

RPI Newsletter – 17th July 2024



Hello everyone,

Hope this newsletter finds you all well. It certainly finds all of us in RPI in a hopeful and expectant mood with the arrival of not one, but two, new Chairs, Ruth Kelly and Terry O’Neill. RPI has been on a significant resurgence this past 12 months and, safe to say, Kieran O’Dwyer has handed over an organisation ready for the next steps. He is also handing the reins to two people with a lot of energy and ideas, but who are also very anxious to hear from the RP community and work *with* people. Rather than talking about Ruth and Terry though, we felt it best to let them introduce themselves and share some of their thoughts directly with you. So, without further ado.....

RPI Welcomes the Incoming Co-Chairs - Ruth Kelly and Terry O’Neill



“It is a real honour to step into this role; the co-chair of RPI. For those I have not connected with yet, I’ll share a little bit about my RP Journey. I am a secondary school teacher and first trained in RP in 2017. I was trained by the RP Team in our school and a world of comfort and possibility opened before me. RP allowed me to be myself and more significantly live the values I had come to know personally and professionally. I pursued further training and in 2022, CDI made me an RP Champion. I have trained many teachers, students, school leaders and parents.

I would describe my journey as a winding stair. I learn more with each step as my awareness rises yet I continuously return to the values that I know to be true. From 2022, I started working with AVP Ireland in the Midlands Prison, and gained a deeper understanding of how to build community in the most challenging of environments. Every circle confronts me with our shared experience as humans. What sustains me is the community of RP practitioners of our school, Newbridge College. The RP team is creative, resilient and supportive. In the last two years, we have developed a network with local schools. We come together to connect, learn and share from each other. The Newbridge RP Team is a space I treasure as it is the space that has nurtured me into a teacher and RP leader I am today.

My introduction to RPI was meeting the formidable Kieran O’ Dwyer. We met and discussed Education, but a powerful insight emerged for me in that meeting. The perspectives Restorative Practitioners bring and those from the Restorative Justice space. I started working with the RPI Events and Communications Committee in 2022. Richie Walsh led us to create a National Conference in Newbridge College in 2023. It was a real honour to organise our national conference in our Newbridge RP home. I have learned so much from these energetic and skilled practitioners on the committee. It was a fantastic journey to begin with and the relationships formed encourages me to continue working with RPI. I have been working behind the scenes on X (formally Twitter) and hope



to grow our website and social media presence to communicate the powerful restorative work we do.

My aspiration for the role is to firstly form a relationship with Terry. Our initial meetings have been powerful and utterly restorative. I can assure you all that you will have two people guiding the organisation that are rooted in the values of fairness, cooperation and respect. I seek to enhance the membership piece of our organisation and to include more voices in the review of and formation of our next strategic plan for 2025 onwards. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of the Steering Committee and Claire Casey in supporting Terry and I to transition in our new roles. I am optimistic about the future and am looking forward to connecting with you all". Ruth Kelly



Profile:

Terry O'Neill is from Wexford and he has worked with the FDYS in Co. Wexford for the past 20 years. Terry has worked as a Youth Justice Worker with the Slaney Youth Diversion Project, FDYS in Enniscorthy town and Gorey since 2008. He is an RP practitioner, facilitator and trainer. He is a member of the Department of Justice RP training team since 2019, helping to roll-out and develop RP across the Youth Diversion network. He was a member of the RPI Training Endorsement Panel from 2018 until 2023 and has been a member of RPI Steering Committee since 2021.

"Every day is a school day, or so they say. Therefore, at this moment in time, I am very mindful that I have so much more to learn before I could even consider contemplating any kind of vision for RPI. I do, however, have some very simple aspirations. Firstly, like Ruth, I too am honoured to be invited to become Co-chair of RPI. In return, I hope to honour the role and do the best job I can, working with Ruth to try to continue the meaningful progress RPI has already achieved. Also, I hope through this new role to try to forge stronger

connections with the many RP champions and advocates around the country. I hope too to try to help to create and generate a wider sense of awareness of the true potential of Restorative Practices to profoundly influence and impact our everyday interactions with those around us. Lastly, I hope to never stop learning and in so doing perhaps help and support RPI to take another few new forward steps. I thank the committee for their faith in me and I look forward to our working together and supporting each other in the times ahead". Terry.

Exciting times ahead no doubt, and we wish both Ruth and Terry all the best in their roles from here on. If anyone would like to contact either of them they can do so directly through the Twitter/X profile (@RP_Ireland).

Training

Anyone looking for information on possible training available, check out

- **CDI** <https://www.cdi.ie/our-programmes/restorative-practices/> (schools and non-school)
- **OIDE** (formally PDST) schools only
- **Local Education Support Centre** (schools only)
- **Connect RP** (schools only)
- **Restorative Living** - (schools + non-school) powerjoseph1@gmail.com
- **Email RPI for details of trainers in your area**
- **European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ)**
<https://www.euforumrj.org/en/efrj-register-restorative-trainers-and-consultants>
- **Restorative Justice Council (UK)** <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/>

That's all for now Folks. Please also remember to send in information, photos, updates and events you may be running and we'll spread the word for you. Also, do get in touch via info@restorativepracticesireland.ie if you would like to get involved in RPI activities as a volunteer.

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