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Árd-Chonsalacht na hÉireann  
Consulate General of Ireland



## Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver

January 2023



Consulate General of Ireland Staff (L-R)  
Vice Consul Adam Duffy; Ms. Kamilla Losik Finance and Consular Officer; Consul General Cathy Geagan; Ms. Helena Glackin,  
Events and Western Canada Officer.

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## Message from the Consul General

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Consulate's first newsletter of 2023. I hope it finds you healthy and refreshed after a pleasant festive season and looking forward to the year ahead. I would like to start with a thank you to the Irish community for your support and engagement with the Consulate over the past year, and on a personal note for the warm welcome to Vancouver. I have been blown away by the strength of the Irish community here in BC. After my first (unexpectedly snowy!) Christmas here, I am looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible in 2023.

Some highlights of the past four months included the Consulate's Business Breakfasts; the first visit of the Consulate to Calgary; hosting our first creative writing workshop (which drew participants from across Canada); supporting the collaboration of the Irish and Indigenous community through Hearts Beat's participation in the Heart of the City Downtown Eastside Festival; and the first Consulate screening of the Late Late Toy Show. I was delighted to participate in many excellent events by Irish community and trade organisations funded under the Emigrant Support Programme through the Consulate, including the Ireland - Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver (ICCVAN); the Irish Women's Network of BC; the Irish Benevolent Society of BC; and the Ireland-Alberta Trade Association.

This year, we not only reach the conclusion of the Decade of Centenaries but also mark two significant anniversaries for Ireland. On 1 January 1973 Ireland joined what was then known as the European Economic Community. 2023 offers the chance to reflect on the extraordinary impact of 50 years of EU membership and Ireland's emergence as a modern, open economy and society. 2023 also marks 25 years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, a transformative moment in our history. The vision and the values of that agreement remain fundamental to the ongoing journey of peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland. The Consulate will mark both of these milestones during the year.

Finally, a word of thanks to the small team here at the Consulate for all their hard work, namely Vice Consul Adam Duffy; Finance and Consular Officer Kamilla Losik; and Events and Western Canada Officer Helena Glackin. Thanks are also due to team members who left the Consulate in the last year - my predecessor Frank Flood, and local staff member Bláithín Noone, whose contributions to the achievements of the Consulate in 2022 are beyond measure.

Keep in touch with us by signing up to our mailing list, and following the Consulate on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and my own [official Twitter account](#).

Is mise le meas,

Cathy Geagan

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### **NOTICE:**

In 2023 the Consulate is renewing efforts to encourage all Irish citizens residing in Western Canada to join the [Citizens Register](#). By joining this register you will ensure that in the event of an emergency or crisis the Consulate will be able to contact you and/or your emergency contacts in Canada and Ireland. Registering also helps the Consulate, Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Irish Government as a whole, have greater information on the numbers of our citizens in the region.

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Community Welcome Reception for Consul General Cathy Geagan (L-R)  
Marc Balbirnie, Consul General Cathy Geagan, Ambassador Dr Eamonn McKee, Órla Ní Bhróithe, Former Consul General Frank Flood

## Consulate Updates

The Consulate went through some major changes in 2022. With the return of in person events, we had our first in person St. Patrick's Day (SPD) reception since 2019 – which was the largest in the Consulate's history – and hosted a pilot SPD reception in Victoria.

2022 was also the year where the Consulate's remit expanded to cover Alberta, Yukon and the Northwest Territories, on top of our pre-existing responsibility for British Columbia. With this, the Consulate became the first Consulate General of Ireland for Western Canada.

The release of the 2021 Canadian Census data last October highlights the enormity of this remit. This data showed that Irish as an ethnic or cultural identity was selected by 12.8% of responders in BC, 13.5% of those in Alberta, 18.8% in Yukon, and 11.7% in the Northwest Territories.

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September Business Breakfast with Consul General Cathy Geagan

## Upcoming Events in 2023

### *Brigid Festival Vancouver*

An annual staple in Vancouver, the Brigid Festival Vancouver is back with both virtual and in-person events for 2023! Running from 1-4 February, check <https://www.brigidfestivalvancouver.com/> for event details and registration. We are looking forward to hosting some of the events in the Consulate function room and hope to see you there!

### *Business Breakfasts at the Consulate*

The Consulate will continue to bring you our first Thursday business networking breakfasts throughout 2023, starting back on Thursday 2 February. As coinciding with Brigid's Festival Vancouver, this business breakfast will focus on "Women's Health in the Workplace" with Dr Olivia Sampson of WorkSafeBC. Keep an eye on our socials and emails for registration link and info.

### *CelticFest*

Running from 17-19 March, CelticFest is back in 2023 at the Vancouver Art Gallery Square. Check out <https://www.celticfestvancouver.com/about-us/> for more info.

### *Irish Women's Network Nollaig na mBan*

The annual Nollaig na mBan celebration is back this year at Johnnie Foxes, on Sunday 8 January, 11:30am-1:30pm - an opportunity to gather again with friends, meet some new women and connect with each other. Register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Nollaig2023>

#### *Irish Women's Network Coffee Mornings*

Continuing once a month in the Consulate Function Room, 10am-12pm – pop in for a coffee and a chat! Next coffee morning is Friday, 3 February.

#### *I/CAN Newcomers Event*

Information sessions for new arrivals or anyone looking for information on healthcare, PR, work permits, job searching etc.! Every Thursday evening in the Consulate. Registration and further information available at: [Irish Canadian Immigration Centre Events | Eventbrite](#)

#### *Parents and Toddlers*

The next Parents and Toddlers event will be held in February in the Consulate Function room 10am-12pm, date TBD. Keep an eye out on our socials for additional information.

#### *Leabhair Power*

A brand new Consulate event series that will encompass a book club, lending library, and more literary workshops. To find out more join the Consulate's mailing list and follow us on our social media.

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## 2022 - In Review



### **Consular Statistics**

We received 1528 queries in 2022, including 12 serious cases and 121 queries from our new territories. Our top queries are on passports (37%) and foreign birth registration (18%), which tracks with the global increase in the numbers applying for Irish citizenship and passports. Travel Advice was a top category at the very start of the year but as the COVID restrictions on travel globally began to decline, so did the related queries.

This year we saw a significant increase in the number of queries (91 in 2021, 129 in 2022) regarding visas for Ireland by Canadian and other foreign citizens. This increase is encouraging,

suggesting that Ireland has become a more attractive location for work and study for young Canadians.



### **Staff Changes**

August saw many changes to the team, including the departure of former Consul General Frank Flood, after a four-year posting in which he established a Consulate here in Vancouver and secured the wonderful office space in which we host our events. Supported by his wife Orla, former CG Flood brought the many Irish groups in British Columbia together and, despite the lost time during pandemic restrictions, met and supported the Irish community in a myriad of ways. Vancouver's loss is Malahide's gain!

Before his departure he secured sanction to hire a third local staff officer to lead on events and support our expansion into Western Canada, and so we were delighted to welcome Events and Western Canada Officer Helena Glackin to the team in August.

Consul General Cathy Geagan's also took up position in August, and she looks forward to working with all of you over the next four years as the first Consul General of Ireland to Western Canada.

In December we said goodbye to Bláithín Noone after three years as Executive Assistant and Admin Officer. Many of you will know Bláithín not only through her work here at the Consulate, but through the GAA as a player and organiser, or through the many ways she volunteers and supports the Irish community here in Vancouver. You'll be missed Blá!



## Social Media Statistics

In 2022 our reach on social media was expanded, through the growth of our existing pages and the addition of an official “Head of Mission” twitter account for Consul General Cathy Geagan. This year we grew our audience across all platforms, with a combined followership of 4151, and an aggregate reach of over 333,000. We hope to continue our growth and increase our activity on social media in 2023.



*Followers count: 535*

LinkedIn has been growing consistently for the Consulate and is our business and trade focused page. 436 new followers joined us in 2022, and with 75 posts we reached over 52k LinkedIn members.

In 2023 we will continue to focus on business and trade content for LinkedIn, with a focus on using the page to advance our connection with the local business and trade community.



*Followers count: 1,634*

Twitter has the largest audience on all three of our social media pages. Unfortunately, the uncertainty around the future of Twitter may impact the growth potential of the platform. Twitter’s short character limitation means that while difficult to include detailed content, the snapshot provided is designed to be easily consumed. In 2022 we attracted 298 new followers on twitter, with 198 tweets in the year reaching over 179k people.

In August, Consul General Cathy Geagan set up her official Twitter account. This page has gained

404 new followers and has a reach of 66,300 in its first four months.



*Followers count: 1,578*

Facebook is our second largest platform, and is our best platform for longer form content. While the younger generations, particularly the Irish, have started to move away from Facebook, it still remains a key platform for the Consulate and is where most of our community groups have an active presence.

In 2022, the Consulate attracted 181 new followers on Facebook, and reached over 36k people.







Consul General Cathy Geagan at an introductory meeting with former Premier John Horgan

## Trade

The Consulate had a busy year with trade events and visits in 2022, with about 100 meetings, events, and visits. These range from meeting with key contacts, introductions to Consul General Cathy Geagan, high level visits, to support for the local business community and state agencies.

Among the most notable of these was the visit of Minister of State for Further Education and Skills, Niall Collins T.D. Min Collins undertook a trade mission to BC with Education in Ireland last June, signing the first further education MoU between Ireland and BC at an event in the Consulate with BC Minister Anne Kang.

In October, Consul General Cathy Geagan visited Alberta, marking the first visit of an Irish Consul General to the province, in line with the Consulate's remit expansion. On this trip, CG Geagan attend the Calgary Economic Development Forum 2023 met with contacts from Invest Alberta and the Alberta Bureau of International education to name but a few.

The Consulate also continued our Business Breakfast series in 2022, with nine of these networking sessions held in the Consulate Function Room. These sessions had speakers on the topics such as purchasing a home in BC, applying for PR, managing your mental health, culture, and tourism.

Our relationships with the state agencies has continued to grow through the support of their activities in Western Canada and through our monthly 'Team Ireland' local market meetings that include representatives of Embassy Ottawa, CG Toronto, CG Vancouver, Tourism Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA. Similarly, we have continued to work with our community groups that have a trade focus or component, namely the Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver (ICCCVan) and the Ireland Alberta Trade Association (IATA).

CG Geagan was the keynote speaker for the ICCCVan's October Networking Business Breakfast, following on from their annual St Patrick's Day Breakfast where the Chamber hosted Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath, T.D.

In 2023, the Consulate will look to continue growing our relationships with our trade partners, with a focus on establishing new relationships with key stakeholders in our newly acquired remit of Alberta, Yukon and the Northwest Territories.



Consul General Cathy Geagan at the ICCCVan's Networking Business Breakfast

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Vice Consul Adam Duffy and Van Isle Rovers GAA at the McNamara Cup

## Culture & Community

2022 was a great year for the Irish community in Vancouver and Western Canada as COVID restrictions relaxed across the region, allowing for the return of in-person events. 2022 also saw the addition of two new Irish community groups, Vancouver Queer Irish and Irish in BC. The Consulate had an active year with cultural events and support for cultural endeavours in BC and beyond.

A key part of the Consulate's cultural calendar, we were delighted to take part in the annual Brigid Festival Vancouver in February, organised by the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C. This festival saw a range of panel discussion on the importance of women in Irish history, culture and politics.

The Consulate was able to host the first in person St Patrick's Day reception in Vancouver, the first since 2019, on March 17. With over 170 attendees, this was our largest reception to date. The community gathered together to recognise our national day with keynote speaker Min Michael McGrath, and with guest speaker Mir Huculak, Honorary Consul of Ukraine. This was followed by a weekend of Irish music and dance performances at CelticFest 2022.

With the expansion of the Consulate's remit in 2022, the Consulate gained responsibility for all Irish community groups in Western Canada. As part of CG Geagan's visit to Alberta in October, CG Geagan met with members of the Irish Cultural Society in Canada and attended a performance of the Society's choir.

It was a busy year on the GAA scene as well, with a growing membership across all games, the McNamara Cup hosted in Victoria in May, and Vancouver GAA hosting their Championship matches at Burnaby Lakes Rugby club in August. Vice Consul Adam Duffy attended to present the Championship Cups to the Mens Junior and Ladies intermediate victors.

For Pride in 2022, the Consulate hosted a reception with Vancouver Queer Irish (VQI) with Chris Morrissey, Canadian human rights activist and partner of Irish activist, the late Bridget Coll, as guest speaker. This year was also VQI's first Vancouver Pride Parade, and the Consulate joined their members in marching and dancing through Vancouver's West End.

In October and November, the Consulate hosted two virtual literary events for Samhain; a Samhain Story Time with author Patricia Forde, and a Creative Writing Workshop with author Dave Rudden. Another annual tradition in Vancouver, the Irish Women's Network Seniors Luncheon was hosted in December and was attended by CG Geagan and members of the Consulate team.

The above non-exhaustive report on the cultural and community happenings in Western Canada shows just how active and engaged the Irish community is in this region, and we look forward to continuing support these endeavours throughout 2023.



Consul General Cathy Geagan with the Board of the Irish Cultural Society, Calgary, including Honorary Consul Deirdre Halferty (and Cathy's first pint of Guinness in Canada!)



## **Contact Network**

### **Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver**

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### ***Honorary Consuls***

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### **Embassy of Ireland, Ottawa**

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**Email:** [ottawaembassy@dfa.ie](mailto:ottawaembassy@dfa.ie)  
**Website:** [www.dfa.ie/canada](http://www.dfa.ie/canada)

### **Consulate General of Ireland, Toronto**

**Website:** [www.dfa.ie/toronto/](http://www.dfa.ie/toronto/)  
**Twitter -** @IrlinToronto

### **Irish Canadian Immigration Centre (I/CAN)**

**Website:** [ICAN | I/CAN - The Eamonn O'Loughlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre](http://ICAN | I/CAN - The Eamonn O'Loughlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre)  
**Facebook:** @IrishCdn

**Telephone:** +1 (416) 603-9549 or + 1 (877) 603-9549  
(National Free Toll)

**Ireland - Canada Chamber of Commerce,  
Vancouver (ICCCVan)**

**Website:** [Ireland - Canada Chamber of Commerce  
Vancouver \(icccvan.ca\)](http://ireland-canada-chamber-of-commerce-vancouver.icccvan.ca)  
**Email:** [hello@icccvan.ca](mailto:hello@icccvan.ca)

**Irish Benevolent Society of B.C.**

**Website:** - <https://www.irishbenevolentsocietybc.com/>  
**Email:** [benevolentsocietybc@gmail.com](mailto:benevolentsocietybc@gmail.com)

**The Irish Women's Network of B.C. (IWN  
of B.C.)**

**Website:** [www.irishwomenbc.net](http://www.irishwomenbc.net)  
**Email:** [irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com)  
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**Vancouver Queer Irish**

**Twitter:** [@vanqueerirish](https://twitter.com/vanqueerirish)  
**Instagram:** [@vanqueerirish](https://www.instagram.com/vanqueerirish)

**Irish in B.C.**

To find out about the latest news regarding the Irish community here in BC, please sign up to their newsletter [here](#)

**Facebook:** [@irishinvancouver](https://www.facebook.com/irishinvancouver)  
**Instagram:** [@irishinbc](https://www.instagram.com/irishinbc)  
**Website:** [www.irishinbc.ca](http://www.irishinbc.ca)



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