

Network

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Built in the South East Competing on the World Stage

DAVID BRENNAN
OF EASTGATE ENGINEERING
ON THE JOURNEY SO FAR

WHAT'S ON IN WATERFORD?

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MESSAGE FROM GERALD HURLEY, WATERFORD CHAMBER

As we move through another busy and ambitious period for Waterford and the wider South East, this issue of *Network* reflects a region that is not only growing, but increasingly confident in its ability to compete on the world stage.



Our cover story highlights this perfectly. We speak to David Brennan of Eastgate Engineering, a company that has built a strong international reputation while remaining firmly rooted in the South East. It is a powerful example of how global success and local commitment can go hand in hand, something we are seeing more and more across the region and we congratulate David on his selection for the prestigious *EY Entrepreneur of the Year* programme.

The theme of global ambition can also be seen in our feature on the turning of the sod at Waterford Airport. This is a landmark moment for the region, one that signals real progress on a project that will transform connectivity, tourism and investment potential for decades to come. Alongside this, we explore the exciting plans for SETU's Aerospace Academy, further strengthening the South East's position as a hub for innovation, skills and future-focused industries.

Closer to home, we look at practical initiatives that are supporting businesses and communities right now. The launch of the new Waterford In Your Pocket app is set to transform how we showcase everything the city and county has to offer, making it easier than ever for people to discover, engage and support local.

We also highlight the continued growth of companies such as Greenvolt Next and RelateCare, both of which demonstrate the strength of the region in attracting investment, creating jobs and delivering innovation at scale.

Importantly, this issue also reflects the collaborative spirit that underpins so much of this progress. From education and enterprise to infrastructure and sustainability, the common thread is partnership, organisations working together to deliver real impact.

At Waterford Chamber, we remain focused on supporting that momentum, championing initiatives that drive growth and ensuring that the South East continues to realise its full potential.

Gerald Hurley
CEO, Waterford Chamber

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Cheers to the glass half full



■ BY ÉADAOIN CARRICK, PRESIDENT, WATERFORD CHAMBER

There is a phrase we hear all too often when discussing Waterford and the South East, “we’re always waiting.” Waiting for investment, waiting for infrastructure, waiting for recognition, waiting for our turn.

But perhaps it is time we changed the conversation. Perhaps it is time we started looking at the glass as half full instead of half empty.

Because when you step back and look honestly at what is happening across Waterford and the wider region right now, there is a huge amount to be positive about. More importantly, there is real momentum building, momentum that has the potential to transform our city, our economy and our quality of life for generations to come. Too often, we focus on what we don’t yet have instead of recognising the scale of what is now within reach.

MAJOR PROJECTS

Take the re-development of Waterford Airport. For years, people spoke about the airport as an aspiration. Today, we are talking about active development, runway extension plans and the very real prospect of enhanced connectivity that can drive tourism, attract investment and support indigenous enterprise. Regional connectivity matters enormously for economic growth, and the progress being made around the airport should give the entire region confidence.

At the same time, we are seeing major

investment in active travel infrastructure across the city and county. While road congestion remains a challenge, and anyone sitting in traffic each morning knows that frustration well, we are finally beginning to see long-term thinking around how people move around our city. Safer walking routes, improved cycling infrastructure and better urban connectivity are not just “nice to have” projects. They are essential to building healthier, more liveable and more attractive urban centres.

We should also acknowledge that Waterford continues to offer advantages that many other cities have lost. One simple but important example is public parking. Compared to many urban centres across Ireland, Waterford still provides relatively affordable and accessible parking. That matters for consumers, for workers and for businesses trying to sustain vibrant retail and hospitality sectors in the heart of the city. In Canteen, we work all over the country and know first-hand how competitive our parking rates are in Waterford.

Then there is the enormous opportunity presented by offshore renewable energy. The development of offshore wind generation off the coast of Waterford has the potential to be truly transformational, not only from an environmental perspective but from an economic one. The South East has a chance to position itself at the centre of Ireland’s renewable energy future, creating jobs, attracting

investment and building long-term industrial capacity around sustainability and innovation.

REDEVELOPMENT

Alongside these strategic projects, there is another hugely encouraging trend emerging, the growing focus on bringing vacant and underutilised buildings back into productive use.

For too long, we have all walked past prominent vacant buildings in Waterford wondering when they would once again become part of the life and energy of the city. Now, we are beginning to see real movement. Plans are progressing for sites including Tir na nÓg on Lady Lane, the Maryland Hotel, Nos. 125 to 130 Parade Quay and the old presbytery on Great George’s Street. These projects are about more than bricks and mortar. They are about confidence. They are about restoring vibrancy, increasing footfall and creating places where people want to live, work and spend time.

Similarly, the proposed masterplan by Kilkenny County Council for the Clover site at Christendom in Ferrybank represents another important signal of ambition and long-term planning for the region. Coupled with the North Quays, strategic development on both sides of the river is essential if Waterford is to realise its full potential as a regional city.

Tourism also continues to present enormous opportunity. The recent plans by Fáilte Ireland for a tourism attraction



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If we constantly present our city as a place of limitation, we risk discouraging investment, ambition and belief.

of scale in Waterford could become a game changer for the city and county. We know the quality of what Waterford already offers, from our history and culture to our coastline and greenways. A major tourism development has the capacity to significantly increase visitor numbers, extend overnight stays and generate broader economic activity across hospitality, retail and local enterprise.

Equally welcome is the recent Government announcement of grants aimed at converting vacant space above shops into residential accommodation. This is exactly the kind of practical intervention our cities need. Bringing more people back to live in town and city centres creates activity, improves safety, supports local businesses and helps address housing challenges at the same time.

SHAPING THE FUTURE

At Waterford Chamber, we believe strongly that optimism must be matched by action. It is not enough to simply talk about Waterford's potential, we must actively shape and support the future we want to see.

That is why Waterford Chamber continues to play a leading role in driving strategic conversations and practical initiatives for the region. Through programmes such as *The Innovators* and the *Regional Leaders Programme*, we are actively supporting ambitious businesses with the potential to scale, grow and create jobs across the South East. Supporting entrepreneurship and indigenous enterprise is essential if we are to build long-term economic resilience and confidence.

We are also undertaking work on a long term vision document for *Waterford 2075*, a project that asks us to think beyond electoral cycles and immediate challenges and instead consider what kind of city and region we want to leave for future generations. Ambitious regions plan ahead. They invest in vision as much as infrastructure.

Alongside this, Waterford Chamber continues to engage constructively with key stakeholders on strategic projects that will shape the future of the region, from connectivity and infrastructure to tourism, regeneration, housing and economic development. Collaboration between business, local authorities, Government agencies and communities will be critical if we are to maximise the opportunities now emerging.

None of this means we ignore challenges. Of course there are frustrations. Of course there are delays. Of course there are projects we wish were moving faster. But progress rarely happens all at once. Cities are built through momentum, confidence and collective effort. And right now, Waterford has more positive momentum than many people perhaps realise. The key question now is whether we choose to nurture that momentum or constantly talk ourselves down.

There is a tendency in Ireland, and sometimes particularly in the regions, to focus on what has not happened yet instead of recognising the significance of what is beginning to happen. But negativity can become self-fulfilling. If we constantly present our city as a place of limitation, we risk discouraging investment, ambition and belief.

Instead, we need a shared determination to get behind the opportunities in front of us.

That means supporting projects that will improve quality of life. It means encouraging investment. It means constructively challenging delays while still recognising progress. And it means working collectively—public sector, private sector and community alike—to ensure these developments are delivered as quickly and effectively as possible.

Waterford is changing. The foundations for a more vibrant, connected, sustainable and attractive city are being laid right now.

We should be ambitious enough to believe in that future, and positive enough to help build it.



Built in the South East, competing on the world stage

As Eastgate Engineering continues to grow on the global stage, David Brennan speaks to Lynda Lawton about the journey so far, the challenges of scaling a specialised engineering business, and the opportunities ahead from a strong South East base.

■ You were recently recognised in the *EY Entrepreneur of the Year* programme. Congratulations. What did that acknowledgement mean to you personally and professionally, and how has it impacted Eastgate Engineering?

Being shortlisted as a finalist in the *EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Ireland* programme was a huge honour, both personally and professionally. To be recognised alongside some of Ireland's most innovative and ambitious companies was incredibly rewarding, particularly knowing the calibre of entrepreneurs involved.

For me personally, it was a moment to reflect on the journey Eastgate Engineering has been on over the past number of years and the commitment it has taken from our entire team to build the business to where it is today. Professionally, it reinforces that we are moving in the right direction and that the work we are doing across Offshore Wind, Power & Renewables and Critical Infrastructure sectors is making a real impact internationally.

For Eastgate Engineering, the recognition has further strengthened our profile both in Ireland and the UK. It has opened doors to new conversations and opportunities through the EY network, while also giving our team a real sense of pride and confidence in what we are building together.



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There is a strong work ethic and sense of loyalty in the region, and that culture has played a major role in Eastgate's success.

■ Eastgate Engineering has been expanding, including the development of new office spaces in Belview. What drove that decision, and how do these new facilities support your long-term vision for the company?

The decision to expand our facilities, including the office opening in Waterford Port, serves the growth trajectory of our business and the need to create an environment that supports the next phase of Eastgate Engineering's development.

Given our international prominence in the Offshore Wind sector, this is also a strategic location for Eastgate Engineering to be located and support the future ORE employment opportunities that will be developed in the coming years.

Over the last number of years, we have experienced significant growth across Ireland and the UK, and it was important that our infrastructure evolved alongside that growth.

Our presence at Belview represents our confidence in the future of the company and our commitment to continuing to grow Eastgate Engineering as an internationally recognised business with a strong base in the South East.

■ Despite building an international client base, you've chosen to keep your operations rooted here in the South East. What makes the region strategically and personally important to you?

The South East is home to me, and that personal connection is very important. Eastgate Engineering was first established here, and it's important to us, while growing a globally competitive business, to remain rooted in our local community.

Strategically, the region also offers advantages. We have access to exceptional local talent from the likes of SETU, strong infrastructure, proximity to key ports and growing connectivity to both Irish and UK markets.

Equally important are the people. There is a strong work ethic and sense of loyalty in the region, and that culture has played a major role in Eastgate's success. As the company grows internationally, maintaining our base here ensures we continue contributing to the local economy while creating opportunities for future generations in the South East.

■ Scaling a specialised engineering business comes with its own pressures. What have been some of the biggest challenges you've faced while growing Eastgate Engineering, and how have you navigated them?

One of the biggest challenges has been managing rapid growth while maintaining the high standards and culture that the business was built on. In a specialised engineering sector, your reputation and relationships with clients are everything, so ensuring consistent quality and delivery across multiple projects and regions is critical.

Another challenge has been scaling the organisation itself, bringing in the right people and ensuring the business has the systems and leadership needed for long-term sustainable growth. The appointment of a new board of directors was an important step in that process and has been extremely valuable to the company as we continue to expand.

Because of the critical and complex nature of the industries and sectors we work in, we take on a lot of financial risk in undertaking these very complex projects. We are contracted to build the world's largest offshore wind farm as well as the world's largest polyhalite mine. We are also working across many Tier 1 Comah sites in the UK as well as Nuclear and Defence. All these projects carry huge risks for us and we have an ongoing challenge as part of what we do, but we have developed a niche and strong capability to manage these risks on a daily basis.

■ Looking ahead, what does the next phase of growth look like for Eastgate Engineering, both in Ireland and internationally?

The next phase of growth for Eastgate Engineering is centred on strengthening our international presence while continuing to invest heavily in our operations here in Ireland. Over the past number of years, we have expanded significantly across Ireland and the UK, including the development of our Warrington office and upgrades to our facilities in Teesside and Waterford, and we see strong opportunities to continue building on that momentum internationally.

As a business, we now work across a broad range of sectors, including Offshore Wind, Power & Renewables, Oil, Gas & Chemicals, Industrial and Manufacturing, Mining, Nuclear & Defence. The diversity of those sectors has been a major strength for us and has allowed the company to grow while building long-term relationships with global clients.

Given the highly regulated energy security projects that Eastgate Engineering specialise in, we are planning further growth in all these sectors with particular emphasis on offshore wind industry.

Ireland remains central to our long-term strategy. The ambition is to build a globally recognised business known for quality, reliability and the ability to deliver major projects safely and efficiently across multiple sectors.

“

Ireland has some of the best offshore wind resources in the world, and the South East is ideally positioned to become a major hub for the industry.

■ Offshore energy and engineering are becoming increasingly significant globally. How important is the offshore sector to your business, and where do you see the biggest opportunities in that space?

The offshore wind sector is an extremely important part of our business and one that we see continuing to grow significantly over the coming years. We have developed a significant capability in Wind Turbine & Tower Pre-Assembly, Transition Fit-Out, Offshore HV & LV Terminating & Testing and Offshore Substation Fit-Out. The target for UK and Ireland is to develop over 150GW of offshore wind in the next 25 years and, given that there is only 15GW currently installed, we are planning our growth around these targets to deliver this capacity to the grid.

We are currently working on Dogger Bank, which is the world's largest offshore wind farm. Our teams are supporting the mechanical and electrical pre-assembly work for the project. Being involved in a development of that scale demonstrates the level of expertise and capability we have built within the offshore wind sector.

Alongside Dogger Bank, we have also delivered and supported a number of other significant offshore wind projects such as Inch Cape wind farm, Baltyk 2 and 3 and Hornsea 1 offshore wind farm. Through that experience, we have developed specialist knowledge in working within technically demanding environments where safety, quality and reliability are critical.

We also see enormous opportunity for the South East and for Ireland as a whole within offshore wind. Ireland has some of the best offshore wind resources in the world, and the South East is ideally positioned to become a major hub for the industry due to its ports, infrastructure, skilled workforce and proximity to planned offshore developments.

That is why we have been actively involved in events and industry



discussions centred around Tonn Nua, the proposed offshore wind development off the South East coast. Projects like Tonn Nua have the potential to create long-term employment, strengthen regional economies and position Ireland as a global leader in renewable energy.

The skills, people and capability already exist here in Ireland to support this industry at scale. As a company rooted in the South East, Eastgate Engineering can play a major role in helping deliver that future while continuing to expand our presence internationally.

■ You are the owner of the Vicky Phelan portrait. Can you share the story behind acquiring it and why it holds such importance for you?

Vicky was a close family friend, so the portrait holds enormous personal significance for my family and me. Acquiring it was never about ownership in the traditional sense, it was about preserving and continuing Vicky's legacy and ensuring that her voice and message continue to reach people across the country.

Vicky showed incredible courage and determination in speaking out and fighting not only for herself but for countless other women. She changed the national conversation around women's healthcare and patient advocacy in Ireland, and that impact should never be forgotten.

The portrait has become a symbol of that strength and resilience. Through the Vicky Phelan Portrait Events, we are able to bring people together, raise awareness

and continue important conversations around cervical cancer awareness and patient advocacy. Eastgate also runs *Vicky's Legacy*, which is a dedicated platform and awareness campaign committed to cervical cancer awareness and patient advocacy. It was established to honour and continue the extraordinary work of Vicky Phelan, whose courage and determination reshaped the national conversation around women's health in Ireland.

■ Beyond business, you've supported initiatives connected to Vicky. How do you view the role of business leaders in contributing to wider social and cultural causes?

I believe business leaders have a responsibility to contribute positively beyond commercial success alone. Businesses are part of communities, and with that comes an opportunity to support causes that can make a real difference in people's lives. For me, supporting initiatives connected to *Vicky's Legacy* is deeply personal, but it also reflects a broader belief that businesses can use their platforms to create awareness, encourage important conversations and help drive meaningful change.

Leadership is not only about growth and profitability, it is also about values and leaving a positive impact. Whether that is supporting healthcare awareness, community initiatives or projects, I believe businesses can play an important role in helping strengthen society and supporting causes that matter to people.

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What's on in Waterford

New app set to transform how Waterford showcases its offerings

■ BY LYNDA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

Waterford is set to take a major step forward in how it promotes and connects people with the wide range of experiences, attractions, businesses and events taking place across the city and county, with the launch of a new digital platform this July.

Developed by Waterford In Your Pocket, with the support of Waterford Chamber, the new app aims to become the go to source for discovering what's happening throughout Waterford, all from the convenience of the smartphone in your pocket.

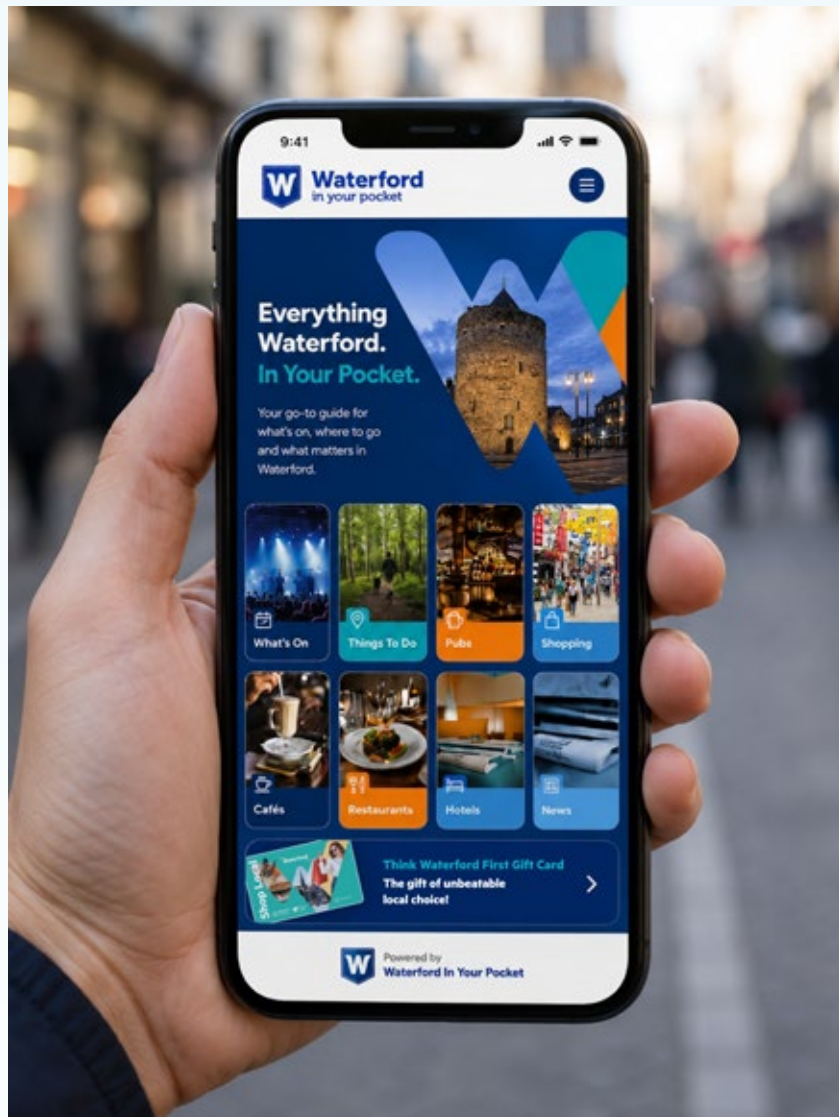
From shopping and retail experiences to hospitality, tourism, cultural events, sporting activities, entertainment, cafes, restaurants, visitor attractions and festivals, Waterford offers an extensive range of experiences for residents and visitors alike. However, much of this activity is currently promoted through multiple channels, making it difficult for people to discover everything that is available at any given time.

The new app seeks to address this challenge by bringing together Waterford's business, retail, tourism, hospitality and events offering on a single platform, allowing users to quickly and easily find out what's happening, where to go, where to shop and what experiences are available across the city and county.

BRINGING WATERFORD TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE

At its core, the app will serve as a one stop destination for discovering events, activities, dining, accommodation, attractions and shopping opportunities throughout Waterford. Whether someone is planning a visit, looking for somewhere to eat, searching for a local event, seeking family activities or simply looking for inspiration for a day out, the platform will make finding information easier than ever.

The initiative builds on the success of Waterford In Your Pocket, which has



established itself as a trusted source of local information, event listings and business promotion. Waterford In Your Pocket currently reaches an average of 1.3 million people every month across its digital channels, providing businesses with an established and highly engaged audience interested in discovering what Waterford has to offer. That reach increases dramatically during major

events and festival periods, with monthly engagement rising to between 2 and 3 million people.

The launch of the app marks a significant evolution in how Waterford presents itself to both visitors and residents.

Gerald Hurley, CEO of Waterford Chamber, welcomed the initiative and encouraged businesses from every

sector to get involved. “Waterford Chamber is delighted to support this initiative. There is a tremendous amount happening across Waterford every day, from retail and shopping experiences to hospitality, tourism, cultural events, sporting activities and entertainment. Unfortunately, much of this activity is not as visible as it could be, particularly to visitors and even local people who may be unaware of what is available on their doorstep.”

SUPPORTING LOCAL RETAIL AND DRIVING FOOTFALL

Importantly, the app will also provide a valuable platform for retailers to promote their businesses, special offers, seasonal campaigns, late-night shopping events, new product launches and in-store experiences. By making this information readily accessible, the initiative aims to encourage greater footfall, support local businesses and strengthen Waterford’s retail offering at a time when attracting customers into town and city centres is increasingly important.

“One of the most important aspects of this platform is its ability to support and promote Waterford’s retail sector,” said Gerald. “Our retailers make a significant contribution to the vitality and attractiveness of the city and county, yet many businesses struggle to communicate special offers, new product ranges, seasonal promotions and events to potential customers. This app provides a direct and affordable way to showcase those offerings and encourage people to shop local.”

Gerald believes the accessibility of the platform will be one of its greatest strengths. “The beauty of this initiative is that all of this information can be available instantly on a person’s phone, in their pocket, whenever they need it. Whether someone is looking for a restaurant, a visitor attraction, a sporting event, a live music session, a retail offer or simply something to do, the information will be readily available. It gives businesses a direct way to promote what they are doing while making it much easier for people to engage with and enjoy everything Waterford has to offer.”

POWERFUL PLATFORM FOR BUSINESS

Waterford Chamber is encouraging businesses from retail, hospitality,



tourism, culture, sports, entertainment and the wider business community to register and support the platform.

“This platform provides an opportunity for businesses to collectively showcase the breadth and quality of Waterford’s offering. It is important that businesses from retail, hospitality, tourism, culture, sports and entertainment get behind this initiative so that we can present a comprehensive picture of everything Waterford has to offer. The stronger the participation, the stronger the platform becomes.”

Paul Dower of Waterford In Your Pocket said the platform has been designed to strengthen the visibility of local businesses while enhancing the overall visitor and resident experience. “The support of Waterford Chamber has been invaluable throughout the development process and has helped ensure that the app delivers real value for businesses and users alike.”

AFFORDABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESSES

The initiative also represents a highly cost-effective opportunity for businesses. Registration on the platform is free for the first three months, after which a nominal monthly subscription will apply.

“Registration is free for the first three months and thereafter there is only a nominal monthly subscription,” said Paul. “For businesses, particularly independent retailers and SMEs, it represents a very cost-effective marketing opportunity. The potential reach is significant and the app will be promoted extensively across the region and through hotels and visitor accommodation providers. Businesses

will have the opportunity to place their products, services, events and special offers directly in front of both visitors and local consumers.”

The app will also help ensure that visitors can easily discover local businesses, attractions, events, cafés, restaurants, bars and shopping opportunities during their stay, helping to maximise the economic impact of tourism across the county.

CALL FOR BUSINESSES TO GET INVOLVED

As the launch date approaches, Waterford Chamber is encouraging businesses throughout the city and county to register and actively support the initiative.

“This initiative is about showcasing the very best of Waterford,” Gerald said. “Whether it’s shopping, dining, visitor attractions, sporting events, festivals, cultural experiences or entertainment, we want people to be aware of the breadth of what is available here. We particularly want to see strong engagement from our retail sector because vibrant town and city centres depend on successful local businesses. By working together, we can better promote Waterford, support local enterprise and encourage people to spend more time and money in the city and county.”

Waterford may soon have its most comprehensive digital showcase yet, placing everything the city and county has to offer directly into the pockets of residents and visitors alike.

■ Visit Waterford In Your Pocket at www.facebook.com/WaterfordIYP



Susan Hogan, HR Manager, and Owen Power, CEO, Greenvolt Next Ireland

Greenvolt Next to create 50 new jobs at Waterford HQ

Greenvolt Next, part of Greenvolt Group, a leading specialist in renewable energy solutions for the commercial and industrial sector, is to create 90 new jobs—50 of which will be based at its Waterford headquarters.

Over the next 12 months, the company will be recruiting mid-level to senior managers to support its operations in Ireland and the UK. Roles will include project engineers, senior project engineers, project managers and site managers. These new positions are part of a significant investment into the company's expansion, talent acquisition strategy and future growth plans.

This funding will also go towards the further development of Greenvolt Next's existing Waterford HQ, which is being increased by 2,176 sq. ft. and will be equipped with the latest technologies. In turn, the expanded team will enable Greenvolt Next to deliver more large-scale projects, supporting developers and landowners in advancing renewable assets, while meeting the increasing demand for green energy solutions in the Irish and UK markets.

As an organisation, Greenvolt Next supports businesses with their renewable energy transformations. It is responsible for some of Ireland's largest and most innovative renewable energy projects, including Sanofi Waterford solar farm. It also works with leading retailers including Lidl, Aldi and Tesco.

Over the next three years, Greenvolt Next forecasts significant increase in revenue following accelerated market growth. This will be driven by the rising demand for sustainable and renewable energy, as well as requirements around CSRD reporting. Specifically, the organisation anticipates growing demand for solar panel installations and battery storage projects over the next 12 months. In 2025, Greenvolt Next reduced customer CO2 emissions by 30,000 tonnes, with a further reduction of 150,000 tonnes of CO2 projected over the next three years as demand for renewable energy soars.

Owen Power, CEO of Greenvolt Next Ireland & UK, commented: "Our success to date has been driven by our ability to deliver the most reliable and cost-effective energy solutions to customers,

underpinned by unmatched resources and expertise. Looking to the future, which will only see greater demand for such projects, we want to continue making a tangible impact for businesses and the environment.

"That means investing in operations, growing the team and innovating for customers. As well as marking the next stage in our own journey, this will allow us to make renewable energy easy for more organisations across Ireland and the UK. In turn, they will not only be more sustainable but also more successful."

Greenvolt Next operates within a dynamic and agile environment. As a growing international Group also focused on Utility-Scale and Sustainable Biomass projects, Greenvolt Next offers opportunities for professional development, enabling people to contribute to projects with tangible impact, supporting the advancement of the energy transition.

■ To apply for available roles at Greenvolt Next, visit <https://next.greenvolt.com/ie/careers>



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Waterford Airport and the South East's next chapter

Breaking Ground, Building Futures

■ BY GERALD HURLEY, CEO, WATERFORD CHAMBER

The turning of the sod at Waterford Airport is more than a ceremonial milestone, it is a signal that the South East is stepping into a new phase of confidence and delivery. For years, the airport represented potential. Today, it represents progress.

That shift did not happen by chance. It is the result of determined leadership, most notably by William Bolster and the former Board of Waterford Airport, whose work in securing a private investor has turned long-held ambition into tangible reality. Their persistence has brought the region to a point where delivery is no longer theoretical, it is underway.

At the heart of the project lies a simple truth—regions of scale require infrastructure of scale. The South East, with a population of over 650,000 people and it cannot reach its full potential as a modern regional economy without direct international connections. For too long, most of those connections have depended on Dublin Airport. While Dublin Airport plays a vital role, relying on it so heavily creates challenges for businesses, makes travel less convenient for visitors, and can leave the South East feeling like it's on the sidelines rather than at the centre of Ireland's growth.

Waterford Airport changes that dynamic. It brings international access closer to home, reducing travel time, improving efficiency, and strengthening the region's competitiveness. More importantly, it sends a clear message, that the South East is open, connected and ready to engage directly with global markets.

This is not an isolated development. The airport aligns with the ambitions of the *National Planning Framework* and the broader goal of balanced regional development. It is a critical component of what is often described as the '45-minute region', where key services and infrastructure are accessible within a reasonable travel time. In that context, the airport is not an optional extra, it is essential infrastructure.

REALISING ITS POTENTIAL

The real story, however, lies in what the airport enables.

Tourism offers the most immediate potential, and landing in Waterford gives you direct access to all that Ireland has to offer—beaches, mountains, heritage and culture. Yet too often, visitors arrive elsewhere and only partially experience what the region has to offer. A functioning airport changes the entry point. It allows visitors to arrive directly into the South East, to start their journey here, to spend more time here and spend money within the region. Long-term projections suggest

the potential for 2.5 million annual visitors and €500 million in tourism revenue, a transformation that would be felt across hotels, restaurants, attractions and local communities.

The impact extends far beyond tourism. In a global economy, connectivity is a decisive factor in investment decisions. Companies do not simply choose locations based on cost. They choose places that are accessible, efficient and internationally linked. Waterford Airport strengthens the South East's proposition, particularly in high-value sectors such as technology, life sciences and the green economy. It positions the region as a credible location for internationally focused enterprise.

BIG AMBITION

That matters because the South East's ambitions are significant. According to extensive research being conducted by Waterford Chamber, in creating a vision for Waterford 2075, the region is targeting the creation of 45,000 new high-productivity jobs in the coming decades. Achieving that goal requires



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Waterford Airport strengthens the South East's proposition, particularly in high-value sectors such as technology, life sciences and the green economy.

more than talent and intent, it requires the infrastructure that connects those jobs to global markets. The airport is central to that ambition.

There is also a powerful economic cycle at play. Infrastructure investment drives connectivity. Connectivity attracts talent and investment. That, in turn, supports business growth, job creation and higher productivity. As opportunities expand, more graduates choose to stay in the region, reinforcing the local economy. Over time, this creates the kind of sustained, compounding growth that transforms regional performance.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

A key part of that ecosystem is South East Technological University. The university's expansion and its growing focus on research, skills and international

engagement will be fundamental to the airport's long term success.

SETU's role goes further. Its commitment to aviation related education and research creates the potential for Waterford to develop as a centre of excellence in aviation and aerospace support services. This integration of education and infrastructure is what sustains regional airports in comparable European cities. It ensures that connectivity is not only established, but maintained and grown.

The turning of the sod marks both the end of one chapter and the start of another. It brings to a close years of advocacy and uncertainty, and signals the beginning of a new phase focused on delivery, growth and making the most of the opportunities ahead.

For the business community, it's a

springboard for growth. For the region, it's a clear signal of confidence in its future.

Waterford Airport is not simply about aircraft movements. It is about economic momentum. It is about reshaping how the South East connects to the world and how the world connects to the South East.

And after years of promise, that future is now under construction.

SETU's Aerospace Academy

A new flight path for Waterford and the South East

■ BY DR FRANCES HARDIMAN, HEAD (CARLOW), FACULTY OF ENGINEERING & BUILT ENVIRONMENT, SETU

The South East is entering an exciting new phase of technological growth as SETU advances its plan for a new Aerospace Academy in partnership with Waterford Airport. This initiative, now actively in development, marks an important step towards positioning the region as a national leader in aviation research, specialist training, and the rapidly expanding field of unmanned air vehicles (UAVs).

BUILDING SKILLS, RESEARCH CAPACITY, AND IMPACT

Over recent years, SETU has built strong capability in flight test engineering and aircraft systems and is steadily strengthening its expertise in drone technologies. UAVs are transforming sectors such as ecology, offshore wind, environmental monitoring, emergency response, and infrastructure inspection. SETU's research strengths in Advanced Materials—which can support the future development of lightweight and more sustainable aircraft components—complement well-established expertise in Intelligent Systems and Data Processing, both of which will become increasingly important as UAV technologies evolve. The university also brings experience in Environmental Monitoring and Digital Twins, working across the region on practical challenges that translate naturally into future aerial and remote sensing applications.

Importantly, these areas align closely with SETU's wider sustainability mission. UAVs offer new ways to monitor habitats, support offshore renewable energy projects, reduce emissions in inspection and surveying work, and provide low impact tools for environmental research. As the Academy develops, it will help bring these strands together—supporting technologies that contribute to a more sustainable future for the region.

SETU has a broad base of practical research expertise across the university, providing a strong foundation for the Aerospace Academy as it develops. The



Pictured at the *Celebrating Aerospace* event at SETU's Carlow campus (l-r): Sean McKeown, Chief Executive, Waterford City and County Council; Dr Frances Hardiman, SETU; William Bolster, CEO, Waterford Airport; Cynthia Ní Mhurchú, MEP; Aidan Power, Manager, Waterford Airport; Prof. Veronica Campbell, President of SETU.

Academy aims to build on what SETU already does well—applied research, collaboration with industry, innovation and practical problem solving—while opening new opportunities in areas such as UAV flight testing and climate-focused aviation technologies. These developments will ensure that SETU serves both learners and industry partners, supporting research in UAV operations, applications, sustainable aviation technologies, and real-world UAV flight testing.

It is recognised that UAVs are a developing technology, and their use and impact on society is evolving. It is important that we have an inclusive and balanced perspective, combining technical expertise with a broader understanding of UAVs and their use within society.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH WATERFORD AIRPORT

The collaboration between SETU and Waterford Airport—formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding—creates a unique opportunity for Ireland. Waterford Airport offers something few locations can match; dedicated controlled airspace and an operational environment ideal for safe UAV testing and flying,

accredited UAV pilot training, and applied research. This approach mirrors successful international partnerships where universities and regional airports work closely together to accelerate innovation. Waterford's location, close to offshore renewable energy zones and key transport corridors, makes it an ideal base for next generation aviation technologies.

CATALYST FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

For Waterford and the wider South East, this initiative is more than an academic project—it is a strategic investment in the region's future. With offshore wind development accelerating and demand rising for advanced monitoring, logistics, and environmental technologies, the Academy will strive for Waterford Airport and surrounding region to become a recognised hub for aviation innovation.

SETU is proud to be working closely with Waterford Airport on this ambitious endeavour. Together, we are laying the foundations for a centre of excellence that will support research, talent development, and industry collaboration for decades to come.

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Pictured at the AIB Club Player Awards at Croke Park (l-r): Jarlath Burns, President, GAA; Orlaith Ryan, AIB Chief Customer Officer; Trina Murray, President of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association; Brian Molloy, President of the Camogie Association

AIB Leading the Way

Empowering women in business, sport, and community

How strategic partnerships and purposeful support are shaping Ireland's future

AIB has made it a priority to champion women across business and sport in recent years. AIB's commitment to empowerment and inclusion has delivered tangible results for organisations devoted to female advancement, with AIB a supportive and trusted ally. The strategic and societal impact of AIB's initiatives is clear, with benefits now being felt far beyond boardrooms and playing fields.

Central to AIB's approach is the cultivation of meaningful partnerships with organisations that support women's professional development. AIB's long-standing relationship with Network Ireland, a leading organisation for women in business has provided thousands of female entrepreneurs and professionals with platforms to learn, connect, and thrive. Collaborating on events, mentorship schemes, and awards, AIB has helped nurture a culture where women's ambition is encouraged and celebrated.

Karen Ronan, Network Ireland President 2026 and CEO, Galway Chamber says: "Empowering women is not just about opportunity, it's about creating the right environments for women to lead, thrive, and influence change. AIB's commitment to supporting women across business, sport, and community is a powerful example of how purposeful partnerships can shape stronger, more connected communities. Through AIB's official partnership with Network Ireland we see every day how this support translates into confidence, leadership, and long-term impact."

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

The bank also plays a key role in the *Chartered Accountants Ireland Women in Business* series, supporting initiatives that address barriers to career progression and foster diverse leadership within the financial sector. This partnership reflects AIB's belief that empowering women in



professional services drives innovation and strengthens the Irish economy.

The significant partnership with *AwakenHub* focuses on supporting female founders and entrepreneurs in start-ups



AwakenHub team (l-r): Denise McQuaid, Cofounder & Director of Investor Relations; Clare McGee, Cofounder & CEO; Sinead Crowley, Cofounder & Director of Community; Mary McKenna, Cofounder & Chair; Maria McKeever, Chief Operations Officer.

and scale-ups. Through tailored events, funding opportunities, and strategic guidance, AIB helps unlock potential and open doors for women seeking to launch and grow their own businesses. As Maria McKeever, COO of AwakenHub, puts it: “AIB’s partnership has enabled us to reach more women, accelerate their businesses, and build a stronger ecosystem for female founders in Ireland. Their support goes far beyond funding—it’s about creating opportunities and raising ambitions.”

ON THE PITCH

AIB’s commitment to women extends to the sporting arena, where its sponsorship of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) and the Camogie Association has brought unprecedented visibility and resources to female athletes. Through these partnerships, AIB has helped elevate women’s sport in Ireland, ensuring that players receive the recognition and respect they deserve.

This commitment was especially evident at the *AIB Club Player of the Year Awards 2026*, where female players were honoured alongside their male counterparts. The awards ceremony marked a significant step towards gender parity in sport, and AIB’s role in supporting such recognition underscores its dedication to equality both on and off the pitch.

AIB’s inclusive approach in the boardroom and on the pitch means that its impact is felt in local communities, schools, and voluntary groups, fostering environments where women can lead, inspire, and make a difference.

AIB’s sustained support for women in business and sport is more than a

corporate strategy, it is supportive in enabling change. By building strong partnerships, investing in female talent, and championing inclusion, AIB is helping to create a more equitable, innovative, and vibrant Ireland.

As the landscape continues to evolve, AIB’s leadership in empowering women seeks to make a meaningful difference. Through our commitment to strategic action, AIB is helping to shape a future where every woman has the opportunity to succeed.

AIB’s story is one of purposeful support and partnership. Its work with Network Ireland, Chartered Accountants Ireland, AwakenHub, and others shows how collaboration fuels opportunity and ambition. By sponsoring the LGFA and Camogie Association, AIB is not only

elevating women’s sport but also sending a clear message about the importance of visibility and recognition for female athletes.

Ireland is changing, with women playing an increasingly central role in shaping its future. AIB’s commitment to help nurture talent, break down barriers, and support achievement is helping to accelerate this progress. The bank’s initiatives are not just about individual success, they are about helping build communities where women can thrive, inspire, and lead.

As the drive for equality continues, the responsibility to support women is shared across society. AIB’s example highlights how purposeful investment, and partnership can make real change. Supporting women is not just the right thing to do, it is essential for Ireland’s continued growth and vibrancy. Through its actions, AIB has become a catalyst for inclusion, innovation, and progress, helping create an environment where women are empowered to reach their potential.



AIB ambassador Aoife Prendergast at the launch of the AIB GAA, LGFA, and Camogie All-Ireland Club Championships.



Campion Insurance | Risk Insights

Trading with confidence in an uncertain economy

Irish businesses are facing a period of heightened financial uncertainty, as a combination of persistent late payments, increasing insolvency levels and ongoing global economic disruption continues to challenge traditional trading models.

According to PwC’s latest *Insolvency Barometer* for Q1 2026, 212 insolvencies were recorded in the first quarter of the year. A closer look at sector performance highlights where these risks are most acute. Retail accounted for almost a quarter of all insolvencies in Q1 2026, reflecting the ongoing strain on consumer-facing businesses. Meanwhile, the hospitality sector remains under significant pressure, with an insolvency rate of 62 per 10,000, more than double the national average. Geographically, Dublin continues to dominate, accounting for over half of all insolvencies, with 110 cases recorded in the capital alone this quarter. Cork and Kildare follow at a considerable distance, with 22 and 14 insolvencies respectively, reinforcing the concentration of financial distress in key urban centres.

Against this backdrop, the risks associated with trading on credit have become increasingly pronounced.

At Campion Insurance, we work with businesses to move beyond reactive risk management and build strategies that are

proactive, practical and tailored to what each company needs.

TRADE CREDIT INSURANCE: ENABLING SMARTER TRADING

When a customer pays late or not at all the impact on cashflow can be swift and serious. Trade credit insurance (TCI) protects businesses against exactly this risk, covering losses from customer insolvency or protracted non-payment. But its value extends well beyond a safety net.

“Trade credit insurance has evolved significantly in recent years,” said Oliver Murphy, Trade Credit Insurance specialist at Campion Insurance. “It is no longer just about protecting bad debt; it is about enabling businesses to trade with confidence. In a climate where uncertainty has become the norm, companies need tools that not only safeguard them but also support smarter decision-making, stronger financial planning and sustainable growth.”

TCI can also strengthen a company’s access to finance and provide detailed intelligence on customer creditworthiness helping businesses decide who to trade with and how far to extend credit. That said, it works best as part of a wider risk management strategy. Companies with concentrated customer bases, international trade exposure, or tighter

margins are often those who benefit most. For others, the value proposition depends on their specific circumstances, which is why expert guidance is essential before committing.

HOW CAMPION INSURANCE CAN HELP

Whether you’re an SME looking to protect your debtor book or a contractor building capacity for larger tenders, our team at Campion Insurance provides specialist advice tailored to your business. We don’t offer off-the-shelf solutions, we take the time to understand your risk profile, your trading relationships and your growth ambitions, then recommend cover that genuinely fits.

■ **Oliver Murphy** is our local Trade Credit Insurance expert. To consult Oliver, call 087 2662966 or email oliver.murphy@campion.com



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The deal highlights the calibre of companies operating in Waterford and the ability of locally based firms to attract international investment and partnerships.

RelateCare joins global firm Huron in major healthcare deal

Waterford-headquartered healthcare solutions company RelateCare has entered a significant new phase of growth following its acquisition by global professional services firm Huron, marking another strong vote of confidence in the South East as a centre for innovation in healthcare technology.

RelateCare, which has built a strong presence in Waterford while serving international healthcare systems, is recognised for its AI-enabled clinical and patient access solutions. The company's model combines clinical expertise with advanced technology to support healthcare providers from initial patient scheduling through to clinical triage, improving both efficiency and patient experience.

The acquisition positions RelateCare to scale its operations and expand its reach globally, while strengthening Waterford's reputation as a hub for high-value, knowledge-driven employment.

Commenting on the development, RelateCare CEO Conor O'Byrne described the move as an exciting next chapter for the business and its team. He noted that joining Huron will enable the company to accelerate its growth and bring its innovative solutions to a broader international market.

From a regional perspective, the deal highlights the calibre of companies operating in Waterford and the ability of locally based firms to attract international investment and partnerships. It also reinforces the strength of the region's



Conor O'Byrne, CEO, RelateCare

talent pool, particularly in areas such as digital health, artificial intelligence and clinical services.

For Huron, the acquisition enhances its healthcare offering by integrating RelateCare's AI-enabled managed services with its existing expertise in care transformation and patient access. The combined capability is expected to support healthcare organisations in improving patient access, streamlining care coordination and delivering measurable operational and financial improvements.

Huron CEO Mark Hussey emphasised the strategic importance of patient access and clinical coordination for healthcare providers, noting that the addition of RelateCare creates a more comprehensive managed service solution for health systems.

RelateCare will now operate within Huron's Healthcare division, forming part of its global consulting and managed services capability. While financial terms of the deal have not been disclosed, the strategic alignment signals strong growth ambitions for both organisations.

For Waterford and the wider South East, the acquisition is another example of how indigenous companies are scaling internationally while maintaining strong regional roots. As global demand for digital health solutions continues to grow, developments such as this underline the region's potential to play a leading role in shaping the future of healthcare delivery.

■ For more information, visit www.relatecare.com and www.huronconsultinggroup.com



Sanofi Waterford

Global Impact, Rooted in Community

In an era where sustainability is no longer optional but essential, Sanofi's Waterford site stands as a compelling example of how a global biopharmaceutical leader can deliver meaningful local impact while advancing ambitious international goals. Recognised as the *BioPharmaChem Sustainable Company of the Year 2026*, Sanofi Waterford is not simply meeting environmental expectations, it is redefining what sustainable manufacturing looks like in practice.

At the heart of this success lies *Planet Care*, Sanofi's global sustainability programme, launched in 2021. More than a corporate initiative, *Planet Care* is a strategic framework embedded across every level of the organisation, aligning environmental responsibility with business performance. It reflects a clear conviction that the future of healthcare depends not only on scientific innovation, but on the health of the planet itself.

Nowhere is this vision more tangible than in Waterford.

GLOBAL VISION, LOCAL DELIVERY

Sanofi's Waterford facility plays a critical role in supplying life changing medicines to over 110 countries, yet its approach is deeply grounded in the South East of Ireland. The site has managed to grow significantly, expanding its footprint by

90% and doubling production output, while simultaneously reducing its environmental impact.

This balance between growth and sustainability is no accident. It is the result of deliberate investment, clear targets and a culture that treats environmental performance as core business.

One of the most visible examples is the site's solar farm, delivered in collaboration with Waterford-based GreenVolt. Spanning approximately five acres and comprising 5,750 panels, the installation

generates 4MW of renewable energy, enough to supply around 20% of the site's electricity needs. Beyond reducing carbon emissions by more than 600 tonnes annually, the project demonstrates the value of local partnerships in delivering global climate goals.

Complementing this is a major heat pump project designed to transition the site away from traditional gas based heating. Together, these initiatives form a cornerstone of Sanofi's broader ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.



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“What truly distinguishes Sanofi Waterford is its emphasis on people. Sustainability here is not confined to infrastructure, it is embedded in culture.”

INNOVATION WITH PURPOSE

Sanofi Waterford’s sustainability journey is defined not just by scale, but by innovation. The site has embraced forward thinking approaches across energy, water, biodiversity and product design, ensuring that environmental improvements are both measurable and meaningful.

A key focus is eco design, embedding sustainability considerations into products and processes from the outset. This includes life cycle assessments to better understand environmental impacts across the value chain, innovative packaging solutions that reduce waste and resource consumption, and energy efficient manufacturing processes that help lower emissions while maintaining world-class production standards.

The site has also made significant strides in biodiversity enhancement. A standout initiative is its contribution to Ireland’s *100 Million Trees Project*. Using the Miyawaki method, a technique that accelerates forest growth and biodiversity, Sanofi has planted 10,000 native Irish trees, transforming sections of its campus into thriving ecosystems.

Further supporting this biodiversity pillar is the development of the *La Marche Conservation Area*, which provides a dedicated habitat for local flora and fauna while creating opportunities for employees to connect with nature. Complementing this are biodiversity walks through *An Gairdín Glas* and along *Slí na Sláinte*, initiatives that not only encourage environmental awareness but also support employee wellbeing and engagement by bringing sustainability to life in a tangible and accessible way.

Elsewhere, water conservation measures have delivered savings of more than 24,500 cubic metres, while ongoing efficiency programmes have reduced energy consumption despite increased production demands.

These are not isolated projects. They are part of a coordinated, long-term strategy backed by significant investment, with €23.8 million committed through 2028, ensuring that sustainability is built into the site’s future, not retrofitted to its past.



EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

What truly distinguishes Sanofi Waterford is its emphasis on people. Sustainability here is not confined to infrastructure, it is embedded in culture.

Employees are actively engaged through structured training programmes, awareness days such as *World Environment Day*, interactive initiatives like *Climate Fresk*, and wellbeing-focused activities that encourage participation in biodiversity and conservation projects across the site.

Beyond the site, Sanofi has developed strong partnerships that extend its impact into the community. Its collaboration with Junior Achievement Ireland on the *It’s Our Planet* programme has already reached 5,000 students across 153 schools, equipping the next generation with the knowledge and skills to tackle environmental challenges.

Closer to home, initiatives such as the partnership with Ard Scoil na Mara and support for local environmental awards demonstrate a commitment to nurturing future leaders within the region.

Even everyday actions are aligned with broader social goals. The site’s bottle return scheme, for example, links recycling efforts directly to charitable giving, supporting *Annabelle’s House* and reinforcing the connection between environmental responsibility and community wellbeing.

RECOGNITION AND LEADERSHIP

Sanofi Waterford’s efforts have not gone unnoticed. Winning the *BioPharmaChem Sustainable Company of the Year Award* is a significant endorsement, recognising not only the scale of its achievements but

the depth of its impact across business, society and the environment.

High profile visits from Mary Butler and Darragh O’Brien have further highlighted the site’s role as a national leader in sustainable manufacturing, while its participation in initiatives such as *Clean Coasts* underscores its ongoing commitment to community engagement.

Yet perhaps the most important recognition is the example it sets.

A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

Sanofi Waterford demonstrates that sustainability and growth are not competing priorities. By integrating environmental responsibility into its core strategy, the site has shown that it is possible to expand operations, increase output and reduce environmental impact simultaneously.

This is the future of industry, one where global companies act as responsible local citizens, where innovation serves both business and society, and where sustainability is not an aspiration, but a measurable outcome.

As Sanofi continues its journey towards net zero, the lessons learned in Waterford will resonate far beyond the South East of Ireland. They offer a blueprint not only for the biopharmaceutical sector, but for any organisation seeking to operate successfully on a global stage while remaining firmly rooted in its local community.

Sanofi Waterford is not just manufacturing medicines. It is helping to shape a more sustainable world.

sanofi



Big ambition of The Innovators

■ BY LYNDA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

Waterford Chamber is proud to announce *The Innovators Entrepreneurship Academy* is now underway. This exciting new initiative designed to support ambitious entrepreneurs and SMEs across the South East who are ready to scale, grow and push their businesses to the next level.

At a time when regional enterprise and innovation have never been more important, *The Innovators Entrepreneurship Academy* represents a real step forward for the South East. It is more than a programme—it is a statement of intent, a commitment from the business community to actively back the founders and businesses who will shape the region's future. Developed to provide practical support, experienced mentorship and powerful connections, it is designed for those who are serious about growth and ready to act on it.

The programme has now commenced, with over 20 new innovators from across the region working closely with a high calibre group of mentors. Over the coming months, participants will be challenged, supported and pushed don't to think bigger as they develop their businesses, with the ultimate goal of being ready to pitch to investors at the *Engineering the South East Conference and Expo* on October 15th in SETU Arena.

The Innovators recognises that scaling a business can be just as challenging as starting one. Many businesses across the region have already proven themselves commercially but may now be facing new pressures and opportunities. They may be expanding teams, entering new markets, refining strategy or navigating the realities of growth. These businesses do not necessarily need generic workshops or networking events. They need access to people who have actually built and scaled successful companies themselves.

HIGH-CALIBRE MENTORS

That is where *The Innovators* stands apart. What makes the programme different from many others is the calibre and credibility of the mentors

involved. This is not a programme built around theory. It offers direct access to entrepreneurs and business leaders who have already done it, people who have successfully scaled businesses, secured investment and created jobs.

Many of those involved have been recognised through prestigious accolades such as *EY Entrepreneur of the Year* and the *Waterford Business Awards*. That matters because participants are learning from people with real world experience, not just academic or consultancy backgrounds.

Among our team of mentors are David Brennan, Eastgate Engineering; Jordan Casey, MindPath; Patsy Carney; Louise Grubb, Trivium Vet; Pat Power, Harcourt Developments; Niall Harrington, WhiteBox Developments; Michael Flynn, FLI Group, as well as Liam Dunne and Mark Rohan of Klearcom, Stuart Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Power, and Seamus Kilgannon, workLAB. These are people who understand the realities of entrepreneurship first-hand, the challenges, the setbacks, the pressure and the decision-making that comes with trying to grow a business.

There is enormous value in being able to sit across the table from someone who has already faced those challenges and successfully navigated them. That peer-to-peer element, the ability to learn directly from recognised and respected entrepreneurs, is what makes *The Innovators* such an exciting addition to the regional business landscape.

CREATING AN ECOSYSTEM

Equally important is the wider network being created around the programme. Access matters in business. Sometimes the right conversation, introduction or challenge can completely change the trajectory of a company. One of the greatest strengths of *The Innovators* is not just the mentoring itself, but the ecosystem it creates around ambitious founders and SMEs.

Importantly, *The Innovators* is not trying to replace existing enterprise

supports across the South East. In fact, it complements them. The region already benefits from strong programmes and initiatives through organisations such as Enterprise Ireland, South East Technological University, Waterford Local Enterprise Offices and others.

What *The Innovators* adds is another layer to that ecosystem, one focused heavily on peer learning, founder-led mentoring and strategic business growth.

The programme has also been designed with the realities of business life in mind. One of the biggest barriers for entrepreneurs considering programmes like this is time. Running a business is demanding and many simply cannot commit to intensive full-time programmes.

Another hugely positive aspect is accessibility. The programme is fully funded through patronage, ensuring that access is not limited to businesses with significant financial resources. That matters for regional enterprise development. Talent, ambition and innovation are not confined to major urban centres, and neither should opportunity be.

The South East has no shortage of talent, creativity or ambition. What it needs are more structures that support businesses to scale confidently and sustainably. *The Innovators* is an important step in that direction.

Most importantly, it sends a clear message to entrepreneurs and SMEs across the region—you do not need to leave the South East to access world-class support, expertise and opportunity.

■ Visit www.theinnovators.ie for further information,



BUSINESS EXPO

Our annual Business Expo, sponsored by Local Enterprise Office Waterford, took place recently at George Corbett Motors on the Cork Road.





Council review: Waterford on the move



WATERFORD DELEGATION STRENGTHENS CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH BOSTON

A delegation from Waterford City and County Council visited Boston to participate in the City’s Saint Patrick’s Day celebrations and to advance cultural and economic partnerships.

Led by Mayor of Waterford City and County, Cllr. Seamus Ryan, the delegation met with key stakeholders including senior IDA Ireland officials in Boston, members of the Boston Irish Business Association and senior executives from global companies.

Academic and cultural links were also reinforced through engagements, including attendance at the *South Boston Citizens Association Evacuation Day Banquet* and a meeting with Mayor of Boston, Michelle Wu.

BUTLERSTOWN AND KILMATHOMAS SCHOOLS CELEBRATE ACTIVE TRAVEL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECTS

Active travel infrastructure works prioritising access and safety at the front of Scoil Mhuire National School, Butlerstown, and Kilmathomas Primary School were delivered by Waterford City and County Council in partnership with An Taisce’s *Safe Routes to School* unit, the National Transport Authority, and with support from the wider school communities.



CREATING COLLABORATIONS AND CONNECTING WATERFORD THROUGH RURAL TOURISM NETWORK

Over 100 tourism and hospitality businesses gathered in Dooley’s Hotel, to take part in the Waterford Rural Tourism Network Showcase Event. This event was funded and supported by Waterford City and County Council and Fáilte Ireland.

The theme of the day was ‘Connecting Waterford’ and the event took the form of a showcase whereby each geographical area within the network highlighted the offering of that part of the county.

WATERFORD GETS TOP ACCOLADE FROM CONDÉ NAST TRAVELLER

Waterford has once again secured top recognition from Condé Nast Traveller, for a second consecutive year after being named the top of the *7 Wonders of Ireland* for 2026.

The beauty of Waterford’s Copper Coast and Greenway are highlighted as “a road trip along the Copper Coast of County Waterford (named after the area’s 19th-century mining industry) takes in some of the most beautiful, empty and underrated beaches in Ireland”, and continues, “equally enjoyable to explore—this time on two wheels—is the Waterford Greenway, which winds from Waterford City to the bucket-and-spade town of Dungarvan across old railway bridges and viaducts.”



BEACH WHEELCHAIR PILOT SCHEME LAUNCHED AT CLONEA

Deputy Mayor of Waterford City and County, Cllr. John Pratt officially launched the Beach Wheelchair Pilot Scheme at Clonea Beach. The wheelchairs are specially designed to provide access across sand and into the sea, enabling wheelchair users and individuals with



Bunmahon Beach, Co. Waterford

mobility challenges to fully experience the beach environment. The launch of the beach wheelchair forms part of Waterford City and County Council’s ongoing commitment to enhancing accessibility and ensuring that public amenities can be enjoyed by people of all abilities.

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST BRINGS HISTORY OF FERRYBANK TO LIFE

Waterford City and County Council, in collaboration with Waterford Walls, commissioned a large-scale mural along Dock Road in Ferrybank, bringing the area’s rich and layered history vividly to life. International artist Mariana Duarte Santos transformed a 150-metre wall stretching from Plunkett Station with a series of evocative images that reflect Waterford’s heritage, with a particular focus on the historic communities of Ferrybank and Sallypark.

Drawing on archival materials provided by Waterford City and County Council’s Archive Department, the mural is inspired by historic maps, census records, newspaper articles and photographs.



WELCOME BACK TO THE WATERFORD WELCOME AMBASSADORS 2026

Visitors and locals alike welcomed the return of the Waterford Welcome Ambassadors, offering a friendly welcome across Waterford City and County for the 2026 visitor season.

The volunteer ambassadors play an important role in helping visitors enjoy everything Waterford has to offer. The ambassadors assist visitors with directions, transport information, recommendations on places to eat and drink, and guidance on local attractions, heritage sites, beaches, walks and events taking place throughout the county.



INTERNATIONAL BLUE FLAG AND GREEN COAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

The awards, presented by An Taisce, awarded Waterford’s coastline three Blue Flags for the 2026 bathing season. Clonea Beach and Tramore Beach retained their prestigious Blue Flag status for 2026, with Bunmahon Beach receiving its first Blue Flag since 2013.

In addition, Waterford celebrated a significant increase in Green Coast Awards from An Taisce, rising from six to ten award-winning beaches in 2026. The Green Coast Awards recognise beaches for their unspoilt environment, excellent water quality and natural beauty.

SCHEME TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY TYCOR FIRE

The devastating fire in Tycor Business Park caused significant disruption and distress for many organisations in the Business Park.

The *Tycor Business Park Fire Scheme* was opened to businesses, and community, voluntary and sporting organisations based in Tycor Business Park that were directly impacted by the fire. The scheme will support business continuity, protect local jobs, and assist community and voluntary organisations in resuming their work as quickly as possible.



Above: Butlerstown and Kilmacthomas schools celebrate *Active Travel Safe Routes to School*.

Left: Turning the sod at Waterford Airport were William Bolster, Chief Executive Officer, Waterford Airport alongside the Deputy Mayor of Waterford, Cllr. John Pratt, and Waterford City and County Councillors on Runway 21, officially launching the new €30 million construction phase of the airport.

SOD TURNED ON WATERFORD AIRPORT REDEVELOPMENT

May 18th was a landmark day for Waterford as the sod was turned on the new construction phase of Waterford Airport. Waterford City and County Council approved the landmark investment proposal to secure the future of Waterford Airport and deliver the transformative €30 million redevelopment project—fully funded through private investment.

A major runway extension and infrastructure upgrades will enable the return of commercial passenger services to the airport. The works include extending the existing runway to 2,287 metres and widening it to 45 metres so that it can accommodate large jet planes. The project will pave the way for the return of scheduled passenger services



possibly by the summer of 2027.
ARTISTIC ADDITIONS ENHANCE GREEN FLAG AMENITIES

The An Taisce Environmental Education Green Flags were awarded to Kilbarry Nature Park and Waterford Greenway.

Kilbarry Nature Park welcomed two new sculptures by artist Declan Breen. The cast iron sculptures, titled *When*

the Cat's Away, the Mice Will Play, add a whimsical and engaging element to the park. Another welcome addition is the new *Buddy Bench*, designed to promote connection and support within the community. Also launched was the new *Active Cities Fitsticks Trail*, a 2km walking route looping through the park, designed to make walking easy, accessible, and sociable for all users.



WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL EXPANDS EV FLEET WITH INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRIC HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE

Waterford City and County Council has further expanded its electric vehicle (EV) fleet with the addition of a new fully electric heavy goods vehicle (HGV), marking another significant step in the local authority's transition to low-carbon transport solutions.

The Volvo FMX, which is currently being trialled by the Council, has a gross combination weight of 46 tonnes, making it the largest electric vehicle in the Council's fleet to date.

The addition of the electric truck brings the total number of EVs in the Council's fleet to 22, with plans to deploy a further 10 electric vehicles before the end of the year.



SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS OPENED

Mayor of Waterford City and County, Cllr. Seamus Ryan along with Minister of State for Planning and Local Government, John Cummins TD, officially opened two new Waterford City and County Council social housing developments in Waterford City.

The first development, Sally Court / Cúirt na Saíil in Ballytruckle, has been delivered on the site of the former Garvey's pub and comprises 10 thoughtfully designed homes. The housing types ensure the development can meet a broad range of housing needs, from individuals and couples to growing families, while also promoting inclusive living through accessible design.

The Minister and Mayor also officially opened The Lodges / Na Lóisti in Ferrybank, an age-friendly and disability-inclusive housing scheme. The 14-unit development comprises two one-bedroom accessible bungalows and twelve duplex units, designed to support independent living and meet the needs of a diverse range of residents.



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Developing the region's future leaders



■ BY LYNDA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

The next generation of business leaders in the South East were celebrated recently at the closing lunch of Waterford Chamber's *Regional Leaders Programme*, held in Faithlegg. The event brought together participants, mentors, coaches and senior business figures to mark the conclusion of another highly impactful leadership journey.

Over the course of the programme, participants were immersed in a structured development experience designed to strengthen leadership capability, broaden strategic thinking and foster meaningful peer connections. A key strength of the initiative lies in its emphasis on mentoring, coaching and shared learning, enabling participants to navigate the complexities of leadership with the support of experienced professionals.

Speaking at the event, Waterford Chamber Deputy President Marian Walsh of Carron + Walsh shared personal insights from her own leadership journey, including the recent acquisition of the firm by Tetra Tech. Her reflections resonated strongly with attendees, particularly her emphasis on the importance of support networks.

"There were moments along the way where I was challenged, where I doubted myself, and where the path forward wasn't always clear," she said. "What made the difference in those moments were the people around me, the mentors who offered guidance, coaches who challenged my thinking, and colleagues who supported and encouraged me."

She continued, "Mentoring and coaching are not 'nice to have' elements of leadership, they are essential. No leader succeeds in isolation. The ability to both seek out support and offer it to others is what creates strong, resilient organisations."

The audience also heard from keynote speaker Joanne Somers, who delivered a candid and compelling account of her leadership experience with Johnson's Celtic Linen. Charting the company's journey from receivership to a thriving, successful business, Joanne spoke openly about the realities of leadership,

the challenges faced, and the resilience required to drive transformation. Her honesty and determination struck a chord with participants and served as a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through perseverance and strong leadership.

Further insights were shared by an experienced panel of mentors and coaches, including Deirdre Phelan of Deirdre Phelan Consultancy, Eugene O'Callaghan, former CEO of ISIF, and Eileen Jameson, coach and poet. Their contributions provided practical guidance on how participants can continue to apply the skills, confidence and perspectives gained throughout the programme in their professional lives.

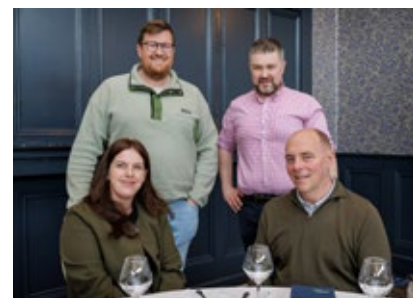
The success of the *Regional Leaders Programme* is underpinned by the collaboration between Waterford Chamber and its partners, including

Waterford Chamber Skillnet, ICF Ireland and Bausch + Lomb, all of whom play a vital role in supporting leadership development across the region.

As this year's cohort concludes their journey, attention now turns to the future. Waterford Chamber is already preparing for the next programme, which will commence in September, with expressions of interest now open.

For those looking to invest in their leadership development and connect with a network of ambitious, forward-thinking professionals, the programme offers a unique opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.

■ To register your interest, email lynda.lawton@waterfordchamber.ie, or visit www.waterfordchamber.ie for more information.



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Engineering the South East

New chapter for a growing region

■ BY LYNDA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

On Thursday, October 15th, Waterford Chamber will host one of its most ambitious and important industry events to date at SETU Arena, the Engineering the South East Conference & Expo.

Many will recognise the event under its previous name, Toys4Engineers. Over the years, it built a strong reputation for showcasing engineering in an engaging and accessible way, bringing together industry and community in a unique format. That legacy remains an important part of its DNA. However, the evolution to Engineering the South East Conference & Expo reflects something much bigger, a broader ambition to position the region as a centre of engineering excellence, innovation and opportunity.

This is no longer just an exhibition style event. It is now a flagship platform that brings together engineers, businesses, multinational companies, educators and future talent in one place, creating meaningful connections across the entire ecosystem. At the heart of the event are three key pillars, the Conference, the Expo and Meet the Buyer.

The Conference will place a strong focus on the role of emerging technologies and innovations and how they are reshaping engineering and industry. From automation and data driven decision making to future skills and digital transformation, the conference will provide practical insights from those at the forefront of change. For businesses navigating growth and innovation, this is a valuable opportunity to stay ahead of the curve.

Alongside this, the Expo will showcase the strength and diversity of engineering across the South East. Companies from sectors including manufacturing, construction, technology, pharma and energy will come together to demonstrate their capabilities, highlight innovation and engage directly with peers, partners and the next generation of talent. It is a powerful reminder of the depth of expertise that exists within the region.

Perhaps most impactful from a business perspective is Meet the Buyer, a structured opportunity for SMEs to connect directly with multinational companies. Supported by IDA Ireland, this element of the event



is focused on creating real commercial outcomes, opening doors to supply chain opportunities, fostering partnerships and strengthening regional enterprise.

Importantly, the event is open to everyone to attend and completely free, ensuring accessibility for businesses, engineers, students and the wider community alike.

What makes this event particularly significant is the way it brings all of these elements together. Too often, industry events focus on one audience, whether that is students, start ups or established businesses. The Engineering the South East Conference & Expo takes a more holistic approach, recognising that regional growth depends on strong connections between all parts of the ecosystem.

SOUTH EAST AMBITION

There is also a clear alignment with the broader ambition of the South East. The region continues to grow as a location of choice for engineering, manufacturing and technology investment. With that growth comes the need to support businesses to scale, to attract and retain talent, and to ensure that innovation remains at the forefront.

Events like this play a critical role in that journey. They create visibility, spark collaboration and, importantly, send a clear message, that the South East is not only open for business, but actively shaping the future of industry.

As Gerald Hurley, CEO of Waterford

Chamber, explains, “The Engineering the South East Conference & Expo represents a significant step forward for the region. It is about bringing industry together, creating real opportunities for businesses to connect and grow, and showcasing the strength of engineering across the South East. Most importantly, it demonstrates that companies here can access world class expertise, partnerships and opportunities without having to look beyond the region.”

Collaboration is key to this event and Waterford Chamber is delighted to partner with Engineering the South East Cluster, Waterford City and County Council, South East Technological University, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Waterford Chamber Skillnet and Waterford Local Enterprise Office.

While the event has evolved, its original purpose still holds true, its original purpose still holds true, to inspire. Whether that is a business discovering a new opportunity, an engineer gaining fresh insight into emerging technologies, or a connection that leads to future collaboration, the impact is real.

The transition from Toys4Engineers to the Engineering the South East Conference & Expo is more than a rebrand. It is a statement of intent, a recognition of how far the region has come, and where it is going next. On October 15th, that future will be on display.

■ To book your stand, visit www.engineeringthesoutheastexpo.ie

North Quays project reaches major milestones

The North Quays Project Team presented a progress update at the June Plenary Council meeting, highlighting significant milestones achieved across the development and outlining the next phase of works scheduled over the coming 18 months.

Sean Dobbs, Senior Engineer with Waterford City and County Council, said the current phase of construction is nearing completion, marking another important step in the transformation of Waterford's North Quays and wider city centre.

Several key elements of the project are now complete and open to the public. In Ferrybank, access works on Abbey Road, Fountain Street and Dock Road have been fully completed apart from minor finishing works and snagging, along with all associated accommodation works at Our Lady of Good Counsel National School and neighbouring community facilities.

The Project Team also confirmed that the Ferrybank section of the South East Greenway, extending from Curraghmore to Abbey Road, will be available to open to the public from next week.

In the city centre, only minor snagging and finishing works remain on the South Quays Plaza, which is expected to open fully to the public in the coming weeks, providing a significant new public amenity for residents and visitors alike.

The new sustainable transport bridge is entering its final stage of delivery. Remaining works include surfacing, architectural lighting, seating installation and the removal of temporary river works, together with the installation of collision protection systems.

Meanwhile, final commissioning and fit-out works are progressing at the transport hub. These include the completion of public facilities, information and communications systems, wayfinding signage and surrounding public plazas.

Mr. Dobbs said, "The new train station will be a landmark public building for Waterford. These final elements will help create an attractive, welcoming and high-quality gateway to Ireland's regional capital of the South East."

Flood protection infrastructure, a critical component of the overall project, is also advancing. The eastern section of the railway flood defence scheme through



the North Quays site has now been completed, while works on the western section at Sally Park, adjacent to Rice Bridge, are approaching completion.

As the current phase concludes, attention is turning to the next stage of delivery.

Over the next 18 months, construction will continue on key elements of the railway flood defence scheme, including new pumping stations and flood defence infrastructure through the car parks and entrance areas of Plunkett Station.

In parallel, Harcourt Developments is expected to commence Phase 1 of the Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) before the end of this year. Initial works will focus on the construction of connecting podiums, plazas and parking facilities required to support the opening of the transport hub and sustainable transport bridge.

Iarnród Éireann will also complete new track and signalling infrastructure along the rail corridor. The new rail systems will then undergo the necessary regulatory

testing, approvals and commissioning processes prior to entering public service.

All strands of the project, including flood defence works, SDZ development, rail infrastructure upgrades and regulatory approvals, are programmed to align for the coordinated opening of the transport hub and sustainable transport bridge towards the end of 2027.

Looking beyond this milestone, Phase 1 of the SDZ development will continue from 2028, delivering much-needed homes, hotel and office accommodation, enhanced public spaces and a vibrant new sustainable urban quarter on the north side of the River Suir.

The North Quays Project represents one of the most significant urban regeneration initiatives ever undertaken in the South East and will play a central role in supporting Waterford's continued economic, social and sustainable growth for decades to come.

■ To view the latest NQ progress visit <https://waterfordnorthquays.ie/>



EY Insight, EU Pay Transparency

Why South East employers should start preparing now

Across Waterford and the wider South East, businesses are working hard to attract and retain good people in what continues to be a competitive market for top talent. For many employers, that means looking carefully at pay, progression and how decisions are made. Now, a major change is scheduled by the European Union that will bring those issues into even sharper focus.

The *EU Pay Transparency Directive* represents one of the most significant employment law developments employers have faced in several years. At its core, the Directive is designed to strengthen the principle of equal pay for equal work, or work of equal value, by requiring employers to be more transparent about pay and more accountable for how pay decisions are made. It introduces a series of measures that will affect recruitment, employee information rights, pay-setting processes and, for employers above certain workforce thresholds, pay gap reporting and follow-up action.

When implemented, Irish law will require employers to disclose salary ranges for job candidates and provide pay range details for comparable roles and roles of equal value to employees, including details on both basic pay and variable components such as bonuses. Larger businesses (250+ employees) must report annually, while companies with 150+ employees will have a filing

requirement every three years. Reporting for entities with 100+ employees will begin in 2031, also on a three-year cycle. It is still unclear whether Ireland will extend these requirements to employers with 50+ employees. If a pay gap of more than 5% is identified without justification and remains unresolved, employees can trigger a Joint Pay Assessment, which may lead to pay remediation claims.

EU Member States are required to transpose the Directive into national law by 7 June 2026. Recent developments in spring 2026 indicate that many countries, including Ireland, are progressing at different speeds. In Ireland, implementation of the Directive is expected to happen on a phased basis, with further detail still to come. That may give businesses some breathing room in practice, but it should not be taken as a reason to delay preparation. The obligations themselves are clearly defined at EU level, and the employers best-positioned to navigate the transition will be those who act in advance of formal transposition.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR EMPLOYERS

Ireland has already introduced gender pay gap reporting requirements in recent years. However, the EU Pay Transparency Directive goes significantly further, shifting the focus from retrospective reporting to real-time transparency and accountability for pay decisions.

For employers in the South East, this is not just a compliance issue. It is a business issue. The region has a strong mix of indigenous companies, family-owned businesses, growing firms and multinational operations. Many are competing for the same talent pool. In that environment, clear and fair pay practices matter not only from a legal point of view, but also for recruitment, retention and trust within the organisation.

KEY CHANGES IN PRACTICE

Recruitment

Employers will be expected to provide candidates with salary information or a pay range earlier in the hiring process. They will also be restricted from asking candidates about current or previous pay. The aim is to make pay decisions more consistent, transparent and grounded in objective criteria rather than historical earnings.

Employee access to pay information

Employees will have stronger rights to seek information about their own pay and about average pay levels for comparable roles, broken down by gender. Employers will also need to ensure that the criteria used to determine pay and progression are objective, transparent and gender-neutral. This will require organisations to have clear, well-documented frameworks underpinning pay decisions.



“

By taking proactive steps now, organisations can position themselves to meet future obligations, reduce risk and enhance their employee value proposition.

Reporting and follow-up action

The Directive also brings more detailed reporting requirements for employers within scope and greater accountability where pay gaps cannot be justified by objective criteria. For many businesses, this will mean more than reporting numbers. It will mean being able to stand over the framework behind those numbers.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

For some organisations, especially those with established grading structures and strong HR systems, this may be manageable. For others, it will require more work. One of the biggest challenges will be showing how roles are compared and how pay decisions are supported.

That is likely to be particularly important for employers whose pay practices have developed over time in a more informal way. In many businesses, pay decisions may have evolved for sensible commercial reasons, but without a formal framework sitting behind them. And this is where job architecture, role

clarity and data readiness come into play. Employers may need to review job descriptions, grading structures, internal benchmarks and the quality of pay data available across the organisation.

For many employers, this will not be just an HR exercise. It will require input from leadership, finance, payroll, legal and line management to make sure the organisation can explain pay outcomes clearly and consistently.

That is why this matters now. Waiting for every detail of the Irish legislation may feel sensible, but it could leave businesses on the back foot. A better approach is to start with the basics and identify where the main gaps may be. The operational burden associated with these requirements should not be underestimated. For many employers, this will necessitate new processes, additional resources and enhanced internal controls.

For example, do you have a clear rationale for how pay is set across the organisation? Are job titles, role scope and levels reasonably consistent? Could you explain differences in pay across similar roles in a way that is fair, objective and well-documented? These are the types of questions leadership teams should now be asking.

For employers across the South East, there is also an opportunity in this. Many businesses in the region compete by offering strong culture, close-knit teams and genuine career opportunities. Clearer pay structures can support that story. They can help build confidence internally, make recruitment conversations more straightforward and reduce the risk of inconsistency over time.

FINAL THOUGHT

Pay transparency is moving from being a specialist HR topic to a broader business priority. While the Irish legislative path is still developing, employers do not need to wait to get ready. The organisations that start reviewing their pay structures, job architecture and governance now will be in a much stronger position when the new requirements take full effect.

At EY, our People Advisory Services and Employment Law teams are working with organisations to support them in navigating these changes with confidence. By taking proactive steps now, organisations can position themselves to meet future obligations, reduce risk and enhance their employee value proposition which is key in navigating the challenges post implementation of the Directive.

LEARN MORE



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Understanding Entrepreneur and Retirement Relief

with Billy Bobb, Mad Mick and Victoria Sponge!

■ BY COLIN COMERFORD, COMERFORD FOLEY



Some changes came in at the start of this year for Entrepreneur Relief. The changes to Retirement Relief came in at the start of 2025. These reliefs are separate Capital Gains Tax reliefs that can save you lots of tax if you qualify. Let's take a look at the basics and outline the recent changes, focusing on directors who own trading companies.

ENTREPRENEUR RELIEF

Entrepreneur relief is a 10% CGT rate rather than the normal 33%. Up to 31 December 2025, it applies to gains of up to €1,000,000. That's a tax saving of €230,000. The key rules to qualify are that you:

1. Own 5% or more of the shares in a trading company
2. Hold those shares for more than three years
3. Hold the shares for three years in the five years up to the disposal date
4. Spend more than 50% of your time in a managerial or technical capacity working for that company

Those are the basics, and there are lots of other rules that will either work for or against you qualifying. The rule about holding the shares was that you had to own them for three years up to the time of disposal. That has now changed to owning them for a continuous period of three years at any time before the disposal.

MAD MICK

Mick Lowry owns 100% of the shares in Mad Mick Ltd, a successful plumbing business. He has owned the shares for seven years and works full-time in the company. A city rival, Go Flow Ltd, is looking to buy Mick's shares for €1,200,000. They make this offer in February 2025. Mick is 53 but looks about 73 with all the stress of running a business. He wants to know what he'll

be left with after tax. We'll assume the cost of his shares is nil. Mick will qualify for Entrepreneur Relief as he has met all the conditions.

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Sales Proceeds | €1,200,000 |
| First €1,000,000 x 10% | (€100,000) |
| Balance of €200,000 x 33% | (€66,000) |
| Net Proceeds | €1,034,000 |

Without Entrepreneur Relief, Mick would pay 33% of the gain, leaving him with a CGT liability of €396,000. So, you'll see that ER will save him €230,000.

But Mick decides not to sell. He thinks the owner of Go Flow is an arrogant so and so, and he ploughs on working. Deciding not to sell has given him a new lease of life. The business had a great 2025, winning new contracts and increasing profitability.

SELL IN 2026

Mick gets another opportunity to sell in 2026. JR Dallas, an out-of-town plumbing contractor, is looking to expand into the area and makes Mick an offer of €1,800,000. Mick meets all the qualifying conditions for ER, and the new 2026 changes are to his advantage. The first €1,500,000 is at 10% and the balance is at 33%:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Sales Proceeds | €1,800,000 |
| First €1,500,000 x 10% | (€150,000) |
| Balance of €300,000 x 33% | (€99,000) |
| Net Proceeds | €1,551,000 |



If the new change to the lifetime limit hadn't come in, Mick's liability in 2026 would be €364,000, which is €115,000 higher. That's the same as €500,000 at 23%, I hope!

EARN-OUT

JR, being a wily old soul, knows that Mick is key to the business in the area and is a brilliant salesman. He'd like to keep him involved and proposes an earn-out deal. Rather than paying the full €1,800,000 up front, he proposes to pay Mick €1,200,000 now. He'll pay the balance of €600,000 over two years in May 2027 and May 2028. This will be dependent on the company hitting certain financial targets. These will be achievable, and they'd expect to hit those targets.

There are a few downsides for Mick, as follows:

- He doesn't get all his money upfront.
- His tax liability is payable on the full amount even though he doesn't have all the money.
- His future payments are somewhat out of his control.

But the positives outweigh the negatives for him:

- He'll continue to work in the business on a good salary.
- The company will make pension contributions for him.
- The targets are very achievable.
- He won't have the pressure of being a business owner.

CGT LIABILITY

Mick will pay his full CGT liability of €249,000 on the 15th of December

2026. As the sales proceeds are known at the outset, his CGT liability is on the full amount. If it later transpires that he doesn't get the full proceeds, then he'd go back to Revenue looking for a refund.

The disposal details will go in his Form 11 tax return for 2026. He'll make the claim for Entrepreneur Relief in the Capital Gains Tax section of the return. The figures will match the tax paid. The two key points to remember are:

1. Don't forget that you must do a CGT return, and
2. Make sure you submit the CGT return on time.

The late filing surcharge can be up to 10% of the liability, so another €25k on top of what he had to pay already.

RETIREMENT RELIEF

Retirement Relief is another Capital Gains Tax relief on a business disposal. You must be over 55 and meet certain conditions to qualify. While it's called Retirement Relief, there is no need to retire. Mick couldn't have got this relief as he was under 55 in 2026. Even if he was over 55, he wouldn't have met some other conditions.

There are two types of Retirement Relief. The first is on a disposal of business assets to a third party. The second is on the disposal of business assets to a child.

AMOUNT OF RELIEF

For a person over 55 who meets the conditions there is full relief when the market value doesn't exceed €750,000. The value of the relief reduces to €500,000 for those aged 70 and over. This

€500,000 cap was in place for those aged 66 and over but from 1 January 2025 that age increased to 70.

MARGINAL RELIEF

There is marginal relief where the sales proceeds exceed the limits. This relief limits the tax to one half of the excess over the €750,000 or €500,000 limit. See below.

QUALIFYING ASSETS

Qualifying assets include the following:

1. Land, buildings and goodwill owned and used for a trade for 10 years continuously.
2. Plant and machinery owned and used for a trade.
3. Shares in a family trading company, farming company or holding company of a trading group. The shares have been held for 10 years, and the individual has been a working director of the company for 10 years. Of those 10 years, he or she must have been a full-time working director for at least five years.
4. Qualifying agricultural land and property.
5. Assets owned by an individual for 10 years ending on the disposal but used by the family company. This applies where the assets transfer at the same time as the shares in the family company.

For a company to be a family company, you must own at least 25% of the shares or 10% of the shares, and you and your family must own 75%.



VICTORIA SPONGE

Victoria bought her bakery business from the then owner in 2015 for €250,000. She owns 100% of the shares in Moment on the Lips Ltd. Victoria is 59 now and would like to sell the business. She has been working full-time in the business for over 10 years, and hers is a family company. As a result, she'll meet the conditions for Retirement Relief.

Maggie May owns the other bakery in the town and would be very interested in Victoria's company. Maggie runs the numbers and makes an opening offer of €740,000, but Victoria wants €800,000. If she accepted the €740,000 offer, there would be no CGT to pay as that is less than €750,000. They split the difference and agree on €770,000.

Looking at the gain in three ways gives a good understanding of the reliefs and the interaction between ER and RR. If there was no CGT relief, the tax would be:

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Sales Proceeds | €770,000 |
| Less cost | (€250,000) |
| Gain | €520,000 |
| Tax payable x 33% | €171,600 |

With retirement relief, marginal relief comes into play to limit the tax.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Sales Proceeds | €770,000 |
| RR threshold | (€750,000) |
| Excess over limit | €20,000 |
| Tax limit 50% of excess | €10,000 |

You'll see that Victoria also qualifies for ER on this sale as she has met all the conditions.

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Sales Proceeds | €770,000 |
| Less cost | (€250,000) |
| Gain | €520,000 |
| Tax payable 10% | €52,000 |

So, the best outcome for Victoria is to claim Retirement Relief, as this gives her the lowest tax liability of €10,000.

DISPOSAL TO A CHILD

A €10 million limit applies on a disposal to a child of assets that qualify for Retirement Relief. This is for those aged over 55 and under 70. That limit reduces to €3 million for disposals of qualifying assets to a child when you are 70 or over. If the value of the qualifying assets is over €10 million, there's an option to defer the excess CGT over €10 million.

Billy Bobb bought Monster Trucks Ltd in January 2015 for €4 million. On the 5th of November 2025, he transfers 100% of the shares in the company to his son John. The company has a value of €12 million at that time. The normal CGT computation of liability would be:

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Sales Proceeds | €12,000,000 |
| Less cost | (€4,000,000) |
| Gain | €8,000,000 |
| CGT x 33% | €2,640,000 |

However, Retirement Relief reduces the CGT payable by an amount as if the sales proceeds were €10,000,000:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Sales Proceeds | €10,000,000 |
| Less cost | (€4,000,000) |
| Gain | €6,000,000 |
| CGT x 33% (relieved amount) | €1,980,000 |

JOHN'S OPTIONS

The CGT liability is €660,000, which is the same as the excess over €10,000,000 x 33%. There is an option to defer this excess CGT liability of €660,000. In his 2025 Tax return, Billy Bobb elects to defer the CGT liability of €660,000. In relation to this, there are two possible outcomes for his son John.

1. John disposes of his shares in Monster Trucks Ltd within 12 years of getting them. This is before the 5th of November 2037. In this case, John would pay the CGT of €660,000 that his dad deferred. He would also pay any CGT he is liable for on the uplift in value over €12 million, or
2. John doesn't dispose of the shares within 12 years of getting them. In that case, the CGT deferred is no longer due and payable.

So, Billy Bobb doesn't pay any CGT on the disposal of his shares to John. Retirement Relief reduces his CGT liability of €1,980,000 to nil. And he elects to defer the CGT liability of €660,000 on the excess €2,000,000 over €10,000,000. John now owns 100% of the company, and the base cost of his shares is €12,000,000. If he sells those shares within 12 years, he'll pay the CGT of €660,000 that his dad elected to defer. And he'll also be liable to CGT, subject to any reliefs, on the increase in value over €12,000,000.

■ If you're thinking of selling your business and need help, contact Comerford Foley today.



BUILT IN WATERFORD. DELIVERED WORLDWIDE



At Eirgen Pharma, growth is not just about expansion – it is about delivering meaningful impact for Waterford and the wider South East.

From our campus in Waterford, we partner with pharmaceutical companies worldwide to develop and manufacture complex oral solid dose medicines.

With the launch of our new high volume manufacturing facility, we are strengthening the region's role in global life sciences – creating high value employment and supporting long-term investment.

This progress is powered by a skilled local workforce, strong academic links, and a growing business ecosystem – helping position the South East as a centre of excellence for advanced manufacturing.



A MILESTONE FOR WATERFORD MANUFACTURING

We are proud to have successfully released our first commercial bulk batches from our newest facility (Building 04).

This milestone reflects the expertise, coordination, and commitment of our teams – and highlights the capability within Waterford to deliver at a global standard.

A sincere thank you to everyone involved in reaching this point. It lays a strong foundation for continued growth.



We now move into the next phase, preparing customer-specific products for international markets.



FROM WATERFORD TO GLOBAL PATIENTS

We were proud to support our parent company, OPKO Health, Inc., in their U.S. launch of Project EIR132 in May 2026 – expanding access to a well-established and widely used therapy across oncology and other serious conditions.

This launch reflects a commitment to expanding access to therapy across oncology, improving the availability of essential medicines, with dependable supply and helping patients access critical therapies more affordably.



Supporting high-value employment in the South-East



Strengthening Waterford's position in global pharma



Connecting local expertise with international markets



Driving sustained regional investment



Discover more about our purpose, our people, and our progress.

Eirgen Pharma is proud to be part of a growing South East ecosystem – working together to deliver investment, innovation, and long-term regional impact.



Hartley People Group celebrating 25 years of success

■ BY LYNDA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

There is something uniquely special about celebrating a business milestone in the region where it all began. This year marks 25 years of Hartley People Group, one of the South East’s best known recruitment, healthcare, training and HR suite of companies, and a business that has become synonymous with professionalism, resilience and people first values.

For many across the business community, Hartley People feels like it has always been part of the landscape. But like so many successful businesses, its beginnings were far from glamorous.

On May 18th 2001, siblings Fergal & Roisin Hartley opened the doors of Hartley People Ltd at their first offices on The Quay in Waterford. In the early days, it was just the two of them, quickly joined by their first employee, Debbie Flynn

Delaney, who remarkably still works with the company 25 years later. Reflecting on those early days recently, Fergal recently shared a story that will resonate with many entrepreneurs and business owners.

GETTING STARTED

“Like most start ups, we hustled and scrapped for everything. We took out six different personal loans to get started, and we got our desks from a skip outside one of the banks where I was applying for a loan.”

It is a reminder that behind every successful business is often a story of risk, sacrifice and determination that people rarely see.

The Hartleys used furniture from their own homes for the reception area, including wedding gifts, purchased second-hand computers and even created

their first company logo themselves using Microsoft Word because every available euro was needed to go towards advertising and growing the business.

“We didn’t even pay ourselves a salary for the first three months,” Fergal recalled.

And yet, despite the uncertainty and pressure that so many start ups experience, he remembers it as “one of the most exciting periods” of his professional life.

Twenty-five years later, the Hartley People Group has grown into a highly respected recruitment, HR and training group with an outstanding reputation across the South East and beyond. The company has become a trusted partner to countless businesses while also helping thousands of people navigate their careers, secure opportunities and develop professionally.

“

Looking back now, what makes me most proud is not the growth of the company, but the relationships we've built along the way.

PEOPLE-CENTRIC CULTURE

However, what stands out most strongly when speaking about Hartley People is not simply business growth, but culture.

Recently, staff across the business secretly organised a celebration to mark the company's 25th anniversary. Offices had been decorated over the weekend, cakes and treats baked, and a genuine sense of pride and appreciation filled the workplace. For both founders, it was an emotional moment. For Roisin, the occasion served as a reminder of the relationships that have defined the business since its earliest days.

“When we started out, we were focused on building a business that people could trust. Looking back now, what makes me most proud is not the growth of the company, but the relationships we've built along the way. We've worked with clients who have supported us for decades, candidates and learners who have built successful careers through opportunities we helped create, and colleagues who have grown alongside the business. Those connections mean everything.”

Perhaps that is the real story behind the success of Hartley People. In business, strategy matters. Hard work matters. Financial management matters. But culture matters too. Businesses that genuinely value people, build loyalty and create positive working environments often stand the test of time.

Roisin believes that culture is not something that can be manufactured. “The culture we have today has been built over many years through trust, respect and genuinely caring about people. We've always believed that if you look after your team and your clients, everything else follows. The fact that our staff wanted to celebrate this milestone themselves meant more than any formal event we could have organised.”

Fergal summed it up perfectly when reflecting on the surprise celebration organised by staff. “You can pay people to turn up, but you can't pay people to care.”



That simple sentence says an enormous amount about the culture that has been created within the business over the past quarter century.

It is also important to acknowledge the wider contribution Hartley People has made to the region. Through recruitment, HR support, training and business advisory services, the company has played a meaningful role in supporting economic growth and helping businesses across the South East develop and retain talent.

Fergal has also made a significant contribution through his involvement with Waterford Chamber as a board member, bringing both experience and a strong commitment to supporting regional enterprise and business development.

CELEBRATIONS

Waterford Chamber was delighted to be part of the company's recent anniversary celebrations and to acknowledge the extraordinary milestone achieved by Fergal, Roisin and the wider Hartley People team.

Congratulating the company on reaching 25 years in business, Éadaoin Carrick said: “Hartley People represents everything that is positive about indigenous enterprise in the South East. Fergal and Roisin built this business from the ground up through hard work, resilience and a genuine commitment to people. Over the past 25 years they have not only built a hugely respected company, but have also made an enormous contribution to businesses, employees and

the wider regional economy. On behalf of Waterford Chamber, we congratulate the entire Hartley People team on this incredible achievement and wish them continued success for the future.”

What makes the Hartley People story particularly inspiring is that it is deeply relatable. It is not a story of overnight success or massive outside investment. It is a story of resilience, hard work, long hours, personal sacrifice and belief in building something meaningful. Most importantly, it is a story rooted in people.

Reflecting on the milestone, both founders spoke about the overwhelming sense of gratitude they feel after 25 years in business.

Roisin noted: “Twenty-five years is a significant milestone, but no business achieves it alone. We are incredibly grateful to our team, our clients, our candidates, carers and learners, and everyone who has supported us throughout the journey. The trust people have placed in us over the years is something we never take for granted.”

Fergal added: “Gratitude for the team, that cared enough to mark the occasion when we had nothing planned. Gratitude for all the people who took a chance on us over the years, backed and supported us, stayed loyal to us, and helped us to make this milestone.”

Twenty five years on from those early days on The Quay, that gratitude appears to have come full circle.

BITE SIZE NEWS



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

- Clarity Coach
- Digital[Partner]
- Ezmar Event Management
- HumanEdge+
- John Walsh HR Consultancy
- Zambrero Ardkeen

WATERFORD CLIMBS THE RANKS AS IRELAND'S CLEANEST CITY

Once again Waterford has emerged as *Ireland's Cleanest City* in the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Anti-Litter League 2026. The city ranked 4th out of 40 cities and towns, a jump of two places from the previous survey, and was classed as Cleaner than European norms. According to the latest survey, "As has been the case over many years, Waterford City is again the top-ranking city in our survey. A few sites which had been heavily littered previously were deserving of the top litter grade this time around."

The report also highlighted some of the top ranking sites that deserved special mention, stating, "the residential area of May Park Village was a lovely environment, the birdsong was testament to the abundance of planting within; the recently created 'Waterford Cultural Quarter' was very colourful, with some magnificent buildings lining the street



'OH MY COOKIES' WINS LEO PITCH PERFECT

Oriana Ramirez with her business 'Oh my Cookies' has walked away with the 2026 Waterford *Pitch Perfect* title. 'Oh My Cookies' creates New York style cookies, cookie bars, and cookie cakes in a fun and indulgent way. Within the past year Oriana has grown her business from an interesting hobby to selling in cafes, online and at markets all over the South East. Apart from her baking skills and imagination, her real point of differentiation is her marketing and presentation skills.

It has been a steep learning curve for Oriana, but she loves the challenge: "Every day is a school day, that is why I entered Pitch Perfect. I knew taking part would help me grow my business in a more structured and professional way. I want to learn how to scale, reach more customers, and expand into more events, collaborations, and potentially work with larger businesses or retailers."

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Waterford, SETU Xcelerate Centre and Boxworks Co Working Space joined forces to deliver this Start Up Competition for those with an innovative business idea or those already in business trading less than 18 months.

MYWEALTHMANAGEMENT GROUP ANNOUNCE ACQUISITION OF ADELPHI FINANCIAL BROKERS

MyWealthManagement (MWM) Group, one of Ireland's fastest-growing wealth management and mortgage brokerage firms, has announced the acquisition of Waterford-based Adelphi Financial Brokers (AFB), marking the fifth acquisition completed by the group since launching its growth strategy in June 2025.

Adelphi Financial Brokers provides financial planning advice to high net worth individuals, corporates and families and has built up a client base of approximately 2,000 clients. The business employs six people, bringing MWM Group's total workforce to 44 employees nationwide.

Commenting on the latest acquisition, Joey Sheahan, Head of Acquisitions at MyWealthManagement Group, "Adelphi Financial Brokers is a highly respected business with a strong reputation for delivering high-quality financial advice and long-standing client relationships. John and his team have built an excellent business and we are delighted to welcome them to MWM Group as they continue to lead the business in Waterford and across the South East."



Joey Sheahan, Head of Acquisitions, MyWealthManagement Group and John O'Byrne, Director, Adelphi Financial Brokers.

"This acquisition represents another important step in our growth strategy as we continue to expand our presence across Ireland. We see significant opportunities to partner with advisory firms that share our long-term approach to client service and financial planning."

John O'Byrne, one of the founding Directors of Adelphi Financial Brokers, commented, "This is an exciting new chapter for Adelphi Financial Brokers and our clients. What stood out from our discussions with MWM Group was the strong cultural fit and shared focus on long-term client relationships and quality advice. Joining the group will allow us to continue delivering a personal service to clients locally, while also benefiting from the additional scale, resources and expertise that come with being part of a larger organisation."

SETU RESEARCHERS TO PLAY KEY ROLE IN NEW €460 MILLION NATIONAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT

South East Technological University (SETU) has welcomed the announcement of a major new national investment in research and innovation, which will see the University contribute to three of Ireland's newly established Rinn research centres. The initiative represents a €460 million investment through Research Ireland and will support world-leading research across seven strategic areas of national importance.

The new Rinn network will bring together researchers from across Ireland to address some of the most significant challenges and opportunities facing society and industry, including artificial intelligence, advanced therapies, energy, medical devices, pharmaceuticals



and biopharmaceuticals, quantum technologies, and semiconductors. SETU is a partner institution in three of the newly announced centres.

Collectively, the seven centres will support more than 577 research positions, facilitate the development of over 800 PhD research positions, and involve 17 research-performing organisations across Ireland. The initiative is also expected to leverage an additional €500 million in investment from industry and other funding sources, with support from more than 200 industry partners.



SOLVE INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY TYCOR FIRE

Following the devastating fire at Tycor Business Centre, Waterford Chamber and Waterford City and County Council jointly launched the SOLVE Initiative (Supporting Our Locally Vulnerable Employers) to provide structured support to impacted businesses.

The initiative has been established in response to significant outreach from the local business community, with many companies expressing a strong desire to assist those affected. SOLVE will act as a coordinated framework to ensure that all contributions, financial or otherwise, are effectively managed and directed to where they are needed most.

Both organisations are maintaining close and ongoing contact with the businesses in Tycor Business Centre, and a detailed assessment is currently underway to identify priority areas of need. This process will inform how supports and funds are distributed in a targeted and meaningful way. Businesses or individuals wishing to contribute to the SOLVE Fund, either financially or through other forms of support, are encouraged to contact Gerald Hurley, Waterford Chamber, on 086 2528093.

IRELAND'S FIRST AGE FRIENDLY PODCAST SERIES

'Not Slowing but Knowing', a new eight-part podcast series from Age Friendly Waterford in partnership with Waterford Older People's Council, has launched as the first podcast in Ireland dedicated to the Age Friendly programme and positive ageing initiatives.

Hosted by Tony Kelly, the series celebrates the value, participation and wisdom that come with age, while exploring what it truly means to age well in Waterford.

The podcast forms part of the wider Age Friendly Waterford initiative which supports older people to live a full, active and connected life within their communities.

Listeners can follow *Not Slowing but Knowing* on major podcast platforms and through Age Friendly Waterford channels.



Network Ireland Waterford Branch hosted its annual *Businesswoman of the Year Awards* recently at the Granville Hotel, celebrating the courage, leadership, and achievements of women in business across the region. The event brought together finalists, families, colleagues, and supporters for an evening centred on one theme: *the power of believing in yourself*.

WATERFORD BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

BRANCH WINNERS 2026

Emerging New Businesswoman
— Edel Tobin, Pink The Agency

Solo Businesswoman
— Pamela Golden, The Wellness Tribe

Early Career Employee
— Martina Twomey, Parker Law Solicitors

Advanced Career Employee
— Hazel Cotterell, Cantec Group

Creative Professional
— Kim Whyte, Pawpear

STEM Professional
— Petra Curtis, Frisson Creative

Established Businesswoman
— Karen Murphy, Murphy Larkin Timber Products

Networker of the Year
— Suzanne Parker, Parker Law Solicitors

HIGHLY COMMENDED 2026

Emerging New Businesswoman
— Niki Harrold, ClearPath Marketing Europe

Solo Businesswoman
— Georgiana Chitas, Angelic DNA Jewellery

Established Businesswoman
— Laura McBrinn, Majestic Hotel

New 'Kokoro' Heritage Centre and Café open in Tramore

Monday 8th June saw the official opening of 'Kokoro' Heritage Centre and Café at the Lafcadio Hearn Japanese Gardens by Minister Dara Calleary T.D., Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht & Minister for Social Protection. Also in attendance: His Excellency, Ambassador Miyagawa, Japan's Ambassador to Ireland, Metropolitan Mayor of Waterford, Councillor Adam Wyse, Minister of State Mary Butler T.D., Minister of State John Cummins and Senator Joe Conway along with many other distinguished guests, local councillors, friends, supporters, volunteers and staff of the gardens.

The new 'Kokoro Heritage Centre and Café' will add a much needed new dimension Tramore's thriving tourism attraction and event space. Through this new Centre, and throughout the gardens, visitors will be introduced to the inner spirit of Japan as perceived and written about so evocatively by Lafcadio Hearn.

The beautiful Japanese-style event space will also provide a much-needed indoor space for a range of cultural and family events held at the Japanese Gardens throughout the year. It will also offer a unique covered space in times of inclement weather for the many weddings held there annually. There will also be opportunities to expand on the existing programme of events, with plans to deliver additional music recitals, poetry readings, talks, lectures, artistic and family events.

The upper floor café with unrivalled views of Tramore beach and bay will provide a stunning setting for locals and visitors alike to enjoy local food and artisan produce. Tea/Coffee and Cakes will be served at the Kokoro Café from Thursday to Sunday until the end of June, and it's full Café menu will be launched on June 26th.



FLI Group sells UK remediation specialist Vertase FLI

FLI Group, the Waterford headquartered environmental services and technologies company, has announced the sale of Vertase FLI, its UK contaminated land remediation subsidiary, to Adler & Allan, a leading UK provider of integrated environmental risk reduction services backed by Goldman Sachs Alternatives.

Vertase FLI, which FLI Group acquired in 2005, has grown into one of the United Kingdom's foremost contaminated land remediation specialists. The business employs a team of around 90 people and has built a nationwide reputation for the design and delivery of complex brownfield and contaminated land projects across a wide variety of industry sectors and customers

FLI Group's focus will be on its continuing operations including its Irish operations, strengthening the Group's three remaining core businesses in water and wastewater treatment, sustainable precast concrete infrastructure, and industrial wastewater process

technologies. Each of these has strong growth opportunities and expansion plans across Ireland and also the UK, which has long been a second home market for the Group and remains central to its future.

Michael Flynn, Group Executive Chairman and CEO of FLI Group, said: "Vertase FLI has been an important part of the FLI Group story for two decades, and I am very proud of all that our UK team has achieved. The team's ability to develop solutions for some of the most complex contaminated land problems in the UK has set them apart from the remainder of the industry. The UK has always been a second home market for FLI Group and for me personally, and it will continue to be so. Each of our three remaining businesses has strong growth opportunities and clear expansion plans, in Ireland and in the UK, and our focus will be on pursuing and delivering them. Sustainability in managing water and infrastructure is critical to growth for these industries and the FLI Group

companies are at the forefront of these sectors."

The sale allows FLI Group to focus on its three remaining businesses, each of which has strong growth opportunities and expansion plans, while ensuring continuity for the customers, people and partners associated with Vertase FLI.

FLI Group is an environmental services and technologies business headquartered in Waterford, Ireland. Founded in 1989 by Michael Flynn, the Group provides innovative and sustainable solutions for the protection of air, land and water across Ireland, the UK and the wider EU.

■ For more information, visit www.fli-group.com



Michael Flynn, Group Executive Chairman and CEO, FLI Group

Waterford's Blue Plaque Trail

■ RESEARCHED BY MARCUS COPLEY, WATERFORD CIVIC TRUST



1948 All-Ireland Final
match day programme

A Heritage Blue Plaque commemorating the sporting life of the great hurler John Keane was unveiled at No.80 Barrack Street on the 28th of November 2009. I spoke with David Smith, John Keane's nephew, and author of the book *The Unconquerable Keane*. David remembers that John was known as the "white-haired boy", and speaking of John's fame, he pointed out that primarily "he was my uncle, he was generous, scrupulously honest, and recognised for it."

John Keane was born on the 18th February 1917. Keane played in an enclosed common green, and it was here that he learned the art of hurling. He played in the nearby Gaelic field, (often with old broken hurleys), when one day the Presentation Convent groundskeeper, a man named Maurice Lucas, kindly gave John his first proper boy's hurley.

John excelled in all subjects at Mount Sion, and Gaelic games were quickly established throughout the city. John captained two of the inter-school league teams. Aged just thirteen, John's team beat Dungarvan 8-2 to 0-0, winning his first county medal. Tall and physically very strong, John excelled in several sports, essentially an "all-round athlete."

John Rouse informs us that "the rise of Mount Sion as the dominant club in Waterford and the simultaneous rise of Waterford County as contenders in the sport in Munster and Ireland are inextricably linked with the career of John Keane...regarded as Waterford's greatest ever hurler." He was considered the finest centre back to have played the game, and he was named in the *Irish Independent's* "Team of the Century" in 1984.

John's skill gathered in momentum and in 1934, aged seventeen, he played full back in the Waterford junior team winning the All-Ireland Championship. By 1936, John was county captain after Mount Sion's victory in the county championship, and was selected at centre-field in the team to play Dublin in the National League at Croke Park. John's nephew writes: "The team responded magnificently when after being despairingly in arrears, they fought back to win a thrilling game by 4-5 to 4-4. The game against Dublin showed a facet of John's play that was to become a trademark of his—the surge into the forward line in an attempt to revive his team whenever it was in trouble. Donal Foley, journalist, remarked that "John had the ability to take the ball right up the field on his own hurley

while men tackled him on all sides." Back home in Waterford, Keane was so admired by kids that they would walk behind him "at a respectful distance."

One of Keane's opponents was Mick Mackey. The renowned GAA writer Séamus Ó Braonáin wrote that Mackey was "the talk of the land, and the pride of Limerick." John and Cork man Christy Ring sprung into hurling eminence fully grown, but Mackey was born to be a hurler. John was selected for Munster in 1937, and he studied Mackey's game at close quarters. At the Munster Championship on July 4th of that year, Waterford led with only seconds remaining in lost time when Dave Clohessy scored the winning goal for Limerick, but the hero of the day was John Keane. Smith noted that Keane exploded onto the scene that day, "bested Mackey, and out-hurled him."

The *All-Ireland Final* on September 5th 1948 was the spectacular culmination of years of finely-honed skill rewarded. Waterford beat Dublin 6-7 to 4-2. David remembers: "Waterford rarely dallied with the ball, they outpaced the opposition, and were so accurate in their approach shots that flag umpires were kept busy. It had been a comprehensive victory. The *Irish Independent* reported that John Keane, whose artistry on the 40-yard mark left Dublin centre half back J. Butler in a state of bewilderment. *Radio Teilifís Éireann* reported that Keane dominated the whole half forward line.

So, senior medals for the team, and the magnificent McCarthy Championship Cup held aloft for a Waterford first—what a day.

John died on Wednesday, October 1st 1975 aged 58, but not before he visited all his friends and former rivals locally and nationally for one last time.

Thanks to: David Smith for personal communication and, *The Unconquerable Keane* (2010); John Rouse, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, Royal Irish Academy; Donal Foley, *Irish News Agency*; *The Irish Independent*; and, *Radio Teilifís Éireann*. Suggested viewing: 1948 All-Ireland Hurling Final Waterford v Dublin www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK0yVi96DOU

■ Waterford Civic Trust is a voluntary organisation whose pursuit is the enrichment, preservation, protection, promotion and improvement of our heritage in Waterford. Find out more at www.waterfordcivictrust.ie

gallery

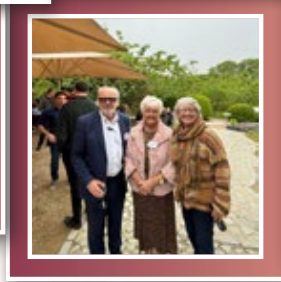
Business After Hours
@ Glassworks



Business Expo
@ George Corbett Motors



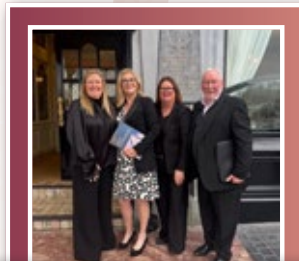
**Business After Hours
@ Lafcadio Hearn
Japanese Gardens**



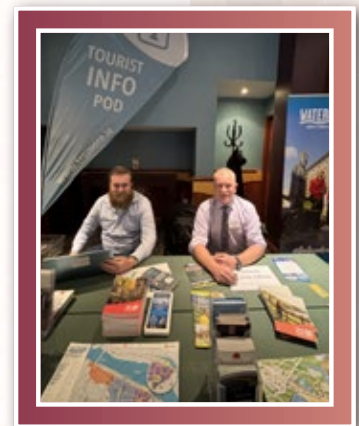
**Celebrating 25 Years of
the Hartley People Group**



**An Taoiseach Micheál Martin
visit to Waterford**



**Waterford Rural
Tourism Network Event**



Membership Directory



Waterford Chamber
Advancing business together

ACCOUNTANT

Aidan McAvinue & Co
CFO Solutions
Comerford Foley Consultants Ltd
ConnorsMeskill
DMB Chartered Accountants
Drohan & Knox
EY
FDC Group
Fitzgerald Power
Hall Lifford Hall
James F. Wallace & Company
Jephson & Co
MK Brazil
O'Sullivan Scanlon Brazil
PwC
Ray Wall & Co. Chartered Accountants
RDA Accountants
Veritas Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditor

ARCHITECT

C.J. Falconer & Associates
DHB Architects
Fewer Harrington & Partners
Merrigan Doyle Phelan and Partners

ARTS & LEISURE

The Art Hand
Artform School of Art
Blackwater Valley Opera Festival
Christ Church Cathedral
Coastguard Cultural Centre
Garter Lane Arts Centre
Imagine Arts Festival
IRIT Productions
Kilcohan Park Greyhound Stadium
Lafcadio Hearn Japanese Gardens
Mount Congreve Gardens
Newtown Golf Practice Range
Peter Flanagan Hurleys & Sports
SETU Arena
Splashworld
Symphony Club of Waterford
The Rock Dublin
Theatre Royal
Tramore Amusement & Leisure Park
Tramore Golf Club
Waterford Golf Club
Waterford Healing Arts Trust
Waterford Suir Valley Railway

AUDIO & VISUAL SOLUTIONS

Centre of the Line Productions
DigiCol Photography & Media Productions
EveryEvent
Frontline Audio Visual
Hi-Lite Television Productions

BANKING & FINANCIAL

Adelphi Financial Brokers
AIB Bank
Anita Cambie Financial
Bank of Ireland
Close Brothers Commercial Finance
EBS Waterford
ezfees financial
FDC Group
Finance For Business
First Citizen Finance
Fitzmaurice Finance Ltd
Journi Credit Union
Kiely Gaule Financial Services
Lisduggan Credit Union
Lockton
Parolla

PTSB

Sure Valley Ventures

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Business in the Community
Enterprise Ireland
GreenTech HQ
IDA Ireland
Ireland South East
Irish Exporters Association
New Frontiers
Propelor
SETU Xcelerate Centre
Waterford City Enterprise Centre

CLEANING SERVICES

Aisco Security
CCS Facilities
Kathy Barry's Cleaning
MHL Facilities
S. Security Group Ltd & RAC Facilities
Tramore Dry Cleaners

COMMUNITY

Autism Friendly Waterford
Ballybeg Greens
Bulíon Phort Láirge
Business in the Community
Down Syndrome Ireland Waterford & South Kilkenny Branch
GIY Ireland
Renew Enterprises
Respond
Rotary Club Waterford
Samaritans Waterford & South East
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
Solas Cancer Support Centre
Tintean Housing Association
Waterford Disability Network
Waterford Food Bank
Waterford In Your Pocket
Waterford Integration Services
Waterford Public Participation Network

CONSTRUCTION

Bolster Construction
Concrete Pumps
Encon
Hi-Tec Construction
Hus Living
MacMinn O'Reilly Mahon
Michael Murphy Building Services
Sealant Store

CONSULTANCY

AeroInfra
Almega Business Consulting
Benedek Frank
Brigid Milner
CaffCo Business Planning
Carron + Walsh
The Compliance Specialist
Darlington Consulting
Eicea Energy
Finance For Business
Halley Consulting
JHG Consulting Services
ncco
Nolan Construction Consultants
ReduceCosts
Ria White HR & Training
Ruya Advisory

EDUCATION

DX2 Training Solutions
Irish Management Institute

Junior Achievement Ireland
Medical English Courses
South East Technological University
Waterford & Wexford ETB
Waterford College of Further Education
Waterford Youthreach

EMBASSIES

Embassy of Canada
Embassy of France
Embassy of Germany
Embassy of China

ENGINEERING

Codico Distributors
Eastgate Engineering
Ellickson Doors
Ellickson Engineering
Engineering the South East
Institute of Industrial Engineers & Safety Management Systems
M.W. Murphy & Son
Metalman Engineering
STS Group
Total Precision Engineering Solutions
Weltec Engineering

ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS

Douglas Carroll Consulting Engineers
Frank Fox & Associates
Garland
Reyden Consulting Engineers
Malone O'Regan Consulting Engineers

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

Byrne & McGuire Oil
Climate Innovation
Copper Coast Renewables
Eicea Energy
ESB
ESB Networks
FLI Group
Gas Networks Ireland
Granny Recycling
GreenTech HQ
Greenvolt Next
NEG8 Carbon
Ørsted
ReduceCosts
Russell Environmental and Sustainability Services
SolarSure
South East Energy Agency
Visor Construction Solutions
Wayne Hutchinson Energy Advisory Group

FOOD & DRINK

Anchor Spirits Ireland
Blackwater Distillery
Blue Butterfly Coffee Company
Brady's Quality Foods
Coffee House Lane
Curraghmore Whiskey
Dawn Meats Group
DessertFirst
Flahavan's
Grantsstown Nurseries
The Iverk Show
Jack Molloy & Son
Legacy Irish Craft Cider
Molloys Butchers Ardkeen
O'Connell Whiskey Merchants
Shirley's Delicatessen
Supporting Nature Naturally Co.
Walsh's Bakehouse

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

James Falconer Undertakers
Robert Thompson Funeral Directors

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Cantec Group
Charisma Design
Creating Momentum
The Forest
OfficeMaster
Passion For Creative
Tagline Print & Design
TOTEM

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Autastic
Colm Morrissey Hair Salon
Connecting to Nature
Eyeworks Opticians
Nolke Opticians & Hearing Care
Smovey Health
Spirit Leisure Centre
Supporting Nature Naturally Co.
The Crucible Gym
Waterford Skin & Laser Clinic

HEALTHCARE

Celltrion Healthcare Ireland
Chronic Health Advocate CLG
Clannad Care
Dermot Crowley
Dovida
Dr Joseph O'Beirne
Elena Brante Jungian Analyst
Family Practice Medical Centre
Hidden Hearing
The Keogh Practice
Monica Jackman
RelateCare
TriviumVet
University Hospital Waterford
UPMC Whitfield
Waterford Hospice
Waterford Massage Therapist

HOTEL

Arlington Lodge Suites
Dooley's Hotel
Faithlegg Hotel & Golf Club
Fitzwillton Hotel
Granville Hotel
Greenway Manor Hotel
Majestic Hotel
One the Waterfront
The Strand Inn
Tower Hotel & Leisure Centre
Travelodge Waterford
Treacy's Hotel Waterford
Viking Hotel Waterford
Waterford Castle Hotel & Golf Resort
Waterford Marina Hotel

HOUSEHOLD & INTERIOR DESIGN

The Assembly Crew
Cove & Co Paint Studio
Dlight
Evoke German Kitchens
Hogan Painting & Decorating
Laurence Farrell
Mattress Mick Waterford
McGuire's Garden Centre
Murphy Larkin Timber Products
Porta
Sealant Store
Sienna Home Furnishings
Tara Blinds
Woodpecker Floors & Tiles

HR & RECRUITMENT

AA Euro Recruitment Group
Aphex Group
Hartley People Recruitment & Training
Matrix Recruitment
Morgan McKinley
Osborne Recruitment
Turas Nua

HR SERVICES

Brigid Milner
Darlington Consulting
John Walsh HR Consultancy
Ria White HR & Training
Simmons & Simmons
SimplifyHR
Turas Nua

INSURANCE

Arachas
AXA Insurance Waterford
BMCI Insurance & Investments
Campion Insurance
ezfees financial
Kiely Gaule Financial Services
Lockton
Vhi

IT SERVICES

Agora Publishing Services Ireland
Aisco Security
Fyrefli
Trilateral Research
Unitec

MANUFACTURING

APS Materials, Inc.
Ball Beverage Packaging Ireland
Bausch + Lomb
Carten Controls
CMC Hygea
Codicod Distributors
Eco-Burner
Eirgen Pharma
ELC Laser Group
Glazik
Haleon
Jabil Healthcare
MEDITE SMARTPLY
Orafol Europe
PPI Adhesive Products
Repligen Ireland
Sanofi
Schivo Group
Signode Packaging Ireland
South Eastern Chemicals
Swedencare Ireland
Teva Pharmaceuticals Ireland
West Pharma

MARKETING & PR

Agora Integrated Marketing
Creating Momentum
Forest, The
Market Dynamics
Passion For Creative

MEDIA

Beat 102-103
Hi-Lite Television Productions
International Living
The Munster Express
Waterford News & Star
WLR FM

OFFICE SUPPLIES

OfficeMaster

PHOTOGRAPHER

Brownes Photography

David Murphy Studio
DigiCol Photography
& Media Productions
Garrett FitzGerald Photography
Noel Browne Photographer
Paddy Tubbritt Photography

PRINT & SIGNAGE

Cantec Group
Charisma Design
Focus Visual Communication
Graphic Image
OfficeMaster
One Stop Printing
OrphanPixel
Tagline Print & Design
Tramore Print

PROPERTY

Brophy Cusack
Causeway Group
DNG Reid & Coppinger
Ennis Gough Property
GMC Auctioneers
Hutchinson Auctioneers
Lawrence & McDonald
Liberty Blue Estate Agents
M&M O'Shea
O'Shea O'Toole
O'Shea Properties
Purcell Properties
RE/MAX Team Fogarty
Sherry FitzGerald John Rohan
Smart Move Properties
Sugarcube Developments Ltd
Thomas Halley Auctioneers
Whitebox

PUBS

Jack Meades
Number 21 Off License
The Old Forge
O'Neill's Bar
The Reg
Robinson's Bar
Tully's Bar

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Market Dynamics
RIKON
SEAM Research Centre
Trilateral Research
Walton Institute

RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS

Azzurro Restaurant
Bishop's Palace Café
Dooly's
Everett's Restaurant
High Horse Coffee
Mol's
One the Waterfront
Piper's Café & Churro Bar
The Reg
The Riverside Cottage
Shirley's Delicatessen
The Holiday Shops
T&H Doolan's
Zambrero Ardkeen

RETAIL

Alfie Hale Sports
Altitude
Ardkeen Quality Food Store
Auto Boland
Bolands Waterford
Brennan's Pharmacy
Cahill's Tramore
Carry Out
City Square Shopping Centre
Cove & Co Paint Studio
Delany's Pharmacy
ElectroCity Waterford

Evolution
Fitz U
Fitzgerald's Menswear
Full of Beans
George Corbett Motors
George's Court Shopping Centre
Heroes
House of Waterford
Kelly's of Waterford
Mattress Mick Waterford
Maxi Zoo
Morris's Builders Providers & DIY
Mulligan's Pharmacy
One Stop Clothing
One Tech Mobiles
Phelan's Pharmacy
Power's Pharmacy
Satina Boutique
Seagull Bakery
Sheridan Motor Group
The Shoe Centre
Sienna Home Furnishings
The Holiday Shops
Three Store Ardkeen Waterford
Tom Murphy Car Sales
Tramore Service Station
Volkswagen Waterford

SECURITY

Aisco Security
Browne Fire and Security
CCS Facilities
Germar Electrical & Security
S. Security Group Ltd & RAC Facilities

SERVICES

AeroClime Refrigeration & HVAC
Agora Publishing Ireland
Arc Mediation
Boxworks
Browne Fire and Security
Cantec Group
Clem Jacob Hire
DGD Shredding
Emerald Contact Centre
Euro Car Parks (Ireland) Ltd
EveryEvent
Ezmar Event Management
Frescold Services
Germar Electrical & Security
Infosys BPM
Nigel M. Daly Electrical Ltd
Prolines Naval Architects & Marine
Surveyors
Q1 Scientific
Van der Velden Ltd
workLAB
YourSecretary.ie

SOLICITORS

Mullins & Treacy Solicitors
MW Keller & Son Solicitors
Newell Gillen & Cunningham
Nolan Farrell & Goff
Parker Law Solicitors
Peter O'Connor & Son Solicitors
Simmons & Simmons

TECHNOLOGY & SOFTWARE

Aphex Group
Bluefin Payment Systems Ireland
Cantec Group
CGM
Compar
Datworks
Digital[Partner]
Euro Tachograph Solutions
Euryka
Fyrefli
HiSpeed Wireless Broadband
Honeywell Aerospace Technologies
HumanEdge+
Klearcom
Li4
NEG8 Carbon

Passion For Creative
Pimbrook Software
Red Hat
Sedicii Innovations
Sun Life
Threefold Systems
Zinnia

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

Atlantic View Caravan Park
Beachside Apartments
Failte Ireland
Fitzmaurice's Caravan Park
Newtown Cove Caravan & Camping Park
Seacourt Accommodation
Strand Travel Worldchoice
Tramore Tourist Office

TRAINING & COACHING

Avalon Training
Benedek Frank
Browne Fire and Security
CCS Facilities
Clarity Coach
Direct Training Ireland
Doug Dane Consulting
DX2 Training Solutions
GreenTech HQ
Inspiring Excellence
Irish Management Institute
Leyden Consulting Engineers
Li4
MCX Training & Development
Mediforce Ltd
Monica Jackman
National Learning Network
Roadskill Training Centre
Ruya Advisory
Simmons & Simmons
Sinead O'Neill Consulting
Waterford Chamber Skillnet

TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

Bell Transport & Logistics
DFDS
Emerald Cargo Forwarding
Euro Tachograph Solutions
Irish Rail
J.J. Kavanagh Coaches
James Falconer Chauffeur Hire
MAC Trans Freight
Marine Point Partnership
Passage East Ferry
Port of Waterford
Rapid Cabs
Rapid Exec
Rent-A-Box
Southeast Port Services
Storage City
Store-All Logistics
Thomas Carey T&T Coaches
Trans-Stock Warehousing & Cold Storage
U Store It
Waterford Airport

WEBSITE SERVICES

Aphex Group
Benedek Frank
The Forest
Fyrefli
Hosting Ireland
Passion For Creative
Success Online
TOTEM

WHOLESALE

Curran Foods & Express Cuisine
Musgrave MarketPlace

Waterford
Chamber

Skillnet



Building competitiveness for businesses through **skills**

Celebrating 25 years supporting Waterford business through talent development

www.waterfordskillnet.ie

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Skillnet
IRELAND



An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Éolaíochta
Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science



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