



ISME
Irish **SME** Association

30

1990 - 2020

Celebrating 30 years of ISME
The leading voice for SMEs

ISME 30 YEARS ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

**COMMEMORATIVE
PROGRAM**

iSME

Irish **SME** Association

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CHAIR'S ADDRESS



Marc O'Dwyer

Chair's Address



Ladies and Gentlemen, members, guests, sponsors and friends,

Welcome to our lunch today, commemorating the 30th Anniversary of ISME's founding.

On the 14th of December 1993, 30 members of the Council of the then Small Firms Association who had left that body, met in Barwells Hotel, and resolved to meet in March of the following year, under a new constitution as the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association.

Their decision to set up this new Association was born of the frustration that they could not speak up on behalf of the interests of small business.

They did not want their voices diluted by those of big banking, big multinationals, big insurance, big law, or big semi-states.

So many of the issues we lobbied on in the succeeding years remain concerns for us today, labour costs, childcare, the minimum wage, insurance, business costs, the black economy, and access to affordable finance.

That core mission statement remains true today, and ISME is the only cross-sector trade association to fearlessly voice the concerns of small business, independently of the interests of big business.

It is that dedication to your interests that has delivered SCARP, the affordable restructuring for SMEs in trading difficulty, a perjury act to punish fraudulent plaintiffs (if it is ever used by our judiciary), reduced personal injuries damages, and personal and business tax reforms delivered in Budget 2024.

Chair's Address



ISME is still the place where the voice of the sole trader and the small business owner is heard and respected.

I am delighted that the Chair of that first meeting in 1991, Terry Hobdell, joins us this afternoon, as does Eoghan Hynes, and several succeeding Chairs Daniel Hickey, Robert Barney, Eamonn Kilty, James Coghlan and Ross McCarthy.

Thank you all for establishing ISME as the force it is today.

I would like to welcome our guests His Excellency Vincent Guirend the French Ambassador, Declan Hughes, Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Shirley McCay, Director of Trade and Investment at the British Embassy, Leo Clancy, Chief Executive of Enterprise Ireland, Aidan Finnegan, Public Affairs Manager with the British Irish Chamber, and Will Goodbody, Business Editor of RTE, whose phone I am assured is turned off this afternoon.

I want to thank our sponsors today, FBD Insurance, ISME Skillnet, Keogh's Crisps, Lily O'Brien's Chocolates, Tier3Tech and the Shed Distillery for their great support.

I also wish to thank our own staff in Kildare Street for their dedication in organising our anniversary lunch today, and the staff of Clontarf Castle for welcoming us into this beautiful venue.

I am personally delighted to be the 10th Chair of ISME, especially in this year where ISME celebrates its 30th anniversary which incidentally coincides with my own Company Big Red Book/Cloud 30th anniversary also.

I would like to welcome not only all the ISME members and guests here but also the three tables of guests and colleagues we have invited along to celebrate these two outstanding organisations.

Chair's Address



Without customers and partners none of our businesses would survive so a big shout out to everyone here today and wishing you all continued success.

I am honoured to follow the great work previous Chairs have put into ISME and I will endeavour to do my best to make sure all SME's have a voice through ISME.

Lastly, it gives me great pleasure to call on a special guest to address our anniversary celebration.

He is Chairman and co-founder of Ergo, Ireland's largest IT solutions provider.

With a global footprint, Ergo excels in the provision of IT and hardware managed services, cloud applications, software services and IT resourcing.

He spun off a fintech called Fenargo, which achieved unicorn status in 2021 after raising over \$600m in funding, valuing the company at \$1.1bn.

He was named EY Industry Entrepreneur of the Year in 2014.

He is a fabulous example of what we want to see for all Irish SMEs, an ambition to scale, to innovate, to succeed, to support the 60% of the Irish workforce that is employed in the SME sector, and to spread beyond Ireland's shores.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am delighted to call on John Purdy, co-founder and Chairman of ERGO, to address the ISME 30th Anniversary Lunch.

Marc O'Dwyer

CEO'S REMARKS



Neil McDonnell

CEO's Remarks

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are most welcome to Clontarf Castle today to mark the 30th Anniversary of our founding in 1993.

Thirty years ago, the Celtic Tiger had yet to roar, Ireland was just emerging from its eighties slump, but the combination of membership of the European single market, prudent economic management and a skilled workforce were about to bear fruit.

It is easy, and sometimes necessary, to be critical of Ireland's economic progress, as ISME frequently has been. But let us first point out the positives: We have turned from being the poor man of Europe to one of its best performing economies, and emigration is now most usually a lifestyle choice rather than an economic imperative.

Ireland's long-run economic progress since post-independence contraction has been built on the creation of a vibrant, open, trading, non-protectionist economy, welcoming of foreign direct investment. ISME is not critical of the FDI model, but as the bedrock of the Irish economy, we understand its limitations better than most.

The Apple Tax case, and the OECD's steady progress with the BEPS process, show us the necessity to avoid placing all Ireland's economic eggs in the FDI basket. Not alone would this be strategic folly, but it would be fiscal disaster: while FDI contributes a huge (but falling) amount to the Irish economy in corporation tax, the Net National Product contribution of the domestic sector (a measure of in-your-wallet economic value) is 3.75 times greater than that of foreign multinationals.

CEO's Remarks



The emerging global picture for the 2030's and beyond is much less benign than the first two decades of this century. We see the reemergence of global power blocks, deglobalisation, potentially reduced international trade, and more assertive local nationalism. While we recognise the nature of Ireland as a trading economy, we must mature into a more resilient society domestically, capable of dealing with identifiable risks and international shocks as we have not done before.

On top of this, we see legislatures in Leinster House and in Brussels that seem hellbent on levels of regulation not being contemplated anywhere else in the world.

Forget "challenging." The simple fact is that times are going to become more difficult for small business, especially those competing at the maritime edge of Europe and sharing a land border with a close, but non-EU member.

There has never been a greater need for a vocal, fearless and independent SME champion. ISME has been in your corner for thirty years, and with your support we'll be around for another three decades.

My sincerest thanks to all our staff in Kildare Street who have worked so hard over the summer to prepare this anniversary celebration, and to our hosts in Clontarf Castle for their beautiful venue.

Enjoy the day.

Nell McDonnell

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ISME

Irish **SME** Association


**FROM OUR
MEMBERS...**



We are
Ireland online

Huge congratulations to iSME on your 30th Anniversary, offering service and support to the Irish small and medium business sector. Working tirelessly as a truly independent voice for Irish SMEs over the past three decades, your support has greatly contributed to the success of so many businesses all across Ireland. We at JE are proud to be members and supporters of your work and look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming months and years.

For further information on how we enable and empower people, communities, and businesses across Ireland to thrive online see our website www.sears.ie

A background image showing a close-up of two business professionals, a woman on the left and a man on the right, both wearing glasses and looking towards the right. The image is slightly blurred and has a blue tint.

Enabling Ireland to
thrive online

Lily O'Brien's

Passionate about Chocolate

Happy 30th Anniversary ISME! Congratulations on successfully representing Irish SME's over the past 30 years. ISME has made an invaluable contribution to the success of the SME sector in Ireland. Thank you for your dedication and commitment and for all the supports you have provided to Irish businesses throughout the years. We look forward to continue to work with you and wish ISME and all our fellow members many more years of success in the future.

For information about Lily O'Brien's award winning chocolates and our corporate gifting range please visit:
<https://lilyobriens.ie/corporate>





DRUMSHANBO
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From all of us here at The Shed Distillery of PJ Rigney - the home of Drumshanbo Gunpowder Irish Gin, we would like to wholeheartedly thank ISME for all their help and support through the years. Wishing you all the warmest of congratulations on this extraordinary achievement, and here's to the next 30 years!



The logo for ISME Skillnet features the acronym 'ISME' in a large, blue, sans-serif font. To its left is a stylized bracket shape composed of a dark blue vertical line and a green horizontal line. Below 'ISME' is the word 'Skillnet' in a blue, sans-serif font, with the 'net' portion enclosed in a green circle.

Congratulations to ISME on your 30th anniversary. The ISME Skillnet has been a part of ISME for 23 of those years. The team would like to extend their thanks to the ISME Board, The National Council, and all their member companies for their guidance and support through the years. Without you we could not bring meaningful learning experiences to your business. Best wishes for another 30 years and more.





Well done to ISME on reaching the 30 year milestone for supporting Irish SMEs. Everyone at Tier3Tech Support Ltd is extremely proud to be a member of an organisation that really values and understands the needs of SMEs in Ireland today. Now more than ever we need that voice to ensure we get heard and looked after at a national level. Your training and supports are exemplary and we take full value from your networking events throughout the country. Wishing you all at ISME continued success and a great day at the 30th Anniversary.

For further information on how Tier3Tech help SMEs unlock the Full Potential of Microsoft OneDrive, SharePoint and Teams with Tier3Tech, please visit our website www.tier3tech.ie or email info@tier3tech.ie





To ISME, the voice of small and medium-sized enterprises in Ireland.

You have played a key role in supporting a network of businesses, from new ventures to established companies, that boost economic growth and innovation in Ireland.

Your tireless efforts in providing resources, guidance, and a strong collective voice empower Irish SME's to flourish and overcome challenges. You lobby on behalf of your members on issues that matter to them, such as taxation, regulation, and access to finance. You offer business opportunities and wellness services to help your members grow and thrive.

Keep up the good work! From us all at Big Red Cloud



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Saint Tola

Irish Farmhouse Goat Cheese



Comhghairdeachas to ISME on celebrating its 30th Anniversary. We very much appreciate the hard work that ISME has done, over the decades in supporting ,motivating and, representing small indigenous businesses like ours, which are the backbone of Irish society. We look forward to working with ISME and its members into the future as together we are stronger.

For more details on our multi-award winning cheeses & gift ideas please look at our website www.st-tola.ie



Heneghan

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Many congratulations to ISME as it celebrates thirty years of courageous and impactful advocacy on behalf of Ireland's SME sector.

The association has provided consistently honest, independent and intelligent responses for Ireland's businesses across many issues over three decades including significant fiscal, employment, insurance and insolvency matters. It has also represented the best interests of businesses during major challenging events such as the global financial crisis of 2007 and 2008, Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Particular credit is due to Neil McDonnell and his executive and administrative teams for their continued hard work and strong delivery for Ireland's SMEs.

Wishing ISME and all its members all the very best for the next thirty years and well beyond

A dark banner with a background image of a row of stone pillars. The Heneghan logo is in the top right, and a list of services is on the right. Contact information is in the bottom left.

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FIRST MEETING OF THE
ISME NATIONAL COUNCIL

12.30 P.M., 14TH DECEMBER, 1994.

RUSWELL'S HOTEL.

PRESENT:

Peggy Farrell, Martin Coughlan, Sean Fennell, Peter Paulson, Jim Cahill, Terry Hebble, Frank Mulcahy, Pat Linn, May Fitzmaurice, Eoghan Hyman, David Dixon, Martin Taylor, Pat Georgegan, Liam Sheehan, Tom MacDonncha, Don Curry, John Quinn, Audrey Glynn, David Orr, Jonathan Dillon

ABSENT:

Brian Bennett, Billy Rooney, Pat McKeown, Cathal McGalvan, Michael Burke, Jim Keating, Cyril Bellon, Adrian Gordon, Declan O'Leary, Liam Doyle, John McCormack

1. The Chairman, Terry Hebble, opened the meeting by proposing that the articles of Association still to be formed before the ISME Annual General Meeting is to be held on the 24th March, 1994. This motion was second by Peggy Farrell.
2. Proposal that the existing Council of the SFA should become the Council of ISME and the A.G.M., 24th March, 1994.
Proposed by Jim Cahill.
Second by Peggy Farrell.
3. With regard to the Deputy Chairman automatically assuming the role of Chairman for the following year, maybe the outgoing Chairman should confirm this during his term.
4. It was agreed that a new constitution for ISME would be drafted by Frank Mulcahy, David Dixon, Eoghan Hyman and Peggy Farrell.

5. The heading was informed of the current activities of ISME. As of the 14th December, 1993, one hundred and eleven cheques had been received for subscriptions. It was agreed that further completion of the SFA who had been assigned for ISME membership but who had not yet paid would be printed on the next list. The current list would be divided into sections and distributed to various contact members in order to make follow-up phone calls.

6. Insurance Scheme

The list of the SFA members who participated in the Insurance Scheme was divided up between E. Hyatt, P. Paulson, T. Hobbell and P. Mahony. The members were pleased to get their agreement on signing a mandate to transfer the C.C.M. insurance scheme to ISME.

Twenty-five out of twenty six of his list agreed to switch the scheme to ISME. It was agreed that a greater level of feedback from the members regarding completion from C.C.M. should be sought.

Contacted eighteen members and found a level of confusion regarding the identity of ISME vs. and the SFA.

Spoke to eighteen members and found Ebbett to be supportive of ISME's insurance scheme. He also found a level of confusion about the difference between ISME and the SFA. The Cork members of the SFA appeared less satisfied with the SFA/ISME scenario than Dublin members.

Eighteen members were contacted, fourteen of which were very aware of ISME and equally supportive of the new company. One member had a bad experience with C.C.M.

7. It was agreed that no member could serve simultaneously on both the SFA Council and the ISME Council.
8. In order to increase national awareness of ISME a widespread series of local radio interviews should be conducted. This should be undertaken in early January.
9. There is a possibility that the Irish Marine Federation (industry) and its Fibre Mats and Confectionery Manufacturers might join with ISME. Discussions on these regards are in their early stages.
10. The issue of INDC alleging certain accusations at both P. Paulson and P. Mahony was raised. It was agreed not to pursue this matter any further since Peter Paulson had sent a letter to John Dwyer.

11. The issue regarding confusion amongst the public with regard to ISME and the SFA was raised. Various suggestions were made with the intention of protecting ISME's image.

Council members of the council made the point that this supposed confusion was only prevalent in certain pockets of the membership and was not widespread. It was agreed that the fundamental way to promote ISME was to emphasize that the new company presents a separate and independent vision for private small business.

Other ways of promoting ISME's image included the roadshows in the New Year as well as releasing major press coverage around the time of Seamus Deane's Publication on January 19th.

T. Hottel closed the meeting at 7.30 sharp.

Council was advised to not profiting to pay for postcards, no matter

SIGNED:



DATE: _____



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