

REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (Irish Branch)

E-NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2, August 2007

Welcome to the second issue of the Regional Studies Association (RSA) e-newsletter. A new development for the Irish Branch of the Association, this e-newsletter serves as a way to highlight conferences, events, publications and other developments in the broad regional policy area. Contact details are included below.

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1. About the Association

The Regional Studies Association is a learned society interested in regional development, policy and research. The Association carries out a range of activities including:

- publishing a journal, newsletter and books;
- organising conferences and other meetings; and
- establishing and maintaining a branch and international section network.

It has an international membership of individuals, corporate organisations and students.

The Irish Branch was formed to provide a forum to discuss regional issues in Ireland.

2. RSA News

NEW WEBSITE

The website of the Irish Branch of the RSA can be accessed at: www.regionalstudies.ie
Suggestions on the site's continued development is welcomed – as is relevant text! The Association's general website can be accessed at: www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE-BASED SPATIAL PLANNING AND ANALYSIS

Organised by the RSA in association with the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), NUI Maynooth and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), two workshops have now taken place on this topic: the first in the National University of Ireland Maynooth on 15th February 2007, and the second in University of Ulster Jordanstown on 21st June 2007. Both events were attended by approx. 30 people; representing academia, policy-makers, local, regional and central government, and special interest groups. An interim report on the proceedings to date is published in this month's edition of *Regions*. A clear message emerging is that there is a need for leadership or "championing" of the development of all-island spatial databases.

This message, together with identified challenges, will be discussed at the forthcoming joint ICLR-D-RSA Conference on all-island spatial databases (see below for further details).

For further details contact: Dr. Chris Van Egeraat at chris.vanegeraat@nuim.ie;
Alternatively, log on to www.regionalstudies.ie or www.iclrd.org

3. Joint Irish-Scottish Conference on Regional Issues

DEMOGRAPHY AND ECONOMIC CHANGE: THE CASES OF IRELAND AND SCOTLAND

Date: 19-20 September 2007

Venue: Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow

This joint conference of the Scottish/Irish RSA Branches will explore the multifaceted themes associated with demography and economic change within the context of two small European nations: Scotland and Ireland. Whilst the precise linkages between population change and economic growth are contentious issues for demographers, economists and economic geographers alike, many observers agree that population plays a key role in long-run economic

growth. This conference will develop these issues in the context of the two nations. Topics being addressed range from demographic change in Scotland, Ireland and Europe to the impact of both internal migration and immigration flows; and from the impacts of economic restructuring on rural areas to the implications of population change on transport demand. Confirmed speakers include: Robert Wright, University of Strathclyde; Jaques Poot, University of Waikato; Eoin O'Leary, University College Cork; David Newlands, University of Aberdeen; Mike Danson, Paisley University; Prof. Jim Walsh, National University of Ireland, Maynooth; and David Meredith, Teagasc.

For further details contact: Dr. Edgar Morgenroth, Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI) at edgar.morgenroth@esri.ie or Des McCafferty, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick at Des.McCafferty@mic.ul.ie

4. Joint ICLRD-RSA Conference on All-Island Spatial Databases

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE-BASED SPATIAL PLANNING AND ANALYSIS IN IRELAND: TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL-ISLAND SPATIAL DATABASES

Date: 15 November 2007

Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk, Co. Louth

This conference is the culmination of work arising from two seminars organised in 2007 by the RSA (Irish Branch) and the International Centre for Local & Regional Development (ICLRD), in association with the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) and the National Centre for Geocomputation (NCG), to identify priority indicators for all island spatial planning. The conference, which is targeted at sectoral policy makers and practitioners as well as those engaged in spatial planning and analysis, will review the findings of the earlier seminars hosted at NUI Maynooth and UU in Jordanstown. A report listing the priority indicators that emerged as most viable and accessible for realistic island-wide spatial planning will provide the core focus of presentations and discussion at the conference. A major all-island socio-demographic atlas will also be launched at the conference.

For further details contact: Dr. Chris Van Egeraat at chris.vanegeraat@nuim.ie; Alternatively, log on to www.regionalstudies.ie or www.iclrd.org

5. Other Upcoming Events

- **PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS/PAPERS**

NORTH DUBLIN DEVELOPMENT COALITION

The NorDubCo annual seminar series for 2007 is entitled *Community, Power and Democracy – Community Development and Social Institutions in Ireland 1991-2007*. Three seminars are being held from September-November; the format being three presentations by invited speakers followed by a Q&A session. There is no fee for attendance.

Seminar 1 Title: "Historical & International Perspectives".

Presenters: Deiric O'Broin & Peadar Kirby, Brian Harvey, and Mary Murphy

Date: 21 September 2007

Venue: DG 11, Bea Orpen Building, Dublin City University (10a.m.)

This first seminar will examine the development of community-based movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, partition and the development of two divergent Irish community sectors, and the impact of globalisation on the Irish community sector.

Seminar 2 Title: “Theoretical Perspectives – debates around the different conceptions of the concepts of equality, citizenship and social capital”

Presenters: John Baker, Michael Cronin, and Clare Farrell

Date: 12 October 2007

Venue: DG 11, Bea Orpen Building, Dublin City University (10a.m.)

This second seminar will explore the issue of formal equality versus real equality and the conflicting definitions that exist, the meaning of active citizenship, and consider the concept of social capital from a critical approach.

Seminar 3 Title: “Perspectives from Practice”

Presenters: Fred Powell, Deiric O’Broin, Catherine Murphy, and Paul Rogers

Date: 2 November 2007

Venue: DG 11, Bea Orpen Building, Dublin City University (10a.m.)

This final seminar will consider community development in the Irish State, the institutionalisation of social partnership, and the practitioner’s perspective of community development.

For further details contact: Jean Nelson at 01-700 8860 or by email at: jean.nelson@dcu.ie
Places are limited and must be reserved in advance.

ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE – REGIONAL SEMINAR SERIES

Seminar title: “City Regions – Plans to Reality”.

Date: 3 October 2007

Venue: South Shields Town Hall, Tyne & Wear

Hosted jointly by the RTPI North East Region and South Tyneside Council, this seminar provides an opportunity for the private and public sectors to engage with the emerging city regions debate. Sessions will focus on the City Regions initiative in terms of where it is heading, the Northern Way, and the implementation of the Tyne and Wear City Region; as well as its implications for business and transport development. Speakers include: Prof. Patsy Healey, Andrew Lewis (Northern Way), and Malcolm Bowes (North East Assembly). The fee for attending this event is Stg£99 (incl. VAT).

For further details contact: RTPI North East Region at 0044 1661 871 719 or by email at: northeast@rtpi.org.uk

• UPCOMING CONFERENCES

26TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON URBAN DATA MANAGEMENT

Date: 10 – 12 October 2007

Venue: Stuttgart University of Applied Science, Germany

The Urban Data Management society (UDMS) promotes the development of information systems in local government since 1971. It provides a forum for people to discuss new

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approaches, consider new technologies, and to share practical experiences. Data is collected for urban, regional and rural areas. Issues and topics to be covered include:

- remote sensing
- public participation
- urban crime mapping
- changing land-use policies
- coastal area management.

A series of workshops will be held as part of the symposium and the broad focus of these will be on (a) the use of 3d in planning, public participation and administration, and (b) the potentialities of Location-Based Services, and the major problems and solutions in order to implement those infrastructures.

For further details contact: Conference Secretary at info@udms.net

IRISH HOUSING: DO WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING?

Date: 11 – 12 October 2007

Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Santry

The primary aim of this conference is to critically examine the Irish housing sector from personal, public and private perspectives, while considering the role of social housing and future developments in the sector. Confirmed speakers include: Eddie Hobbs, Dr. Rory O'Donnell (NESC), Des Geraghty (Affordable Homes Partnership), Fr. Sean Healy (CORI), John Fitzgerald (Limerick Regeneration Agencies), and Joe Horan (South Dublin County Council).

For further details contact: RESPOND! Housing Association at 0818 357 901 or by email at: conference@respond.ie

DEVELOPING COMPETITIVE KNOWLEDGE-BASED REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Date: 11-12 October 2007

Venue: Kilkenny

Organised by the Waterford Institute of Technology, this conference will examine the role of RTD and innovation in developing knowledge-based regional economies and present an effective process and methodology for creating an RTD investment policy for regions (Source: Irish Regions Office, 2007).

For further details contact: Louise Dalton at (051) 302946 or by email at: ldalton@wit.ie

GATEWAY STATUS...WHAT'S IT WORTH?

Date: 1 November 2007

Venue: Ballymascanlon House, Dundalk, Co. Louth

This 1-day event considers the Gateway of Newry-Dundalk in terms of the challenges and vision in delivering this. As part of the discussions, consideration will be given to the twin-city concept, the 'drivers' for expansion, city regeneration, and town centre management. The examples of city regeneration in Liverpool and the national park tourism in Cumbria will be outlined and discussed.

For further details contact: Dundalk Chamber of Commerce at (042) 9336 343 or by email at: info@dundalk.ie

TRANSPORT, MOBILITY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Date: 23 November 2007

Venue: London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, Holloway Road, London N7 6PA

The Winter Conference of the Regional Studies Association focuses on the cross-cutting themes of regional competitiveness, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and the development of innovative strategies to enhance transport efficiency and social mobility. The main themes being covered as part of this 1-day event include:

- connecting peripheral regions
- regional sustainability
- sustainable transport
- personal mobility
- mobility and regional labour markets
- transnational transport and communication networks.

The conference is organised into a two plenary sessions and a number of parallel workshops, with keynote speakers including Prof. Roger Vickerman (Centre for European, Regional and Transport Economics) and Dave Wetzel (Transport for London).

For further details contact: Lisa Bidy Larsen at 0044 1323 899698 or by email at: events@rsa-ls.ac.uk

• FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE SCHEME

In April, the Irish Government launched a new €21 Community Enterprise Centre Scheme to be managed by Enterprise Ireland. The Scheme runs from 2007-2009 and over this period, there will be three calls for funding proposals. This scheme supports the creation of business space in a supportive environment in urban and rural locations; the availability of business space being considered a fundamental infrastructural requirement for businesses to establish and grow in any location. Enterprise Ireland will fund up to 50% of the costs of the centre, with the remainder coming from the local community itself. It is thought this funding will lead to the creation of 330 new businesses and over 1500 new jobs. Applications for funding will be invited through the national press.

For further details contact: Gillian Slattery, Enterprise Ireland at (01) 609 2172 or by email at: gillian.slattery@enterprise-ireland.com

If you have a submission or suggestion on any upcoming events, seminars, presentations or conferences and would like them to be included in a future edition, please email newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

6. Publications of Interest

• BOOKS (incl. CHAPTERS)

Title: People and Place: A Census Atlas of the Republic of Ireland

Editor(s): Prof. Jim Walsh.

Date Published: April 2007

Publisher details: NIRSA, NUI Maynooth

Major changes in the distribution of population, migration patterns, the geography of employment, commuting, rural housing, the social structure of rural and urban areas, as well as some cultural attributes are confirmed in this new book based on the Census of Population. With over 200 maps, this book provides a solid evidence base for future policy debates where local considerations can be contextualised and understood against a broader framework. It also highlights the need for a coherent and proactive approach to integrated spatial planning at all geographical scales, extending from the local to the national. Further details from: Prof. Jim Walsh at (01) 708 3611.

Title: EU Environment Policy Review 2006

Editor(s): European Commission

Date Published: April 2007

Publisher details: Commission of the European Communities

The annual Environment Policy Review reports highlight the main developments in environment policy at EU and Member States level over the last year, together with recent findings and environmental trends. It also indicates the main issues to come up over the next year. The current review shows that 2006 was a very active year for environment policy. It highlights the political prominence of the fight against climate change and unsustainable development (i.e. the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the renewal of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy) Within Ireland, 2006 will be remembered for the country's commitment to increase electricity consumption generated from renewable sources; the publication of Ireland's Roadmap for the implementation of the Environmental Technology Action Plan (i.e. tackling surface water eutrophication, air emissions and waste); an increase in the uptake of biofuels and the establishment of Renewable Energy Grants relating to biofuels; and the publication of a Green Paper on Energy Policy, *Towards A Sustainable Energy Future*. A copy of this report can be downloaded from: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/policyreview.htm>

• WORKING PAPERS/DOCUMENTS

Title: Green Paper on the European Research Area

Author(s): European Commission

Date Published: April 2007

This paper launches a broad institutional and public debate on what should be done to create a unified and attractive European Research Area (ERA), which would fulfil the needs and expectations of the scientific community, business and citizens. The European Research Area is regarded as a cornerstone for a European knowledge society involving research, education, training and innovation. However, research activities and programmes remain fragmented and according to the Green Paper, to overcome this the following features must be put in place:

- an adequate flow of competent researchers,
- a world-class research infrastructures,
- an excellent research institutions,
- an effective knowledge-sharing,
- a well-coordinated research programmes and priorities, and
- a wide opening of the ERA to the world.

A copy of this working document can be downloaded at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/consultation-era_en.html

If you wish to have a recently published book/paper listed in this section of future newsletters, please e-mail details formatted as above to newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

7. An Introduction to the Mid-East Regional Authority

In each addition of the e-newsletter we plan to briefly profile a body working in the area of regional policy in Ireland. Thanks to John Byrne, Director, Mid-East Regional Authority for his assistance in preparing this profile.

Established in January 1994, the Mid-East Regional Authority is one of eight Regional Authorities set up under the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Authorities) (Establishment) Order 1993. Their key functions are:

1. Preparing Regional Planning Guidelines and Regional Economic and Social Strategies.
2. Reviewing, as appropriate, the Development Plans of the Local Authorities in the Region and, where relevant, the Development Plans of Local Authorities adjoining the Region; to consider the consistency of plans with one another and with the overall development needs of the Region.
3. Promoting coordination of public services and, where relevant, consideration by Public Authorities of the implications for, or the effect of, their decisions, activities or services on the Region.

The Region is some 6,063 sq. km. with a population of 475,026. The Mid-East Region covers the three counties of Meath, Kildare and Wicklow.

MEMBERSHIP: The Membership of the Mid-East Regional Authority comprises elected representatives from each of the counties within its remit, as well as one member from the Committee of the Regions. Members have been nominated by the constituent Local Authorities from among their own elected members. There are currently 22 members on the Mid-East Regional Authority.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ISSUES: The Mid-East Region is unique as it borders a fast growing metropolitan area. The impact of continued development in the city of Dublin and its environs has, and will continue to have, a major effect on this Region. All forecasts agree that the growth of Dublin will continue, and this has both positive and negative implications for the Mid-East. On a positive note, the consequent income generating activity will result in continued job growth and overall economic improvement. On the negative side, local authorities in the Region are faced with an exceptional rise in population but without an associated increase in the level of resources needed to service this growth. Furthermore, there are already signs that economic and social development is unbalanced, with the growth of dormitory towns and other non-organic developments. The rate of growth of the population was 2-3 times that experienced in most other Regions, and this analysis confirms that the Mid-East Region continues to be the fastest growing Region in the State.

REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES: To give regional effect to the *National Spatial Strategy*, the Dublin Regional Authority and the Mid-East Regional Authority jointly published the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* in July 2004. Covering the period 2004 – 2013, the strategic approach of the Guidelines for the Mid-East Region is essentially based around a clearly articulated hierarchy of settlements. This approach seeks to promote development into a series of tiers, with primary growth centres at the top, followed by secondary growth centres, and with other towns and villages located in tiers below.

The Regional Economic Strategy seeks to promote development of settlements in accordance with their location in this hierarchy. As part of this, the county development plans seek to promote industrial and commercial development in the primary and secondary growth centres. The strategic aims of these policies is to create a most sustainable, balanced development pattern, particularly given the Region's close proximity of the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE REGION: During 2005, the Regional Authority commissioned a study focussing on the funding needs of the Region. The Study focuses on

the expenditure needs of the Region and explains how the extremely rapid growth in population has put the ability of local authorities to provide an appropriate level of service under severe pressure. Expenditure per capita in the Mid-East Region in 2002 was only 70% of the national average (much lower than any other Region). The Region also has the second lowest levels of revenue from commercial rates relative to the number of households that demands services. The reason for this is the uniquely low number of business firms in the Region, and this in turn is due to the high proportion of people living in the Region but working in Dublin.

Transport investment is the most critical element to ensuring the sustainable growth of this Region. The launch of *Transport 21* has brought a level of clarity to the deliver of transport facilities for the overall Greater Dublin Region; it has given the area a dedicated transport investment plan and includes some of the schemes identified in the Regional Planning Guidelines. However, it does not give full clarity in planning for major transport links to Meath, Kildare and Wicklow; nor does it have any concrete reference to the development of an Outer Orbital Route for the Region. It is essential that work commences immediately on key public transport infrastructure projects so that facilities are provided in line with expected population growth.

RURAL DEVELOPMENTS: The Region is comprised of three counties which are predominately rural in character. As noted in the *National Spatial Strategy*, the *Regional Planning Guidelines*, and Local County Development Plans, the overall need for the Region is to address imbalances between urban and rural development policies. All County Development Plans in the Mid-East Region area recognise the importance of their rural areas as a key part of the makeup, character, and identity of the Region. They identify areas where there is pressure from urban generated housing, and have put policies in place to control such developments. Further policies are also in place seeking to promote diversification of the wider rural economy in rural disadvantaged areas. However, with the growth in long distance commuting, there is a serious danger that any existing rural development enterprises are in danger of losing viability and sustainability.

ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS: The key organisational requirements for this Region are as follows:

- The establishment of a Central Agency with responsibility for all Government funding for major projects in the Greater Dublin Area, and the Gateways and Hubs in the Region.
- The establishment of the Greater Dublin Transport Authority, with dedicated powers and authority to coordinate the multi-agency transport programmes already set out and envisaged under *Transport 21*.
- The coordination of transport and land-use planning decisions so that they are complimentary rather than contradictory. The Mid-East Regional Authority considers that the potential effectiveness of land-use management for achieving transport planning objectives is widely accepted internationally and should be included within the remit of the New Transport Authority for Greater Dublin.

Further Details on the Authority and its work can be accessed via their website: www.mera.ie. Alternatively, the Authority can be contacted by email at: mera@eircom.net

8. Regional Policy: What's New?

LEIPZIG CHARTER on Sustainable European Cities

A new guide on the urban dimension of Community policies, presented at an informal Council of Ministers of Urban Affairs meeting in May, assists urban areas in taking full advantage of EU

policies. The Leipzig Charter recognises the value of cities of all sizes socially, economically and culturally. In this document, the Ministers recommend:

- making greater use of integrated urban development policy approaches by
 - * creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces
 - * modernising infrastructure networks and improving energy efficiency
 - * implementing proactive innovation and educational policies; and
- paying special attention to deprived neighbourhoods within the context of the city as a whole through
 - * pursuing strategies for upgrading the physical environment
 - * strengthening the local economy and local labour Market policy
 - * implementing proactive education and training policies for children and young people
 - * promoting efficient and affordable urban transport.

A copy of this Charter can be downloaded at:

www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_995333/Leipzig-Charter-on-Sustainable-European-Cities-final-draft-2-May-2007.pdf

COMMISSION APPROVES IRELAND'S NATIONAL STRATEGIC REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

Agreement was reached with the European Commission on the focus of Ireland's national plan and priorities for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. The Framework outlines how Ireland will invest EU funding of €750million in the delivery of the Lisbon Agenda for Growth and Jobs over the next seven years. According to Commissioner for employment and Social Affairs, Vladimir Spidla, "The Irish Strategy shows strong commitment to promoting more, better investment in human resources – which we hope will lead to more, better jobs". The Framework also places emphasis on securing balanced and harmonious development, including the reduction of regional disparities. This will be achieved through strengthening the competitiveness, attractiveness and connectivity of the National Spatial Strategy. A copy of Ireland's National Strategic Reference Framework can be downloaded at:

http://www.ndp.ie/docs/NDP_Homepage/1131.htm

IRELAND'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME

In July 2007, the Irish Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley T.D., announced the largest local government reform package to date. The programme aims to reconnect town, city and county councils with the local people and local communities they serve. A Green Paper, outlining the various reform options to be considered on how local authorities operate, is to be produced by early 2008. Key areas for consideration include: the direct election of a Mayor in Dublin and possibly other cities and towns, the rebalancing of power between councillors and local authority managers, and the need to establish new town councils in those areas experiencing rapid population growth. A consultative committee of locally elected councillors, local authority managers, academics, and other interested bodies is to be established to advise on the production of this Green Paper. For further details see: www.enviro.ie

BLOGGING CROSS-BORDER

The first blog for cross-border programmes - "Tales from the Borderlands" – was launched in August 2007. The blog collects comments and news from everybody. It hosts documents, stories and announcements on upcoming events. It is also a source of links from the cross-border world. For further details see: <http://talesfromtheborderlands.blogspot.com/>

9. Contacting the RSA Newsletter

This is the second e-newsletter of the Irish Branch of the Regional Studies Association. There will be a further one e-newsletter during 2007 and this will be circulated in mid-November.

If you have any queries regarding the newsletter, or any comments, suggestions or submissions for future editions (incl. details on upcoming events, publications of interest, job vacancies), please email newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

PLEASE NOTE: the closing date for receipt of submissions is the first day of the month of the next issue.

10. Membership of the RSA

Membership of the Association is open to all individuals and organisations with an interest in the analysis and development of regional policy.

The benefits of membership include nine issues of the international journal *Regional Studies*, four issues of *Regions: The Newsletter of the Regional Studies Association* (overall body), three issues of *Spatial Economic Analysis*, discount on other Routledge publications, access to Association events, and ability to participate in any local branch or section activities.

Membership is based on the calendar year. Details of membership rates (individual, associate, student or corporate), together with a registration form, can be downloaded at: www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk/members/benefits.asp

11. Current Irish Committee Members

The current RSA committee for 2007 are: Micheál Collins, TCD/IPA (Chairman); Chris Van Egeraat, NUI Maynooth (Vice-Chairman); Patrick Collins, NUI Galway (Hon. Secretary); Edgar Morgenroth, ESRI (Hon. Treasurer); John McDonagh, NUI Galway; Des McCafferty, Mary Immaculate College, UL; Stephen Walsh, DIT; Mark Scott, UCD; Caroline Creamer, ICLRD/NIRSA; Davis Hogan, Shannon Development; Gillian Slattery, Enterprise Ireland; David Meredith, Teagasc; Ronnie O'Toole, Forfas.

The following are the contact details of the Association. We strongly encourage communication by e-mail.

RSA Chairman Micheál Collins: chairman@regionalstudies.ie

RSA Secretary Patrick Collins: secretary@regionalstudies.ie

Newsletter: newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

12. Joining/Leaving the RSA (Irish Branch) Mailing List

If you wish to have your details added to the RSA mailing list please e-mail the following address with the word "ADD" in the subject line: mailinglist@regionalstudies.ie

To have your details removed from the RSA mailing list please e-mail the following address with the word "REMOVE" in the subject line: mailinglist@regionalstudies.ie

The RSA updates its mailing list approximately once every six weeks.

A pdf copy of this newsletter is available on the RSA website at www.regionalstudies.ie