

## Conference Speaker Sessions Summary

The Tuesday conference sessions are as follows:

**Short-Term Rentals and Sustainable Tourism:** Daniel Guttentag, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in Hospitality and Tourism Management in the School of Business at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. He will share with us his insights into the growth, size and evolution of Short-Term Rentals (STRs). He will explore international and Irish developments in consumer preferences, branding, social conflict, taxation, regulation, safety and hotel strategic responses.

**People Focus - Engage, Develop and Retain:** Dawn Wynne is the Head of Human Resources at Dalata Hotel Group plc. Our industry provides great opportunities for people to develop skills and pursue a fulfilling career. Dawn will share with us her insights into the culture of engagement, the training, the development policies and progression structures that enhance employee satisfaction and increase retention.

**Customer Experience – The New Battleground:** Alan O'Neill, MBA, is an international business consultant. His retail and hospitality experience ranges from food to fashion. Great customer satisfaction is the key driver of repeat and referral business. In a time where traditional business models of customer service collide with new-world digital and omni-channel strategies, excellence in customer experience is the new battleground. Alan will show us how to achieve a culture of consistent great service that will differentiate for the long term.

**Product Development and Domestic Marketing Plans – Opportunities to Leverage:** Paul Kelly, CEO, Fáilte Ireland will outline current initiatives to support the industry on Regional Experience Brands, Visitor Experience Development Plans, Seasonality Plans and Capital Investment in visitor experiences. He will also present opportunities for our industry to participate in 2020 Domestic & NI marketing campaigns.

**International Marketing Plans - Industry Opportunities:** Shane Clarke, Director of Tourism Ireland will share with us their Marketing plans, the exciting developments in digital and Ireland.com and explore industry opportunities to capitalise on driving more business to Ireland in 2020.

**Tourism Industry Forum – Next Steps for Irish Tourism:** Tourism businesses are experiencing significant pressure from rising costs while growth is expected to moderate in the coming year. Ruth Andrews, Chair of the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC), Sean O'Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer, iNua Hospitality PLC and a Vice President of the Irish Hotels Federation, Sarah Duignan, Director of Client Relationships, STR and Jim Power, Chief Economist, Aviva Ireland will discuss the outlook for Irish tourism, its importance to the Irish Economy and the next steps required to ensure sustainable growth in a panel discussion session with Ivan Yates.

**One Step at a Time:** John Burke is the proprietor of the Armada Hotel in Spanish Point, West Clare which he personally oversees along with other tourism interests. In 2017, he became the first Clare person to summit mount Everest, a feat which pushed him further than he would have ever thought possible, as his body was ravaged by exhaustion, extreme hunger and dehydration, along with the effects of the infamous 'death zone'. He credits in part this resilience from his career in the hotel industry, and the challenges he met along the way. John will share with us fascinating stories he has accumulated on his enduring journey of personal and business development.

**Mindset to Achieve:** Debra Searle is an entrepreneur, professional adventurer and motivational speaker. She is the youngest and only the third woman in the world to have rowed an ocean solo. Debra's overwhelming positivity and 'go for it' attitude are contagious. She is convinced that learning to choose the right attitude can transform our work lives and our personal lives. She is dedicated to showing people how to leverage their mindset so that they can kick the can't out of life. It's not magic, it's mindset.

## Conference Outline

There will be a golf competition on Sunday and following its successful introduction last year, the Battle of the Branches will give teams from each Branch an opportunity to compete in a wide selection of sports, each with its own unique challenge for everyone to enjoy, to win the IHF Battle of the Branches Perpetual Trophy. Prize giving for both events will be held at the welcome buffet that evening.

The Showtel Trade Exhibition opens on Monday morning and is followed by the Annual General Meeting and elections. On Monday afternoon we are hosting the following four workshops: Digital Distribution and Cost per Acquisition; Junior Managers and Careers Development Opportunities; Sustainability; and Innovation and Artificial Intelligence in Irish Hotels.

That evening Brendan Griffin TD, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, will present the Irish Hotels Federation Quality Employer and Employee of the Year Awards.

On Tuesday the main conference, chaired by Ivan Yates, will be opened by Michael Lennon, President, Irish Hotels Federation followed by brief addresses from the main conference sponsors Dermot McArdle, Head of Business Markets, Electric Ireland and Mark Lee, Commercial Director at Pallas Foods.

The Gala Dinner will be held on Tuesday evening and Michael Lennon will present the IHF President's Award.

## Speaker Biographies



### **Brendan Griffin, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport**

Minister of State for Tourism and Sport Brendan Griffin is Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport with special responsibility for Tourism and Sport. He is a TD for Kerry since 2011 and previously served as a member of Kerry County Council representing the Dingle Electoral Area.

Brendan is married to Róisín and lives with their two sons on the foothills of the Sliabh Mish Mountains on the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry.



### **Michael Lennon, President, Irish Hotels Federation**

Michael is the 37th President of the IHF. He is a fifth generation hotelier with over 25 years' experience in the hotel sector. A native of Co. Carlow, Michael Lennon is a graduate of the College of Catering, Cathal Brugha Street. He began his career in Chicago before returning to Ireland, where he initially worked with the Great Southern Hotel Group before joining Brian McEniff Hotels. Together with his wife, Joanne McEniff, he owns and runs the Westport Woods Hotel in Mayo, which the couple bought over twenty years ago.



### **Ivan Yates, Broadcaster and Columnist**

Ivan Yates is a broadcaster, columnist, businessman and former politician, holding the position of Fine Gael Dáil deputy for more than twenty years. A native of Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, he became the youngest member of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dáil at twenty-one. He was appointed Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry in 1994. He founded Celtic Bookmakers, a chain of betting shops, which became one of the largest independent family chains in the country. Ivan now works full-time in the Irish media. He is presenter of The Hard Shoulder, *Newstalk's* drive time show, he co-presents TonightTV and writes weekly columns for the *Irish Independent*. Ivan is married with four children and lives in Dublin.



### **Dermot McArdle, Head of Business Markets, Electric Ireland**

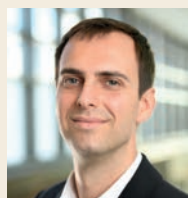
Dermot has over 30 years' experience within the Irish energy markets and is responsible for business markets energy solutions within ESB Group's supply business, Electric Ireland. In his time with the ESB Group he has held senior management positions across the finance, commercial, generation, supply and trading businesses. This included a notable two-year stint as the manager of ESB eCars, where he championed the EUs ENEVATE programme to trial fully electric commercial vehicles in city centre locations, and the Dublin City Council eCar Pooling Scheme.

Since December 2018, Dermot has been shaping the business vision of ESB's Brighter Future initiative, to manage the development of ESB's business markets into 2030 and beyond. Electric Ireland is one of Ireland's leading retail brands and the largest energy partner of Irish business.



### **Mark Lee, Commercial Director, Pallas Foods**

Mark is the Commercial Director at Pallas Foods, a Sysco Company. He is responsible for the Sales and Marketing teams in addition to the Customer Contact Centre and Culinary teams. Prior to joining Pallas Foods, Mark held a number of executive positions with Compass Group Ireland including Marketing Director, Retention Director and Commercial Director. He started his career in Diageo as Sponsorship Manager before moving to O2 and subsequently Eircom where he was Marketing Communications Manager & Head of Sponsorship respectively. He later joined Platinum One, a specialist sports management agency, and counted Ryder Cup Ltd and The European Tour as his primary clients, before moving to The Doyle Collection as Head of Marketing.



### **Daniel Guttentag, Assistant Professor, Charleston College**

Dr. Daniel Guttentag is an Assistant Professor in Hospitality and Tourism Management at the College of Charleston in South Carolina, USA. He holds a Ph.D. in Recreation and Leisure Studies and a Master's degree in Tourism Policy and Planning, both from the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. Daniel wrote one of the first academic papers on the short-term rental industry, and he has remained a leading researcher on the topic ever since. Daniel publishes regularly in top academic journals, and he presents frequently about short-term rentals to academics, industry professionals, and policymakers.



### **Dawn Wynne, Head of Human Resources, Dalata Hotel Group plc**

Dawn has spent her entire career in Hotel Management, primarily in operational roles such as Deputy General Manager in the Burlington Hotel and Regional Operations Manager in hotels in France and Italy before moving into Human Resources. Having worked for Dalata Hotel Group plc for twelve years, Dawn's role as Head of Human Resources has evolved since the groups inception in 2007. Dawn successfully managed the people transfer and integration of two of Ireland's hotel groups Moran Bewley's and Clarion into Dalata. She leads the HR function that now spans over 43 hotels and almost 5,000 employees across the UK & Ireland, one which is continuing to grow with 10 hotels currently under construction!



**Alan O'Neill**, International Business Consultant and Non-exec Director, Kara

Alan has over 30 years' experience working with blue-chip organisations across the spectrum of industry – brands such as Harrod's, Selfridges, Mercedes, Dubai Duty Free, Getty Images, Dalata Hotel Group and countless others. He has a passion for B2C organisations in particular, such as retail, hospitality, banking and tourism - where excellence in customer experience has immediate impact.

He has also supported Tourism Ireland destinations to improve product, using best practices from The Disney Institute. Alan is a lead judge for the Q-Mark Awards (affiliated to the European Federation for Quality Management) and has supported the criteria design. He is a Visiting Professor with ESA University in Beirut. Alan is also a columnist with Ireland's leading newspaper, *The Sunday Independent Business*.



**Paul Kelly**, Chief Executive, Fáilte Ireland

Paul is the Chief Executive of Fáilte Ireland. Paul began his career in Marketing with Procter & Gamble UK and went on to hold senior executive positions with Diageo Ireland, Aviva and the UCD Smurfit Business School. During his career, he has developed many iconic Irish and international marketing campaigns.

A native of Wexford in the south-east of Ireland and a commerce graduate of University College Dublin, Paul brings extensive management and marketing leadership experience to Fáilte Ireland to ensure that the National Tourism Development Authority continues to significantly shape the development of the Irish tourism industry and assists the sector in generating jobs, revenue and economic contribution for Ireland.



**Shane Clarke**, Director, Tourism Ireland

Shane joined Tourism Ireland in 2009. He is responsible for Corporate Services and Northern Ireland. With an extensive background in Tourism, FMCG Sales & Marketing, Manufacturing and Logistics. He has worked in both public and private sectors across the island of Ireland. Shane is a Graduate of DCU, Business Studies and has a Masters in Marketing and Strategy, he qualified as an Accountant FCMA with Cadbury's (UK) and is a member of the Institute of Directors, C.Dir. Shane has a keen interest in Travel, Food and Wine. He has completed a number of marathons, triathlon's and a 1/2 Iron Man. Shane is married with 5 children and a dog, and is a native of Castleknock, Dublin.



**Ruth Andrews**, Chief Executive, Incoming Tour Operators Association (ITOA)

Ruth's career in Irish tourism spans over 30 years. She is currently chair of ITIC – Irish Tourism Industry Confederation. Her career commenced in the Hotel sector working as a marketing/sales professional in some of Ireland's then largest hotels before establishing her own consultancy service, providing marketing communications, coaching & mentoring and business development expertise to a wide range of Irish tourism industry businesses. In 2006 she was appointed as Chief Executive of ITOA. Ruth was appointed Special Advisor to AVEA – The Association of Visitor Experience and Attractions in 2017. She has served and continues to serve on many industry and business advisory boards.



**Sean O'Driscoll**, Chief Executive Officer, iNua Hospitality PLC

Sean is CEO of iNua Hospitality PLC. iNua has 8 hotels in Ireland including Radisson franchise hotels in Cork, Limerick, Sligo & Athlone, 5\* Muckross Park resort in Killarney, Kilkenny Hibernian Hotel, Hillgrove Hotel in Monaghan and Tullamore Court Hotel. Sean is an experienced hotelier with a passion for the industry having spent 13 years as a General Manager in 4 & 5 star properties. He has a BA in Hotel Management from GMIT and trained with the InterContinental Hotels Group in Switzerland and the Great Southern hotel group. He is a Vice President of the IHF and was National President of SKAL, a worldwide tourism organisation.



**Sarah Duignan**, Director of Client Relationships, STR

Sarah departed Irish shores in 2005 having spent seven years in hotel operations. She joined the HotelBenchmark team at Deloitte in London as a Business Development Executive and as the team re-structured came to manage a number of key international clients. STR Global was formed in 2008 following the merger of the HotelBenchmark team with The Bench and Smith Travel Research. In 2016, the international family of companies united under one brand: STR. As Director of Client Relationships, Sarah regularly attends and presents at hotel group and industry events. She holds an Honours Degree in Translation from DCU.



**Jim Power**, Chief Economist, Aviva Ireland

In a career that spans over 30 years, Jim Power has held a number of senior positions including Treasury Economist at AIB, Chief Economist at Bank of Ireland Group and Chief Economist at Friends First Group. Owner Manager of Jim Power Economics Limited, an economic and financial consultancy, he is also Chairman of Love Irish Food and Three Rock Capital Management. Jim is the author of the SIMI Quarterly *Motor Industry Review* and Aviva Ireland Economic Outlook and writes a weekly column in the *Irish Examiner*.



## John J. Burke, One Step at a Time

John is the Managing Director of a tourism portfolio in Co. Clare. He entered the tourism business after taking charge of his family business, the Armada Hotel, in 2001 at the young age of 21, through recessions and setbacks, he has continued to grow and develop his portfolio to include Hotel Doolin, Doolin Village Lodges, Bo & Baine, Fiddle + Bow and CrossFit in Ennis. John currently employs 350 people across all his businesses.

About 8 years into this life and with a flourishing business, John came to realise that taking fulfilment only from work had led to an unhealthy work life balance, physically and mentally he was feeling the effects. He turned to the outdoors after reading an article on Everest. Determined to climb it, he learnt on that journey to the top of the world that not only would his body benefit but his mind and consequentially his businesses too.

Ten years after his first step on Carrantuohill he summited Everest, on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017. Since his return John is back to his role as MD of his hotel business as well as founding The ELEVATE Foundation which is a not-for-profit organisation. It aims to fund the rollout of a wellness programme to young people, utilising independent organisations and professionals, specialising in youth wellness and mental health.

## Debra Searle, Mindset To Achieve

Debra Searle is a professional adventurer and serial entrepreneur. Her expeditions have included rowing solo across the Atlantic and sailing around Antarctica. She has also launched four companies, is a published author, has worked as a presenter for the BBC and is a trusted corporate speaker. Debra's spirit of adventure gained her an MBE from Her Majesty the Queen. In Spring 2015, Debra and her company combined her two passions for adventure and gender equality by organising and leading an all-female team on an expedition in the Arctic Circle. The movie of Debra's Atlantic story is currently in development in Hollywood.



# Conference Social & Evening Entertainment

### SUNDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY

#### 12.00 Golf on Galway Bay Championship Course

Competitors must check in 30 minutes before their allotted tee time which will be advised in advance.

*Sponsored by: Celtic Linen.*

#### 14.30 Battle of the Branches

Teams must check in for orientation at 14.00 in the lobby of The Galmont Hotel. Teams are required to have registered in advance with their Branch Chair.

#### 19.30 Welcome Buffet

Join us in Marinas Restaurant for the Welcome Buffet. The golf and Battle of the Branches prize-giving will take place at 8 pm.

*Wines by: Dalcassian Wines & Spirits.*

*Water by: Deep River Rock, provided by Coca-Cola HBC Ireland.*

### MONDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

#### 19:00 IHF Quality Employer and Employee of the Year Awards & Drinks Reception

Presented by Brendan Griffin, TD, Minister of State for Tourism & Sport.

*Drinks Reception sponsored by: Dalcassian Wines & Spirits.*

#### 20:00 President's Dinner "Taste of The West"

Executive Head Chefs from The Galmont Hotel & Spa, Ardilaun Hotel, The G, Glenlo Abbey & Salthill Hotel have come together to create a 5 course tasting menu showcasing the best the West of Ireland has to offer.

*Supported by: Kings Laundry.*

*Wines and After Dinner Drink by: Dalcassian Wines & Spirits.*

*Water by: Deep River Rock, provided by Coca-Cola HBC Ireland.*

*Tea & Coffee by: Bewley's.*

### TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

#### 19.00 Reception & Gala Dinner (Black Tie)

The welcome reception will begin at 7pm followed by our Gala Dinner.

*Welcome Reception sponsored by Diageo.*

Michael Lennon, IHF President, will present the IHF President's Award to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to tourism and Ireland.

*Supported by AIB.*

*Wines by: CLASSICdrinks.*

*Hennessy VS After Dinner Drink sponsored by: Edward Dillon & Co. Ltd.*

*Entertainment sponsored by: IMRO.*

*Water by: Deep River Rock, provided by Coca-Cola HBC Ireland.*

*Tea & Coffee by: Java Republic.*

# PROGRAMME FOR 2020 IHF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## SUNDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY

- 12.00 Golf – Galway Bay Championship Course *sponsored by Celtic Linen*  
 14.30 Battle of the Branches  
 19.30 Welcome Buffet – *Wine by Dalcassian Wines & Spirits. Water by Deep River Rock, provided Coca-Cola HBC Ireland*

## MONDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

- 09.30 Opening of Showtel Trade Exhibition  
*Refreshments provided by Coca-Cola HBC Ireland*
- 10.00 Annual General Meeting - Opening by President and Branch Resolutions  
 11.00 Coffee in Showtel Trade Exhibition Area. *All Coffee Breaks sponsored by Bewley's & Java Republic*  
 11.30 Elections  
 11.45 Accounts, Annual Report and Completion of Branch Resolutions  
 13.00 Election Results and Close of AGM  
 13.15 Lunch supported by *Repak* – wines by *Irish Distillers* followed by dessert and coffee in Showtel
- 14.30 **Simultaneous Workshops**
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| <p><b>WORKSHOP #1: Digital Distribution and Cost per Acquisition</b><br/>                 Kevin Mulvany, Irish Hotels Federation<br/>                 Denyse Campbell, Maldron Hotel Dublin Airport<br/>                 Oonagh Cremins, The Innovate Room<br/>                 Peter Collins, Academy Plaza Hotel<br/>                 William Cotter, Net Affinity</p> | <p><b>WORKSHOP #1a: Junior Managers and Career Development Opportunities</b><br/>                 Michael Vaughan, Vaughan Lodge<br/>                 Aaron Mansworth, Trigon Hotels<br/>                 Paul Hayden, Fáilte Ireland<br/>                 Dr. John McCarthy, GMIT</p> |
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- 15.30 Coffee and visit to Showtel
- 16.15 - 17.30 **Simultaneous Workshops**
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| <p><b>WORKSHOP #2: Sustainability</b><br/>                 Darren Madden, Clew Bay Hotel<br/>                 Diana Geraghty, Bunzl<br/>                 Maurice Bergin, Green Hospitality<br/>                 Sarah Broderick, Clean Technology Centre<br/>                 Kevin Molloy, Electric Ireland</p> | <p><b>WORKSHOP #2a: Innovation and Artificial Intelligence in Irish Hotels</b><br/>                 Jim Deegan, University of Limerick<br/>                 Mary O'Brien, University of Limerick<br/>                 Ruairí Conroy, Siteminder<br/>                 Frank Reeves, AVIO</p> |
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- 19.00 **Irish Hotels Federation Quality Employer and Employee of the Year Awards**  
 Address and presentation of Awards by Brendan Griffin, TD, Minister of State for Tourism & Sport  
*Gin Reception by Dalcassian Wines & Spirits*
- 20.00 The President's Dinner *supported by Kings Laundry. Wines and After Dinner Drink by Dalcassian Wines & Spirits. Water by Deep River Rock, provided Coca-Cola HBC Ireland. Tea & Coffee by Bewley's*

## TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

- 08.45 **'Mindset to Achieve' Conference**  
 Conference – Official Opening: Michael Lennon, President, Irish Hotels Federation  
 Conference Chair: Ivan Yates  
 Sponsor's Address: Dermot McArdle, Head of Business Markets, Electric Ireland  
 Mark Lee, Commercial Director, Pallas Foods  
*Conference refreshments provided by Coca-Cola HBC Ireland*
- 09.15 **Short-Term Rentals and Sustainable Tourism**  
 Dr. Daniel Guttentag, Assistant Professor, School of Business, College of Charleston, South Carolina
- 10.00 **People Focus - Engage, Develop and Retain**  
 Dawn Wynne, Head of Human Resources at Dalata Hotel Group plc
- 10.30 Coffee in Showtel Trade Exhibition Area. *All Coffee Breaks sponsored by Java Republic and Bewley's*
- 11.15 **Customer Experience – The New Battleground**  
 Alan O'Neill, International Business Consultant and Non-exec Director, Kara
- 11.40 **Product Development and Domestic Marketing Plans – Opportunities to Leverage**  
 Paul Kelly, Chief Executive, Fáilte Ireland
- 12.10 **International Marketing Plans - Industry Opportunities**  
 Shane Clarke, Director, Tourism Ireland
- 12.30 Lunch *supported by FREE NOW Hospitality* – wines by *Irish Distillers* – water by *Deep River Rock* provided by *Coca-Cola HBC Ireland* followed by dessert and coffee in Showtel
- 14.00 **Tourism Industry Forum – Next Steps for Irish Tourism**  
 Ruth Andrews, Chair, ITIC  
 Sean O'Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer, iNua Hospitality PLC  
 Sarah Duignan, Director of Client Relationships, STR  
 Jim Power, Chief Economist, Aviva Ireland
- 14.50 Coffee, Closing of Showtel
- 15.30 **One Step at a Time** - John Burke
- 16.00 **Mindset to Achieve** - Debra Searle
- 17.00 Close of Conference by Brendan Griffin, TD, Minister of State for Tourism Sport
- 19.00 Welcome Reception. *Sponsored by Diageo*
- 20.00 **Gala Dinner (Black Tie Event)** IHF President's Award and Transfer of Presidency  
*Supported by AIB. Wines by CLASSICdrinks. After Dinner Drink sponsored by Edward Dillon & Co. Ltd. Entertainment sponsored by IMRO. Water by Deep River Rock, provided by Coca-Cola HBC Ireland. Tea & Coffee by Java Republic*

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