



# A Springtime Note from our CEO

BY GRAINNE O'KEEFFE

## DEAR FRIENDS OF LUDGATE

There is no doubt that the past 12 months have been turbulent and traumatic both personally and professionally for each and every one of us. We know that in 5 years time we will look back on this period with a sense of relief that it is behind us and hopefully be able to conclude that the public health and economic recovery was faster than we could ever have predicted.

When I consider what lies ahead for Ludgate as we navigate the short and medium horizon I am mindful of the European, national and regional landscape and the recovery strategies afoot. We have seen European leaders determine a recovery funding pot of €750 bn which will effectively be split 50:50 between grants and loans. We have seen the headlines announcing 37% of the recovery budget will be dedicated to green transition while 20% will be dedicated to digital transformation. This [infographic](#) neatly illustrates the breakdown and timeline effectively.

At a corporate level, the CEO of Vodafone Group, Nick Read gave a rallying call for the power of connected communities. He spoke about the obligation on organisations as large as Vodafone to play their role in the recovery. He impressed upon his audience how digital infrastructure will be pivotal to emerging stronger and better from this historic era. Skibbereen knows this well having reaped the fruits of 1GB since 2016 and Nick shared our story with his audience at the [LSE German Symposium](#) on Feb 5th 2021 as a noteworthy case study.

Closer to home I have been influenced by both Enterprise Ireland and the IDA's priorities and strategies for the coming years. In depth detail can be found in [EI's 2021 Priorities](#) and in [the IDA's 3 year roadmap](#). The Local Enterprise Offices and County Councils are also making great strides in offering supports and guidance to growing and scaling organisations across every sector. Ludgate plays an integral role within this ecosystem at a West Cork level and will continue to be aligned with these initiatives, partnering with the state agencies to contribute to delivering economic strength to the region.

Enterprise Ireland CEO, Julie Sinnamon said, "Last year underlined the importance of efficiency, agility and innovation in business. In 2021 we will support transformational change within our client base and, in particular, help more Irish SMEs to adapt their business models and invest in R&D, increase adoption of digital technologies, and respond to climate change and carbon reduction opportunities for future business growth. Another priority area for 2021 is to maximise the number of start-up companies, increase the number of high growth clients achieving scale and expand the number of exporting companies."She added, "Having strong, innovative, regionally based exporting companies is vital to balanced economic development and sustaining and creating high value jobs into the future. 2021 will be a critical year for Irish enterprise and we will work closely with Irish businesses to help them accelerate the recovery."

Another influential publication is the Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's [Remote Working Strategy](#), published in Jan 2021. Minister Varadkar said 'Working from home has become the norm for many in 2020. We want remote, blended and flexible working arrangements, a much bigger part of life after COVID-19. We've seen that there can be huge benefits – more flexibility, less commuting, more time for family and friends. It's better for the transport emissions, and for quality of life, but it has to be done right.'

While we may want to see the back of home working post immediate Lockdown we are looking forward to the future where the hybrid model/distributed workforce/'working near home' will bring folks into the Ludgate Hub contributing to a thriving & vibrant community. Digital Hubs are set to become a national economic asset and we in Ludgate are thrilled to be part of this community. We are founding members of [ITHN](#) and participate in other hub networks such [NACEC](#), Cork Hub Network as well as working closely with the team in [AEC](#).



We can see common themes emerging across the board, primarily digitisation, green and of course innovation and education. That brings me nicely to Minister Simon Harris' new role as Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Education and innovation will be crucial to resilience, enablement, entrepreneurship, upskilling and reskilling. Our Ludgate Education programme partnering with local schools has been extremely successful this year, and we are excited to see that continue into the future.

I cannot conclude without a brief note on our expansion plans. We were thrilled to open Ludgate@Fields in Sept 2020 and are very excited about the refurbishment of Mercy Heights together with our existing base at the Old Bakery & Ludgate@Fields will allow us a greater platform to implement those strategies..

There is a big book of work ahead of us as we help enable & sustain jobs supporting a local thriving economy. Ludgate will be with you every step of the way on your recovery strategy partnering with you to the best of our abilities. We have a strong team with an amazing skillset with years of experience. The talent doesn't end there as we are fortunate to have our supportive Board of Directors at hand guiding us through.

*Together, all dreams are possible.*

