



**The Discovery Programme – Centre for Archaeology and Innovation**

**Appointment of New Chief Executive Officer**

**11 November 2020**

**6 Lr. Mount Street Dublin 2**

The Board of the Discovery Programme - Centre for Archaeology and Innovation Ireland is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr John O’Keeffe BA (Hons) PhD MCIOB MIAI MCIFA as Chief Executive Officer of the Discovery Programme with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.

Dr O’Keeffe is currently a senior manager in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, being Principal Inspector of Historic Monuments and Assistant Director of the Historic Environment Division (formerly the Built Heritage Directorate) since 2007.

With more than 25 years of post-graduate professional experience in archaeology, he has developed an expert knowledge of heritage management, academic research and built heritage conservation, alongside a practical application of core personnel and project management skills. He holds an Honours Degree in Archaeology (awarded 1995), and a PhD in Archaeology and Heritage Management (awarded 2008).

Dr O’Keeffe joined the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland in 1998, having been involved in contract archaeology following graduation from the Queen’s University of Belfast in 1995. He has worked across all aspects of archaeology and the management of historic monuments in Northern Ireland.

In announcing the appointment Paul Walsh acting Chair of the Discovery Programme Board said:

*“On behalf of the Board, I am very pleased to announce Dr John O’Keeffe’s appointment as CEO of the Discovery Programme following an extensive recruitment process. Dr O’Keeffe’s eminent standing in archaeology in Ireland and his track record in the Northern Ireland Civil Service will be a major asset to the Discovery Programme at a time of change and development for the organisation. In welcoming John, I would also like to thank the CEO of the Heritage Council, Virginia Teehan for the support and advice extended by her and the Council in the recruitment process. The Heritage Council are the principal funders of the Discovery Programme.”*

Dr O’Keeffe will take up the post of CEO in the Discovery Programme on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.

**ENDS.**

Further information:  
Chris Flynn 087-2797279

The Discovery Programme (DP) was first established by Government in 1995 and in 2015 was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. The Company is a registered Charity No.: CHY 12549. The Discovery Programme is currently located at 6 Lr. Mount Street Dublin 2.

The Discovery Programme: Centre for Archaeology and Innovation Ireland is a publicly funded institution set up to pursue advanced research in Irish archaeology. The Discovery Programme's mission is to identify research themes crucial to interpreting the archaeology of Ireland's prehistoric and historic past and to generate dynamic research around these themes. It conducts that research to the highest academic and technological standards and engages in appropriate cross-disciplinary discourse with cognate disciplines to address research questions. It disseminates the findings of its research widely to scholars and the public.

The Discovery Programme is primarily funded by an annual core grant from the Heritage Council. Current areas of activity involve the production of an analysis of surveys undertaken on the Hill of Tara in the past 15 years and implementing the CHERISH (Climate, Heritage and Environments of Reefs, Islands and Headlands) EU funded project. Further details on the Discovery Programme can be found at [www.discoveryprogramme.ie](http://www.discoveryprogramme.ie). Funding and deliverables are set out in annual Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Heritage Council and the Discovery Programme available on the Heritage Council website [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie)

The following are the nominating bodies to the Discovery Programme Board:

The Heritage Council

Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht

National Museum of Ireland

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Department for Communities Northern Ireland

National Museums Northern Ireland

Royal Irish Academy

The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland

Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland

National University of Ireland Galway

Queen's University Belfast

Sligo Institute of Technology

Trinity College Dublin

University College Cork

University College Dublin

University of Ulster

**END.**