



Victoria and Tom Quigley Engineers – Asset Planning

Victoria and Tom Quigley are engineers and both work in Irish Water’s Asset Planning team. Their work involves looking to the future and designing sewer networks that will better serve the people of Ireland in the decades ahead.

This year the couple are celebrating Engineers Week a bit differently. They are usually based in Irish Water’s Mallow office, but for the last 12 months, they’ve been working from their home in Ballincollig and, like many others, juggling their workload with home-schooling Tom Jnr. (9) and Kate (8), and entertaining their energetic toddler, Liam (3).

For many married couples, working alongside each other at home might be a new experience, but Victoria and Tom met at work in 2002, married in 2010 and the rest as they say is history!

A Cork City native and Ballincollig blow-in, Victoria’s work on the Cork City and Ballincollig Drainage Area Plan (DAP) projects are of great interest to her. Having studied in CIT, her research into the evolution of the drainage network and the piping of old waterways, which now form the main thoroughfares of the city centre, sparked a real interest in the water services aspect of civil engineering.

Victoria says, ‘Surveys and CCTV footage of sewer networks reveal the incredible workmanship of those who culverted the waterways back in the early 1800’s. They have even revealed some unusual ‘rebel’ residents, like a seal who had made a home in one of the outfalls to the River Lee.’

‘My work involves collaborating with colleagues in technical design companies, as well as with local authority staff, caretakers and surveying contractors across the country. I work on projects from Cork City to Monaghan town and many towns and cities in between.’

Victoria's work puts her at the fore of wastewater engineering, addressing issues such as flooding, Climate change, environmental compliance and catchment growth.

Tom hails from Tipperary but is an honorary Cork man, having lived across the county bounds for many years. His work involves looking to the future and deciding where capital investment is made, whilst considering the environmental, social and energy impacts, as well as the range of technologies available.

Tom says, 'My role allows me to meet (on-line!) and discuss challenging issues with a wide range of colleagues every day. I collaborate with colleagues across Irish Water and Local Authorities to deliver improvements where they are needed most. It's always interesting and no two days are ever the same.'

Both Victoria and Tom agree that the variety of projects and challenges they encounter daily make engineering such an interesting and rewarding career choice.

Victoria adds, 'When I graduated in 2002, there was only one other girl in our class of 40. Having immersed ourselves in home-schooling our son and daughter these past few months, we are delighted to see Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects on a par in both the all-boys' and all-girls' schools they attend. It is really encouraging to see how the gender balance in engineering has changed for the better over the past 20 years. Long may it continue!'

Tom believes the pandemic has changed how many of us deliver our work over the last 12 months. 'It will be interesting to see if this pandemic will result in permanent changes to the way we work. Initially working from home was an unexpected and bizarre experience. We joked about whether we were 'working from home' or 'living at work'. Technology has made working from home a real option. Of course we look forward to the day we can be back in a meeting room with real people, but we don't miss the hectic pace of life we had less than a year ago; rushing out the door in the morning, not spending enough quality time with the kids, sitting in our cars for far too long each day and spending each evening getting ready to do it all again the next day,' he says.

Victoria agrees, 'The pandemic has definitely taught us to enjoy a different pace of life. Lunchtime walks to Ballincollig Regional Park are now a regular occurrence, we rarely use our cars anymore, and we have so much more time with the kids. Not every day is easy; we both know we were not born to be teachers, and we dearly miss seeing our family and friends. We consider ourselves very lucky as we have worked throughout the pandemic, unlike so many people across the country who are currently out of work. We have a very supportive network of colleagues in Irish Water and most importantly, we have happiness and health.'