

WATERFORD CHAMBER

Network

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Waterford & The South East

2075

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MESSAGE FROM GERALD HURLEY, WATERFORD CHAMBER

Welcome to this edition of *Network Magazine*, which I believe captures something particularly important about Waterford and the wider South East: our ambition.

Across this issue, you will see a consistent theme. We are not simply talking about where Waterford is today, but where we want the city and region to be in the decades ahead, and what we need to do to get there.

At the heart of this is *Waterford & the South East 2075: A Regional Strategy for Prosperity and Connectivity*. This is a strategy born from a belief that Waterford and the South East have the potential to become one of Ireland's leading regional economies, but that achieving that potential requires long-term thinking, investment and collective leadership.

That same ambition runs through our Pre-Budget Submission, where Waterford Chamber is making the case for the infrastructure, healthcare, education, connectivity and investment needed to unlock the region's economic potential. We are not asking simply for more investment, we are making the case for strategic investment that delivers long-term regional growth.

We are also demonstrating the power of collaboration. Our work with Chambers across the South East on the N24 highlights what can be achieved when we speak with one voice on infrastructure that is critical to the future connectivity and competitiveness of the region.

Closer to home, our submission on the William Vincent Wallace Plaza reflects another important part of our work. We want to see investment in our city centre that creates purpose, attracts people, increases footfall and supports the businesses that underpin our urban economy.

These initiatives may appear different, but they are all connected by one objective: building a more prosperous, connected and confident Waterford and South East.

As a Chamber, we have a responsibility to champion that ambition, challenge where necessary and, most importantly, bring people together to turn ideas into action.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Network* and, like us, feel optimistic about what we can achieve together.

Gerald Hurley
CEO, Waterford Chamber



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A year of listening, a fifty-year task of building

■ BY ÉADAIOIN CARRICK, PRESIDENT, WATERFORD CHAMBER



When I took up the role of President of Waterford Chamber, I knew I was stepping into a city with a long memory and a restless ambition. What I did not fully appreciate, until I had spent a year in rooms with business owners, educators, healthcare workers, port operators and civic leaders across the South East, was just how much shared appetite there is for Waterford and the wider region to stop waiting its turn.

It has been a privilege of a year. There are highlights I will carry with me forever: my family around me at our President's Summer Gala in beautiful Tramore; playing with robots at what is now Engineering the South East Conference & Expo; being on stage to witness the best businesses in Waterford being celebrated at the Waterford Business Awards; meeting so many international Ambassadors, diaspora members and stakeholders at our Waterford City Region Advantage Dinner. All incredible experiences on their own, but collectively showing the strength, grit and determination of our region.

There is no doubt that Waterford Chamber excels in listening, planning and acting. Meeting so many businesses and actively listening to their ambitions and concerns is what convinced us that the most useful thing the Chamber could do this year was not to lobby for one more project, but to help the region think properly about the next fifty.

LOOKING AHEAD

That thinking is now about to be published. *Waterford and the South East 2075: A 50-Year Strategy for Regional Prosperity and Connectivity* is the most ambitious piece of work the Chamber has produced in my time here, and I want to be honest about what it is and is not. It is not a prediction. Nobody can promise what Waterford will look like in 2075. It is a strategic framework: an honest reading of where we stand today, and a case, built on evidence rather than sentiment, for

what the South East could become if we choose to invest in it properly.

It is a story of a region whose infrastructure and coordination have not yet caught up with what the anchor city already generates. Waterford on its own cannot build a region, it needs to act as the driver, but without a strong region, a stand-alone city is not enough.

Three things explain the gap, and the strategy treats each as an opportunity rather than a grievance: a university sector that has not yet reached the scale of Cork, Galway or Limerick; a transport network that leaves communities close in distance but far in travel time; and a system of national decision-making that gives the South East no dedicated voice when the big calls on hospitals, universities, transport and ports are made.

Waterford and the South East 2075 answers each of those in turn. It sets out a case for growing SETU toward a genuinely comprehensive university of scale, so that the four and a half thousand school leavers who leave the region every year have a reason to stay, and a reason to come back. It makes the case for three new crossings of the Suir, for electrified rail that gets the first train in from Dublin before ten in the morning, and for the kind of forty-five-minute region that turns half a million or more people into one functioning labour market and one functioning catchment for a university, a hospital, and a cultural life worth having. And it proposes a South East Authority for Regeneration (SEAR), not to take power away from local authorities, but to give the region, for the first time, a single unified voice when it competes for national and European investment.

None of this is small, and none of it is quick. That is rather the point. The strategy borrows its horizon from the things that actually take fifty years to build: a university's reputation, a bridge's working life, a hospital's capacity to meet a population that is ageing faster than the national average. Business does not usually think in half-century terms, but

this Chamber has learned, over the course of one busy year, that the region's patience has already been tested by short cycles and shifting priorities. A fifty-year strategy is our way of saying that Waterford's ambition is not going to be reset every time a plan changes hands.

What gives me genuine optimism, leaving this role, is not any single bridge or building. It is the tone in the room whenever this strategy is discussed. There is no sense of a city demanding more than its share. There is instead a coherent, evidence-led case for a region working as one: Waterford in service of the South East, not in competition with it. That idea, of a regiopolis rather than a capital city pulling talent inward, is genuinely new in an Irish context, and it is one I believe the country needs.

REINVENTION

Waterford has reinvented itself before, from Viking trading port to Georgian merchant city to modern industrial and knowledge economy. I have spent a year watching the next reinvention take shape in the plans, the arguments and the quiet determination of the people who make up this Chamber. The work ahead will outlast my term, and most of our careers. But the trees we plant this year will be giving shade to a generation not yet born, and I could not be prouder to have helped put the first spade in the ground.

As I hand over the chains of office to Marian Walsh of Carron + Walsh, I know the next year will be as fruitful as the last. Marian's experience in planning and development will be an incredible asset to our city and her quiet style of leadership will leave an indelible mark. With the backing of the small but mighty Chamber team, I am excited to see what comes next.

For me it's time to spend more hours of fun and laughter with my beautiful family and to return to the fold of our business Cantec, proud to have served the business community of Waterford.



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Waterford & the South East 2075

A regional strategy for prosperity and connectivity

■ BY **LYNDA LAWTON**, WATERFORD CHAMBER

As businesses, communities and leaders across the South East, we are often focused on what needs to happen next, the next investment, the next road, the next development, the next Government budget or the next election.

But what if we took a step back and asked a much bigger question, what do we want Waterford and the wider South East to look like in fifty years?

That is the thinking behind *Waterford & The South East 2075: A 50 Year Regional Strategy for Prosperity and Connectivity*, a major new strategic document being presented by Waterford Chamber. It is not intended as a prediction of the future. Instead, it is an evidence-based framework for what the region could become, and an invitation to Government, business, education, communities and civic leaders to start planning and acting with that future in mind. It positions the South East as the region with the greatest untapped opportunity for future growth in Ireland.

The report has been developed following extensive research and stakeholder engagement led by Dr Ray Griffin, a researcher at SETU, Gerald Hurley, CEO of Waterford Chamber, and Niall Harrington, Chair of the Infrastructure and Development Panel at Waterford Chamber. Their work has resulted in a real vision with tangible achievements for Waterford and the South East, one that puts regional collaboration,

investment and long-term thinking at its centre.

According to Dr Ray Griffin, “The South East has no shortage of capable, ambitious regional leaders. What it has lacked is a shared story long enough and coherent enough to change how the region is seen and how it sees itself. Every conversation we had in developing this strategy confirmed the same thing: people know what needs to be built, they just need a framework that connects their ambitions to one another. That is what *Waterford & The South East 2075* tries to do—not to invent a future from scratch, but to take what is already emerging across five counties and give it a shape, a timeline and an evidence base strong enough to demand equal treatment.”

A CITY-SERVING A REGION

At the heart of *Waterford & The South East 2075* is the ambition to establish Waterford as Ireland’s first regiopolis, a city that acts as a strong, accessible centre for the wider region while ensuring that the benefits of growth are shared across neighbouring counties.

The ambition is significant. By 2075, the strategy envisages a Waterford city and metropolitan area of 150,000 people, serving a South East region of 650,000. It proposes a region where people can access education, healthcare, employment, culture and services through improved connectivity, while each county retains its

own identity and strengths.

This is important because the strategy does not present Waterford as competing with Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow or South Tipperary. Instead, it argues that the success of Waterford is intrinsically linked to the success of the wider South East. That is a significant shift in how we think about regional development.

COMPELLING EVIDENCE

The report makes a particularly important distinction: Waterford is not an underperforming economy.

New CSO data sets show that economic output within the South East is unevenly distributed. Waterford county records GVA per capita of €61,209, broadly in line with the Mid-West and ahead of the West, but the regional average is pulled down sharply by weaker connectivity between that economic core and the wider population it should serve, reach and share with.

The challenge, therefore, is not Waterford failing to perform. It is that the economic strength generated in Waterford is not yet fully connected to, or shared across, the wider South East.

The report identifies three interconnected challenges: talent, connectivity and governance.

Every year, approximately 4,500 school leavers from the South East leave the region to study elsewhere. The report estimates that around 25,000 young

people have built their careers outside the region over the past twenty years. At the same time, transport connections restrict the effective economic catchment of Waterford, while the region lacks a dedicated structure for coordinated strategic planning and advocacy.

These challenges are also opportunities.

AN AMBITIOUS ECONOMIC FUTURE

One of the most striking ambitions is the creation of 45,000 additional high productivity jobs by 2075. The strategy identifies three economic engines to help achieve this—the growth of SETU and the knowledge economy; a Port to Great Island technology corridor focused on offshore wind, ICT and clean energy; and a stronger regional service economy.

SETU is central to this ambition. The strategy proposes growing the Waterford student population towards 20,000 to 25,000 over the coming decades, building on the university's existing strengths, research centres and approximately €1 billion economic impact on the regional economy.

This is not simply about producing more graduates. A stronger university strengthens the entire regional economy by attracting talent, employers, research, innovation and investment.

CONNECTING 650,000 PEOPLE

Infrastructure is another defining element of the strategy. *Waterford & The South East 2075* proposes a genuine 45-minute region, connecting approximately 650,000 people through improved rail, road and public transport infrastructure. Three additional River Suir crossings, improved rail frequency, electrification, the reinstatement of the Waterford–Wexford rail connection, and better regional bus connections are among the ambitions set out.

The importance of this goes far beyond reducing journey times. Better connectivity means a larger workforce for businesses, greater access to SETU, improved access to healthcare, stronger tourism and retail markets, and more opportunities for people living across the South East.

The vision is also about the quality of life we create. The strategy proposes 32,000 new homes, the development of 15-minute neighbourhoods, transformation of the River Suir waterfront, improved public transport, enhanced healthcare infrastructure, and a more accessible and age friendly city.

It also sets out an ambition for Waterford to become Ireland's first net zero port city by 2045, positioning the



Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge, New Ross, Co. Wexford

region as a leader in offshore wind, clean energy and green industry.

According to Niall Harrington, WhiteBox Developments, “As Waterford Chamber President in 2023, I advocated for balanced regional development and government investment for the South East region, highlighting our city region's catchment population as comparable and even exceeding Cork, Limerick and Galway. We also expressed our region's ambitions and the level of investment needed to enable the Waterford City Region to compete with our other city regions and to enable us to deliver on the targets set out by the government's own *National Planning Framework* and the *National Development Plan*.”

“This strategy is an opportunity for us as a region to be proactive, as opposed to being reactive. It's where, rather than seeking funding for opportunity and be almost retrospective, we are setting out an ambitious, focussed and targeted plan that is both programmed and costed, so the future growth of our city and region has a purpose, target, vision and a robust plan of action. This is a plan that enables and works for all sectors, all our communities, all our businesses and all our families, a plan that is cohesive, collective, transparent and inclusive.”

A STRONGER REGIONAL VOICE

Perhaps one of the most important proposals is the creation of a South East Authority for Regeneration—SEAR.

The concept is not about replacing local authorities. It is about creating greater capacity for the region to work together, coordinate strategic investment and present a stronger collective case to Government and European funding bodies.

The strategy argues that the South East has previously demonstrated a willingness to collaborate, but voluntary and

project-based initiatives have struggled to provide the continuity and capacity required for long-term transformation.

For a region that has consistently received a lower share of national capital investment than its population would suggest, developing a stronger collective voice matters.

AN AMBITION WORTH EMBRACING

The scale of *Waterford & The South East 2075* is deliberately ambitious.

It envisages between €40 billion and €50 billion of investment over fifty years, delivered through successive phases focused on catalysing, scaling, consolidating and securing the region's future. But perhaps the most important message is that this is not simply about infrastructure.

It is about opportunity and creating a region where young people can study and build their careers, where businesses can access talent and markets, where families can find homes and services, where older people can age with dignity, and where communities across the South East can benefit from shared prosperity.

The document concludes with a simple but powerful message—*Waterford & The South East 2075 is a choice*. A choice to build a city of 150,000 serving a region of 650,000. A choice to become Ireland's first regiopolis, a city in service of its region rather than in competition with it. A choice to lead on climate, education, wellbeing and regional collaboration.

For Waterford Chamber, this document represents an important contribution to the conversation about the future of our region. We cannot know exactly what 2075 will look like. But we can decide what we want to build towards. And if we want the next generation to inherit a South East that is connected, prosperous, sustainable and confident in its place within Ireland, the work has to begin now.

Building an equitable future for UHW

■ BY LYNDIA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

There is a positive story to tell about healthcare investment in Waterford and the wider South East. Recent and planned developments at University Hospital Waterford (UHW) are significant, and they should be recognised.

According to the Government briefing, UHW's budget has increased by 67%, from €231 million in 2020 to more than €386 million this year. Staffing has increased by 842 people, or 40%, since the end of 2020, bringing the workforce to 2,945 at the end of March 2026. Between 2020 and 2024, 74 additional beds were delivered, with a further 98 planned between now and 2031.

These are important developments for Waterford and the South East. Progress in cardiac services is welcome. The Surgical Hub is welcome. Additional beds and staff are welcome. Investment in maternity, community, mental health and older persons services is welcome.

The question, therefore, is not whether Government is investing in healthcare in Waterford. It clearly is. The question is whether the overall level of investment is equitable and sufficient for the role UHW is expected to perform. That distinction matters.

As the principal acute hospital serving the South East, UHW has a regional responsibility extending far beyond Waterford city and county. Its catchment encompasses approximately 558,000 people across Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford and South Tipperary. If UHW is expected to operate as the Model 4 hospital for this population, then its funding, staffing, infrastructure, bed capacity and specialist services must be considered against those of hospitals carrying the same designation elsewhere in the country.

THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT GAP

This is where the figures raise serious questions. Over a 14-year period, UHW has received approximately €118 million in capital funding. By comparison, the Mater Hospital received approximately €350 million, University Hospital Limerick €311 million and Cork University Hospital €230 million.

These are not marginal differences. They represent a substantial disparity in long-term capital investment, with



consequences for UHW's ability to expand, modernise and develop its infrastructure in line with growing demand.

Operational funding has also been a longstanding concern. While recent Government figures demonstrate a significant increase in UHW's overall budget, the central issue remains whether resources are being allocated on an equitable basis relative to the population served, the hospital's Model 4 responsibilities and the resources available to comparable hospitals elsewhere.

THE BED CAPACITY CHALLENGE

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the challenge facing UHW is bed capacity. A study undertaken for *Waterford & The South East 2075* by SENSER (South East Economic Monitor) in May 2026 found that UHW has a shortfall of 413 acute beds when compared with similar hospitals elsewhere in the country.

UHW currently has approximately 0.69 beds per 1,000 people in its catchment. That is just 56% of the national average of 1.23 beds per 1,000 and 48% of the 1.43 beds per 1,000 benchmark used in comparisons with hospitals serving Limerick, Galway and Cork.

Crucially, this is not simply a warning about pressures that may emerge decades from now. The shortfall exists today. It is calculated using the current population of the South East, before future population growth and the additional demands that growth will inevitably place on services are taken into account. The 74 additional beds delivered between 2020 and 2024, and the

further 98 planned by 2031, are therefore important and welcome. But they must also be viewed in the context of the scale of the existing capacity deficit.

RECOGNITION AND AMBITION

There should be no contradiction between recognising progress and calling for greater ambition.

Government investment in UHW and healthcare services across the South East should be acknowledged. New beds, additional staff, cardiac developments, the Surgical Hub and investment across maternity, community, mental health and older persons services represent meaningful progress for patients and families throughout the region.

But welcoming those developments cannot mean that the wider question of regional equity is set aside. The South East deserves a hospital system equipped for the population it serves and the responsibilities it carries. If UHW is to fulfil its role as the region's Model 4 hospital, it requires sustained investment in its people, its infrastructure, its specialist services and, critically, its bed capacity.

The case being made is not that nothing has been done. The case is that investment must ultimately be judged not only by how much has increased, but by whether the South East is receiving an equitable level of healthcare provision compared with other regions.

The message from Waterford is therefore a straightforward one: investment is welcome, progress should be recognised, but equity must be the measure of success.

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South East Technological University President Prof. Veronica Campbell, IBM Chief Financial Officer James Kavanaugh and IBM Ireland Country Manager Nathan Cullen, with IDA's Regional Manager Mary McEvoy and SETU Academic Jerry Horgan, pictured at the announcement of the provision of an €11.5 million technology system, including an IBM z17 mainframe, to SETU Waterford to support skills development in Ireland.

Partnerships to empower the region

SETU launches Regional Engagement Plan

■ BY NIAMH NOLAN, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COORDINATOR, SETU

South East Technological University (SETU) has published its first Regional Engagement Action Plan to further position the University as a driving force for sustainable economic, social and cultural development across the South East.

SETU is the first Technological University (TU) in Ireland to publish a standalone strategy for regional engagement, a central tenet of its legislative obligation under the TU Act, 2018. In doing so, it underpins the importance for the University of strategic engagement with regional stakeholders in delivering on its mission to drive innovation, empower communities and deliver transformative impact for region.

The Action Plan, entitled *Connecting our Region through Partnerships with*

People and Place 2026–2030, positions the University as a key partner in the development of the region—working with business, public sector, government agencies, local authorities, communities and civil society—to strengthen the proposition of the South East as a place to live, work and learn.

SETU's President, Prof. Veronica Campbell said the new plan supports SETU's ambition to be recognised as a regional anchor institution with a global outlook. "Our university is founded on decisions that place learners at the centre of everything we do. By collaborating with partners across our region and beyond, we strengthen our ability to make a positive difference across the South East and internationally," Prof. Campbell said.

"The recognition that our success

is intertwined with the success of our communities has proven to be one of our greatest strengths. It is through this spirit of partnership and shared purpose that we are helping to shape a stronger, more prosperous future for our region."

The strategy signposts a more definitive direction for the region's only university in terms of how it engages with the region. In doing so, it is also a call to action for external stakeholders and communities to develop mutually beneficial relationships with SETU to shape a thriving region.

PILLARS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The Regional Engagement Action Plan identifies three strategic pillars: Partnerships, Public Engagement and Reputation Building and Place-Based Innovation and Skills.

cont.



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We want to ensure there is genuine reciprocity in our partnerships with business, civic and community organisations, where everyone benefits from the connection.

“This plan aims to put in place a clear framework around how we build and sustain relationships across the region. We want to ensure there is genuine reciprocity in our partnerships with business, civic and community organisations, where everyone benefits from the connection,” explained Kathryn Kiely, Vice President for External Affairs at SETU.

Across campuses in Waterford, Carlow and Wexford, SETU aims to position itself as a leader of regional development and as a Trusted Partner of collaboration—evidenced by existing partnerships with organisations such as Teagasc, UHW, the Defence Forces, the South East ORE Partnership, and through strategic developments such as Glassworks and the UNESCO Learning City.

A key outcome of these partnerships is to empower people to access teaching and learning via newer and different access routes—through collaboration with schools, the ETB sector, community and



Kathryn Kiely, Vice President for External Affairs, SETU

employers—and by offering access to lifelong learning, to part-time courses, apprenticeships and to new programmes of study within the South East.

The plan also aims to elevate and expand SETU’s public engagement activities, advancing the profile and reputation of both SETU and the region as a hub for intellectual leadership and learning.

SETU is sharpening its focus on enterprise engagement, industry-supported research, knowledge transfer activity and collaboration with regional agencies and employers.

Companies located at SETU’s Innovation Centre, Xcelerate,

raised in the region of €50m in 2026, a demonstration of real impact. Indicative of the strength of industry/academic partnerships and confidence in SETU was IBM’s investment of €11.5m in technology infrastructure in the university in 2026 to support the future talent pipeline and the region’s innovation capabilities in an increasingly digital and AI-driven world.

“Ultimately, these relationships enrich our students’ experience, create new opportunities for learning, innovation and employment and contribute to the wider social and economic development of the South East,” Kathryn said.

■ View the Plan at www.setu.ie/connect

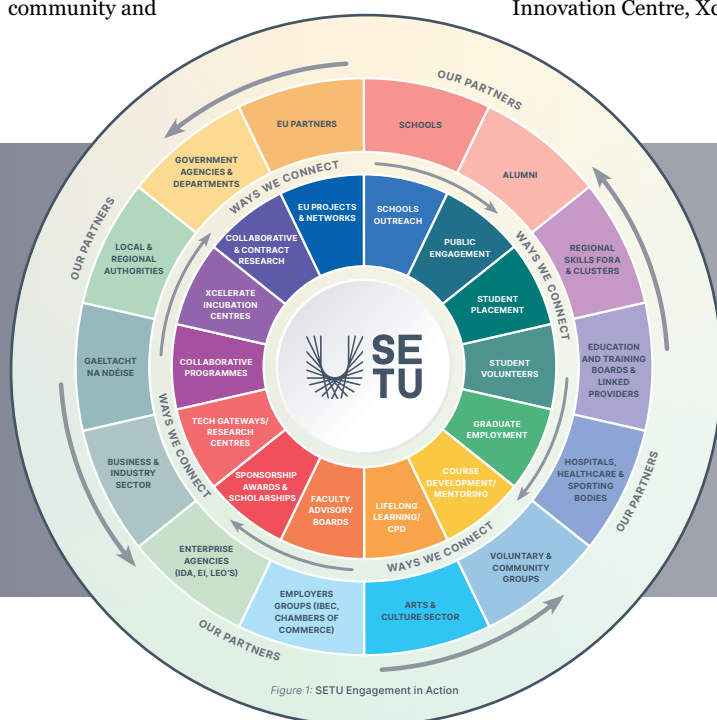
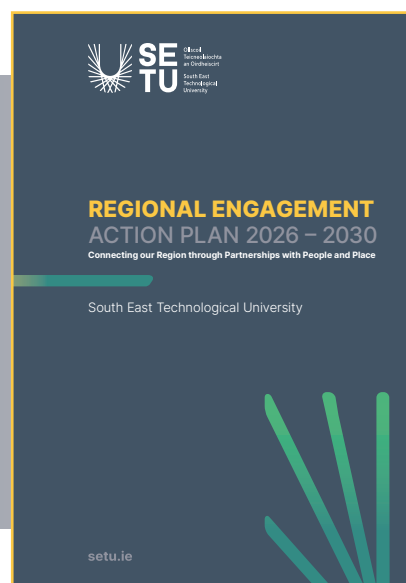


Figure 1: SETU Engagement in Action



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Supporting apprentices, building futures

How employers can transform learner success

■ BY DR KARINA DALY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, WATERFORD AND WEXFORD EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD



Starting an apprenticeship is an exciting step for a learner and the beginning of a journey into a professional career. It is a chance to earn, learn, and develop the skills needed for a successful future. For many apprentices, however, the transition into a demanding workplace can be challenging.

As with many individuals entering the workforce for the first time, apprentices can face challenges in areas such as literacy, numeracy and communication, which may impact their ability to fully engage with workplace learning and training opportunities. Others can struggle with confidence, organisation, or the pressures of balancing work, study, and personal responsibilities. Mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, or feelings of isolation can also arise, particularly for young people entering the world of work for the first time. Without the right support, these challenges can affect an apprentice's progress, motivation, and overall wellbeing.

This is where employers can make a real difference. Once an organisation recognises its role, and indeed its responsibility, in supporting apprentices throughout the on-the-job phases of their apprenticeship, the impact can be

transformative. Apprentices who feel supported are more likely to engage positively with their learning, overcome challenges, and achieve their full potential.

SUIR ENGINEERING

Suir Engineering is leading the way in this area. Currently employing 320 apprentices—predominantly across electrical and instrumentation—the company has invested significantly in its Apprentice Centre of Excellence in Citywest, creating an environment where apprentices receive practical training and mentoring throughout their learning journey. Dedicated trainers and mentors work closely with apprentices, helping them develop not only technical competence but also the confidence and professionalism needed to succeed in the industry.

Chief Executive of Suir Engineering, John Kelly, attests to the transformative change this has brought about. “We have seen significant improvements in safety performance, retention and learner outcomes as a result. Apprenticeships were once under rated, but they should be championed as an excellent way to build a long-term, AI resilient career.”

There is a strong shared commitment

from Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB), which recognises the importance of consistent learner support throughout every phase of an apprenticeship. By investing in supports during the off-the-job phases, WWETB complements the work of employers, ensuring apprentices have access to the academic, personal, and wellbeing supports they need, while WWETB Training Advisors regularly monitor progress, help learners prepare for college phases and connect them with financial, educational and counselling services when needed.

Ronan Quinn, Apprentice Programme Manager with Suir Engineering, reiterated the commitment that Suir Engineering is making to its apprentices: “Many of our leaders began their careers as apprentices, and we are committed to continuing to invest in the next generation of talent.”

■ WWETB provides 1,000 Phase 2 apprenticeship training places annually across 14 trades. For more information, visit www.wwetb.ie.



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IBM in Waterford

A regional investment that goes far beyond jobs

■ BY LYNDIA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

There are some business announcements that are measured in jobs. Others should be measured in ambition. IBM's continued investment in Waterford falls firmly into the second category.

For a region that has spent decades making the case for greater investment, balanced regional development and recognition of its economic potential, the presence of one of the world's most recognisable technology companies is hugely significant.

IBM's Waterford story is no longer simply about having an international technology company operating in the city. It is about what that presence says about Waterford, the South East and the area's ability to compete for high-value investment in a rapidly changing global economy.

In June 2025, IBM announced plans to create up to 75 highly skilled software engineering roles in Waterford, focused on research and development for IBM Z, the infrastructure that powers approximately 70% of global transactions by value. The engineers will work with IBM's

international R&D teams on processors, firmware, software development and Linux.

That is a very different proposition from simply attracting a back-office operation. These are high-value, knowledge-intensive roles operating at the cutting edge of global technology.

BUILDING A TALENT ECOSYSTEM

IBM's relationship with Waterford is closely intertwined with the South East Technological University (SETU) and the talent ecosystem that has developed here over many years. SETU's economic and social impact study highlights the University's role in developing the relevant skills base, research environment and industry relationships that have helped enable IBM's activity in the region. This is perhaps the most important lesson of all.

According to Michael Stetter, Program Director, IBM Z, "Waterford provides a strong ecosystem for innovation and high-tech development, driven by our partnership with the SETU, close collaboration with Red Hat, a diverse



Michael Stetter

Program Director, IBM Z

James Mernin

Site Executive, IBM

and talented workforce, welcoming communities, strong support from IDA Ireland, and a hands-on culture focused on growth. Together, these strengths create an ideal environment for developing world-class Mainframe innovation and delivering long-term business value."

Successful regional economic development does not happen because one organisation makes one investment. It happens when education, industry, research, Government and the wider business community reinforce one another. Waterford has been building that ecosystem and is ambitious about its future.

“

Through continued investment by IBM, the fabric of the city and region is changing for the better and seeing our next generation of innovators flourish on a global scale.

The connection between SETU and IBM is now being taken to another level. In 2026, IBM announced an €11.5 million technology initiative involving an IBM z17 mainframe at SETU, giving students studying computer science, engineering, cybersecurity, data and AI hands-on access to advanced enterprise technology.

For students across the South East, this matters enormously. It means that technologies used in some of the world's most critical financial, healthcare and public sector systems are no longer something they simply read about in a textbook. They can gain practical experience with them here, in Waterford. As AI and other new technologies become increasingly embedded into the systems that organisations rely on every day, that hands-on experience will help equip graduates with skills that are increasingly in demand across the technology sector.

It also creates a powerful feedback loop. International companies need talent. Universities develop that talent. Industry partnerships make education more relevant. Graduates see opportunities on their doorstep. Companies then have a stronger reason to invest and expand locally. In simple terms, it curbs the brain drain.

AN IMPACT ACROSS THE REGION

The economic impact also extends well beyond IBM's direct payroll. Highly skilled employees spend locally. They rent or buy homes, use local services, eat in restaurants, shop in local businesses and contribute to community life. Companies that locate here require professional services, construction, facilities, transport, hospitality, technology and a wide range of other supports.

Most importantly, the presence of

a company such as IBM strengthens Waterford's credibility when the next investor comes looking.

Investment decisions are rarely made in isolation. Companies look at the ecosystem around them. They ask whether the talent exists, whether education institutions can support them, whether there is a pipeline of graduates, whether other international businesses are already succeeding in the location and whether the region has the infrastructure and ambition to support future growth.

IBM provides a powerful answer to many of those questions. It is also significant that IBM has continued to deepen its commitment at a time when competition between regions and cities for high-value international investment is intense. IBM announced 800 high-tech roles across Ireland in 2024, including positions associated with its Red Hat operation in Waterford, followed by the further 75-job R&D expansion in Waterford in 2025. Notably, the majority of these roles were filled within the first 18 months of the project, which underpins the strength and depth of the regional talent pool.

“As a Waterford native, I am immensely proud of the transformation we have seen in the regional technology landscape over the past two decades. Through continued investment by IBM, the fabric of the city and region is changing for the better and seeing our next generation of innovators flourish on a global scale, while working at the cutting edge of technology in Ireland's oldest city, is both humbling and incredibly exciting in equal measures,” says James Mernin, Site Executive at IBM, Waterford

For Waterford, the message should be clear: we should not view this investment simply as a success story to celebrate. We should view it as an opportunity to build upon.

BUILDING ON THE OPPORTUNITY

That means continuing to invest in education and research. It means delivering the infrastructure required

to attract and retain talent. It means making Waterford a place where people want to live as well as work. It means strengthening connections between indigenous businesses and multinational companies. And it means ensuring that the South East is positioned to capture the next generation of opportunity in AI, cybersecurity, advanced computing, software, engineering and emerging technologies.

Regional development is often discussed in terms of closing a gap with Dublin, when in fact the ambition should be to build a region capable of competing internationally on its own strengths. IBM's decision to expand its R&D presence in Waterford is evidence that those strengths exist.

Our job now is to make sure the ecosystem around that growth is strong enough to attract the next IBM, the next Red Hat, and the next generation of high-value companies to the South East.

The biggest regional impact of IBM being based in Waterford may ultimately not be the number of jobs it creates. It will be the confidence it creates, confidence that world-class technology can be developed here. Confidence that graduates can build international careers without leaving the region. Confidence that multinational companies can find the talent and ecosystem they need in the South East. And perhaps most importantly, confidence that Waterford can be a location for global business, not simply a regional one.



Tonn Nua

Powering Ireland's 'next wave' of offshore wind

Waterford has long been known by surfers for its waves, but in the coming years a different kind of wave is set to build off the South East coast: Tonn Nua, meaning 'new wave' as Gaeilge, is a major offshore wind project being planned that will help power Ireland's clean energy future.

Located 12km off the county's coast, the Tonn Nua project is expected to deliver approximately 900MW of renewable electricity directly to the national grid once fully operational—enough to power almost one million homes. The project is being developed by a joint venture between ESB and Danish renewable energy company, Ørsted. The provisional rights to develop the project were awarded to ESB and Ørsted in November 2025 via competitive auction under Ireland's second offshore wind auction (ORESS). It is the first site to progress under the State's new plan-led approach for offshore wind development.

For ESB, Tonn Nua is the latest significant milestone in its journey to decarbonise its energy generation operations. It is a major project within its renewable portfolio and builds on practical experience gained in the renewable energy market in the UK. Since 2018, ESB has been involved in projects such as *Galloper*, off the coast of England, *Neart na Gaoithe*, off the coast of Scotland and *Inch Cape*, a 1.1GW project also off the coast of Scotland.

Tonn Nua is at an early stage of development, with construction expected in the early 2030s. The immediate focus is on building a detailed understanding of the site through surveys and assessments to inform the planning application. Surveys will focus on informing



Moira Walsh, Tonn Nua Project Manager, speaking at the launch of the South East Energy Agency Offshore Wind Report at Port of Waterford, March 2026

engineering design, turbine layout and environmental studies and will include assessments of birds, marine life, seabed habitats and other important features of the marine environment in the South East.

Stakeholder engagement is key as the project develops. Early and open engagement is important in understanding what local communities need, information sharing and ensuring that views from the people of the South East are reflected as the project gathers pace. Throughout 2026, the project team has already had significant engagement with the fishing sector, local communities, academia and business sector and are now planning a series of public engagements in 2027.

The project will also bring long-term regional benefits for the economy of the South East. As Ireland's offshore wind

sector grows, projects create opportunities for ports, local businesses, supply chain companies and skills development. A community benefit fund will also be developed and is expected to contribute about €120 million over 20 years to support various local initiatives.

Delivering offshore wind at this scale is challenging, however, with commitment, collaboration and continued engagement, Tonn Nua can become a landmark renewable energy project not just for the South East but for Ireland—delivering secure, homegrown electricity at scale, supporting regional opportunities and helping to power the country's transition to a cleaner energy future.

■ For more information, visit www.tonnua.ie



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Eastgate Engineering: operating on a global level from the region

From its roots in Ireland's South East, Eastgate Engineering has grown into an international engineering and construction business, with its people now helping to deliver some of Europe's largest and most complex infrastructure projects.

Eastgate's Irish home office is at Marine Point, Belview, beside the Port of Waterford, keeping the business firmly connected to the region it calls home. That connection was recognised at the Waterford Business Awards in 2024, when Eastgate Engineering was named *Business of the Year* and founder David Brennan was named *Entrepreneur of the Year*. But the work being carried out by Eastgate teams extends far beyond the region. More than 500 people now work across Ireland and the UK, supporting projects in offshore wind, power and renewables, oil, gas and chemicals, industrial and manufacturing, data centres, and nuclear and defence.

SAFETY FIRST

These are highly technical, safety-critical environments, and at Eastgate, safety always comes first. The company's main safety objective is straightforward: everyone goes home safely. Procedures and systems provide the framework, but Eastgate's safety culture is built around its people taking responsibility, speaking up and looking out for one another.

As Head of HSEQ Jamie Stephenson explains: "Strong safety performance doesn't happen by accident. It is not achieved by procedures alone, but by people taking ownership, planning work properly, maintaining high standards, and speaking up when something doesn't look right."

For Jamie, safety leadership ultimately comes down to individual actions: "Safety leadership starts with individuals at every level choosing to do the right thing, even when no one is watching."

CLOSE TO HOME

For founder and Chief Executive Officer David Brennan, Eastgate's connection to the South East is personal as well as professional. David grew up in Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny, where he still lives today, and began his career as an apprentice electrician. That journey, from learning his trade locally to leading an international engineering and construction business, reflects the kind of career path Eastgate is helping to create for people across the region.

For David, the easiest way to explain Eastgate is still to focus on what its people actually do. While the scale of the projects has grown and Eastgate teams now work across Ireland, the UK and beyond, the skills at the heart of the business remain grounded in the trades and engineering disciplines that shaped his own career.

"We're electricians and engineers, and I say that plainly because that's what we are, I started out as an apprentice

electrician myself,” David says. “The difference is the scale. We don’t wire houses. We wire the things that keep the lights on for millions of houses at once.”

Eastgate’s story dates back to 2007, and over the years the scale and reach of the business has expanded significantly. Its teams have worked on projects including Dogger Bank Offshore Wind Farm, Inch Cape Offshore Substation and Woodsmith Mine, alongside major energy and industrial developments across the UK and Europe.

Dogger Bank Offshore Wind Farm shows the scale at which those teams are now operating. The 3.6 gigawatt (GW) development off the Yorkshire coast is the world’s largest offshore wind farm and is capable of powering around six million homes.

“Before any of those turbines ever go to sea, the towers and the nacelles have to be assembled, wired, connected and tested on land,” David explains. “That happens at sites across the UK, and that’s Eastgate Engineering doing that.”

SCALING AT PACE

The business has grown fast. Three years ago, Eastgate employed around 170 people and recorded revenue of €22.4 million. Today, the team has grown to more than 500 and revenue reached €57.9 million for the financial year ending March 2026. The company remains privately owned and debt-free, with its growth funded through profits reinvested back into the business.

The past year has also seen Eastgate strengthen its footprint. The business has moved into new offices in Waterford and Stockton-on-Tees and opened a new base in Warrington, putting its people closer

to the industries, projects and clients they support.

The leadership team has grown alongside the business. Eastgate now has a Board of Directors comprising David Brennan as Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Kyle Smith as Managing Director, Anthony Fiske as Commercial Director and Claire Maith as Chief Financial Officer.

For Anthony Fiske, continued growth is about giving clients confidence throughout increasingly complex projects.

“Clients need engineering partners who deliver far more than technical competence; they need certainty, transparency, and value throughout the project lifecycle,” Anthony says.

That means combining engineering expertise with strong project controls, open communication and close collaboration. “Ultimately, clients seek a trusted partner who can consistently

deliver quality outcomes, protect commercial interests, and create long-term value through reliability, innovation, and performance.”

Growth also means investing in the people behind the projects. Eastgate delivered more than 8,000 hours of training over the past year, spanning technical qualifications and leadership development.

David is clear about what he wants Eastgate to hold onto as it grows: “Back your own judgement, put the controls in place so that you can afford to be wrong occasionally, look after your people properly, and give clients certainty in an industry that mostly doesn’t.”

Eastgate’s growth from the South East into an international engineering business is increasingly being recognised on a national stage. David Brennan is one of just 24 finalists in the 2026 *EY Entrepreneur of the Year Ireland* programme and is competing in the International category. For a business founded in Waterford, built without external investment and now delivering major infrastructure projects internationally, the recognition marks an important point in Eastgate’s journey.

From Waterford and the wider South East to the UK, Europe and beyond, Eastgate’s people are demonstrating the scale of what a business rooted in the region can achieve. The company continues to grow internationally while staying connected to the people, places and principles that have shaped it from the beginning.





Waterford Chamber marks 10 years of Regional Leaders Programme

Waterford Chamber has announced the launch of its flagship Regional Leaders Programme, now in its tenth year, with this year's programme commencing on September 25th with a celebration lunch in beautiful Faithlegg. Bookings are now open for professionals across the South East seeking to enhance their leadership capabilities.

Over the past decade, the programme has supported hundreds of leaders from across the region, helping to build a stronger, more connected and more ambitious business community.

Gerald Hurley, CEO of Waterford Chamber, said the milestone reflects the programme's lasting impact on the region. "Over the past ten years, hundreds of leaders have come through this programme, and our region is a better place because of it."

"The Regional Leaders Programme has continually evolved in response to the needs of business. It is designed for professionals who want to develop their leadership skills, and for organisations looking to strengthen their internal talent pipeline."

"With mentors and coaches drawn from a wide range of sectors, participants benefit from one-to-one mentoring, panel discussions, structured networking and monthly leadership events that challenge and inspire."

Mr Hurley added that the programme continues to grow in strength and reach. "We are delighted to welcome a number of new leaders this year, bringing fresh insight and experience. With an alumni network of over 700 participants, this programme has created a powerful community of business leaders who will continue to shape the economic future of the South East."

The programme is delivered in partnership with Waterford Chamber Skillnet, with additional support from Bausch + Lomb and the International Coaching Federation (ICF) Ireland Chapter.

Tommie Ryan, Network Manager at Waterford Chamber Skillnet, said the programme is designed with flexibility in mind. "Participants can arrange their one-to-one mentoring sessions

at a time that suits them, while also engaging in monthly live events focused on leadership development."

"Each participant is matched with experienced programme leaders aligned to their individual leadership journey, while panel discussions featuring leading entrepreneurs and business figures provide further insight and learning opportunities."

The programme is open to professionals at all stages of their careers, including CEOs, senior managers, entrepreneurs, and those aspiring to leadership roles.

Places are limited, and early booking is advised.

■ For further information, contact kelly.cummins@waterfordchamber.ie or visit www.waterfordchamber.ie



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UODMF0005.IE.25 October 2025



More than meets the eye

How Bausch + Lomb, Waterford is shaping the future of contact lenses

While contact lenses may appear unchanged, they have evolved into highly sophisticated medical devices. At its Waterford facility, Bausch + Lomb is developing the global platforms that will define the next generation of vision care innovation.

At first glance, contact lenses can appear to be a mature technology. Their size and shape have remained largely unchanged for decades, constrained by the anatomy of the eye and the fundamentals of optics. It would be easy to assume that innovation in this space has slowed. The reality could not be more different.

Beneath the surface, contact lenses have quietly evolved into some of the most sophisticated medical devices manufactured at scale today—driven by advances in materials science, precision engineering, automation and data-led development. Much of that evolution is happening not in Silicon Valley or Boston, but in the South-East of Ireland.

In Waterford, Bausch + Lomb operates one of the largest and most technologically advanced contact lens manufacturing and

R&D campuses in the world. What makes the site distinctive is not simply its scale, but the fact that global product platforms are conceived, developed, industrialised and manufactured under one roof.

From early-stage research through global distribution, Waterford plays a central role in shaping the products worn by millions of people every day. This end-to-end capability is not just a point of pride; it is what anchors long-term investment, high-value roles and future growth in Waterford.

“From the outside, a contact lens looks simple,” according to Kevin Fahy, Director of Research & Development at the Waterford facility. “But behind that simplicity is an extraordinary level of materials science, precision engineering and process control.

Many of the platforms that will define the next decade of our contact lens portfolio are being developed here in Waterford, with the explicit intent of being manufactured sustainably and at scale.”

THE HIDDEN COMPLEXITY OF A “SIMPLE” LENS

A modern contact lens is a finely balanced

system. Optical performance must be delivered with micron-level precision, while maintaining comfort, stability, oxygen delivery and biocompatibility on a delicate biological surface.

The materials are soft, fluid-sensitive and responsive to their environment, making them some of the most challenging optical products to design, measure and manufacture consistently.

Over the past two decades, progress has come through incremental but meaningful advances—improved polymers, tighter process control, smarter automation and advanced metrology. These changes rarely make headlines, but they are what enable reliable vision correction at global scale.

That depth of capability matters. It is why Waterford has grown into a true innovation hub, and also why new product development has become the lifeblood of the site’s long-term success.

INNOVATION AS THE ENGINE OF REGIONAL GROWTH

For Bausch + Lomb, innovation is not an abstract concept — it is a practical necessity. In vision care, sustained growth depends on a steady rhythm of new

“

What makes Waterford different is that innovation here is not something that happens in isolation from manufacturing.

product introductions that address real unmet needs for patients and eye care professionals.

Waterford-based R&D platforms have underpinned much of the site's growth over the past decade, developed as part of Bausch + Lomb's global R&D network and building on decades of expertise across the organisation, including long-established teams in Rochester, New York. Products such as *Biotrue® ONEday* and *Infuse* did not emerge by accident; they were the result of long-term investment in materials expertise, optical design and manufacturing capability.

“What makes Waterford different is that innovation here is not something that happens in isolation from manufacturing,” says Mark Hennessy, vice president of Operations at Bausch + Lomb Waterford. “Our role is to take highly complex ideas coming out of R&D and turn them into reliable, high-quality products at global scale”.

Crucially, these products are not theoretical. They are designed from the outset to be manufacturable at scale on existing production lines in Waterford. That discipline—innovating within real-world manufacturing constraints—allows breakthrough products to reach the market faster, with lower environmental impact and stronger longterm sustainability.

REDEFINING WHAT A CONTACT LENS CAN DO

After more than 25 years without a fundamental breakthrough in lens materials, the industry is now entering a new phase. One example is the development of bioactive contact lens materials that are designed not just to correct vision, but to actively interact with the biology of the eye.

By integrating bioengineered molecules directly into the structure of the lens material, it becomes possible to deliver sustained hydration, improved tearfilm stability and enhanced comfort throughout the day—addressing issues experienced by a large proportion of lens wearers. Achieving this without compromising oxygen delivery, optical performance, or manufacturability is a significant scientific and engineering challenge, and one that has been tackled through close collaboration between R&D and manufacturing teams in Waterford.

Alongside this, Waterford-based platforms are supporting the development of next-generation daily disposable lenses, and myopia management lenses designed specifically for children. Each targets a distinct and growing need—affordability and access, long-term comfort and early intervention for one of the fastest-growing eye-health challenges globally.

SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING, BUILT IN INNOVATION TODAY MUST ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE.

The Waterford site has embedded sustainability into both product design and manufacturing operations. From energy generation and waste reduction to material efficiency and automation, the goal is to deliver high-quality



medical devices with the lowest possible environmental footprint.

This approach reflects a broader truth about regional investment. When advanced manufacturing, R&D and sustainability are developed together, they reinforce each other. Skills deepen, supply chains strengthen and regions become more resilient and attractive for long-term investment.

A REGIONAL STORY WITH GLOBAL IMPACT

Waterford is Ireland's oldest city, but its role in global eye health is thoroughly modern. The evolution of the site mirrors a wider opportunity for regional Ireland: to compete internationally not on cost, but on capability, expertise and innovation.

As global demand for better vision care continues to grow, so too does the importance of locations that can combine deep technical knowledge with scalable manufacturing. The platforms being developed in Waterford today will shape products launched years from now, worn by patients across the world.

For the teams in Waterford, this work is not about following trends, but about setting them—with the responsibility that comes from shaping products relied on by millions worldwide.

That is the real story behind contact lenses that “look the same.” Quietly, and with precision, the South-East of Ireland is helping to define the next chapter of global eye-health innovation.



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Unleashing the South East: a budget for regional growth

■ BY LYNDIA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

Waterford Chamber's Pre-Budget 2027 Submission, *Unleashing the South East*, sets out a clear message to Government: the South East does not lack ambition or potential, it lacks the investment required to realise it.

The submission is grounded in the evidence. The South East is home to 8.9% of Ireland's population but produces just 3.8% of national economic output, representing the largest regional gap between population and economic activity in the country. Yet this gap should not simply be viewed as a weakness. It represents one of Ireland's greatest opportunities for future growth.

Waterford Chamber is calling for Budget 2027 to mark a significant change in approach, moving away from incremental investment towards strategic, long-term funding that enables the region to reach its potential. The submission builds directly on *Waterford 2075: a 50 year Regional Strategy for Prosperity & Connectivity* and focuses on the infrastructure and investment required to support prosperity, connectivity and population growth.

Healthcare is a central priority. University Hospital Waterford serves a catchment of approximately 558,000 people but has just 0.69 beds per 1,000 people, significantly below the national average. Waterford Chamber is calling for a four-stage expansion programme, beginning with funding for 192 additional beds in 2027, alongside reform of the hospital's governance structure.

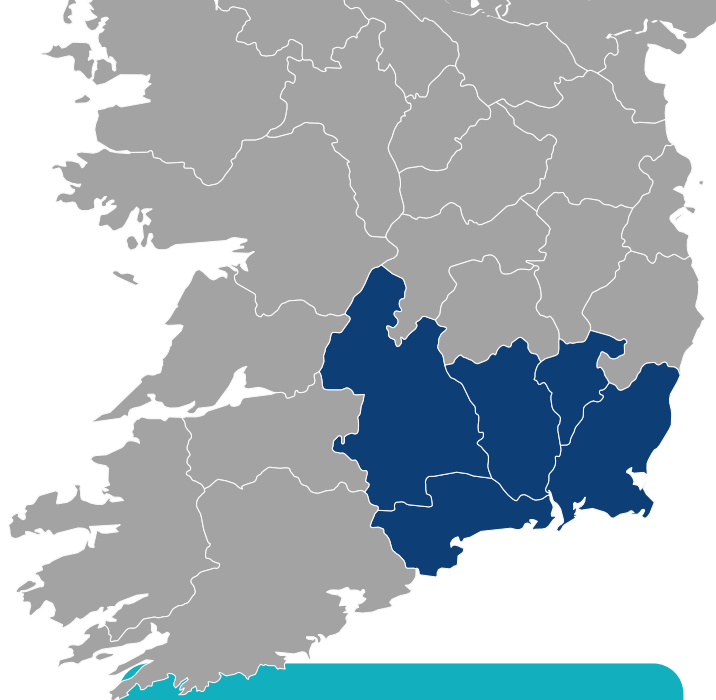
Education and skills are equally critical. The South East has only 7.3% of Ireland's full-time third-level students despite representing 8.9% of the population. The submission calls for multi-annual funding for SETU, improved borrowing arrangements and the establishment of a graduate-entry medical school linked to UHW.

Connectivity is another defining theme. The Chamber is seeking prioritisation of the Foynes to Rosslare motorway corridor, investment in the N24 and N25, improved rail connectivity to Dublin, the reopening of the Waterford to Rosslare rail line and improved access to Waterford Airport.

The submission also identifies major opportunities in offshore renewable energy, FDI, food production and city centre regeneration. With 900MW of offshore wind provisionally awarded off the Waterford coast and the Port of Waterford ideally positioned to support the emerging offshore energy sector, the Chamber believes the State must now provide the infrastructure to capture the economic opportunity.

At the heart of the submission is a simple principle: the South East is not asking for exceptional treatment. It is asking for a fair share of national investment and for Government to deliver on commitments already made.

■ Read the full submission at www.waterfordchamber.ie



Summary of Recommendations

- » **Equalise acute healthcare resources and governance for the South East**, including a four-stage expansion of University Hospital Waterford, beginning with 192 additional beds.
- » **Deliver the university investment promised to the region**, including multi-annual funding for SETU, improved borrowing capacity and a graduate-entry medical school linked to UHW.
- » **Prioritise regional roads and rail**, including the Foynes to Rosslare corridor, N24, N25, Dublin rail improvements, reopening the Waterford to Rosslare line and improved Waterford Airport access.
- » **Back the Port of Waterford's long-term plan**, positioning Belview as a hub for offshore renewable energy with improved road, rail and industrial infrastructure.
- » **Make Government spending transparent**, publishing regional capital investment annually and undertaking a full review of how public resources are allocated.
- » **Resolve Waterford's metropolitan governance challenge**, either by implementing the 2018 boundary recommendation or creating a mechanism to treat the greater Waterford area as a single planning and funding unit.
- » **Boost IDA investment in the South East**, providing additional ready-to-go sites, buildings and infrastructure ahead of improved airport connectivity from 2027.
- » **Protect food security funding**, recognising the strategic importance of the South East's agricultural and agri-food sectors.
- » **Tackle dereliction properly**, reviewing grant criteria and streamlining planning processes so existing regeneration supports can deliver meaningful results.



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Tax Director,
EY Waterford
Michael.Keating@ie.ey.com



Navigating Europe's future with confidence

Using Budget 2027 to back entrepreneurs and family businesses

Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union comes at a time when competitiveness is a defining issue for both Ireland and Europe, with policymakers looking to improve productivity, encourage investment and enable long-term growth.

Entrepreneurs and family-owned businesses make a vital contribution to Ireland's competitiveness, and to the strength of regional economies such as Waterford and the South-East. Through *EY Entrepreneur Of The Year*, we've had the privilege of meeting many business leaders who are building globally ambitious companies from every corner of the island of Ireland and creating employment, developing future talent, supporting local supply chains and making a lasting contribution to their communities.

Helping entrepreneurs and family businesses prosper and transition successfully to the next generation should therefore form an important part of the competitiveness agenda.

As Ireland leads discussions on competitiveness across Europe, Budget 2027 presents an opportunity not only to strengthen indigenous enterprise, but also to position Ireland as a leading location for entrepreneurship, investment and business growth within the EU.

UNLOCKING CAPITAL FOR GROWTH

Discussions around business funding often focus on a lack of capital. Yet Ireland is in a stronger, indeed an enviable, position than many European countries, with cash deposits of more than €160 billion, pension assets of more than €130 billion, along with significant capital in corporate balance sheets.

The challenge is making more of that capital available to our indigenous businesses, particularly to those looking to scale. Access to funding remains one of the most frequently cited challenges facing entrepreneurs, who often find themselves constrained by capital, even when opportunities emerge.

Existing measures such as the *Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme* (EIIS) have played an important role in supporting investment and could be further enhanced. Businesses and entrepreneurs increasingly point to the potential value of an environment that encourages successful founders to reinvest part of the proceeds from a business sale in growing Irish companies, while exploring a greater role for corporate and pension capital in supporting indigenous enterprise.

The challenge for Ireland is not simply in attracting more capital, but ensuring businesses have access to a broader range

of funding sources beyond traditional bank lending and keeping that capital deployed in the long term. The question is often raised as to whether Irish businesses exit too soon or before their full potential is realised.

As holder of the EU Presidency, Ireland is well placed to contribute to discussions on broadening the investor base and strengthen its position as a destination for European growth capital and, importantly, advocate for longer term investment.

SIMPLIFICATION AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Successive governments have introduced a range of measures to support entrepreneurship, investment and innovation, including EIIS, *Angel Investor Relief*, *Entrepreneur Relief* and *Key Employee Engagement Programme* (KEEP). While each serves a purpose, the overall landscape can be difficult for entrepreneurs to navigate.

Budget 2027 presents an opportunity to look at these supports from the perspective of the business owner in a holistic manner rather than the individual scheme. A more coherent framework, supporting businesses from start-up through scaling, succession and reinvestment, could make it easier for entrepreneurs to access the funding and



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If Europe is to improve competitiveness and productivity over the coming decade, it will need more entrepreneurs who not only build successful businesses, but who also continue investing in the next generation of growth companies. Ireland has an opportunity to lead by example.

incentives they need at different stages of growth. Businesses should also be incentivised to stay the course and retain their Irish ownership where possible.

For many businesses, simplification is increasingly viewed as a competitiveness measure in its own right. A more straightforward and predictable environment, across both business supports and the tax system, would make it easier for entrepreneurs to invest, grow and plan for the future. Ireland's EU Presidency also provides a platform to contribute to the European discussion on simplification, including the unnecessary complexity across a range of areas.

SUPPORTING GROWTH AND REINVESTMENT

Ireland is great at creating successful businesses. The next challenge is ensuring more of the capital, expertise and experience generated by successful entrepreneurs remains active in the economy.

Much of the discussion around entrepreneurship focuses on helping businesses start and grow. Less attention is paid to what happens after a successful exit, or when entrepreneurs choose not to exit at all.

For example, in countries such as Sweden certain dividends attract a lower tax rate, which allows entrepreneurs to take an element of “cash off the table” without being forced to sell the business. By contrast, dividends in Ireland are taxed at rates in excess of 50%. It raises an interesting question as to whether a different approach to dividend taxation could encourage longer-term business ownership and investment.

For those who do exit, entrepreneurs often leave with not only capital, but valuable commercial experience and networks that could support the next generation of businesses.

Another area of discussion is how reinvestment can be encouraged. Measures such as a CGT rollover relief, or a broader *Entrepreneur Reinvestment Relief*, could make it more attractive for entrepreneurs and investors to reinvest proceeds from a business sale into growing Irish companies.

Such an approach could be particularly valuable in sectors that will shape Ireland's future competitiveness in capital-hungry businesses, including AI, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy and critical infrastructure. The objective should be simple: keep entrepreneurial capital, expertise and experience working within the economy long after a business has been sold.

If Europe is to improve competitiveness and productivity over the coming decade,

it will need more entrepreneurs who not only build successful businesses, but who also continue investing in the next generation of growth companies. Ireland has an opportunity to lead by example.

Budget measures are often judged by their immediate impact. Their longer-term significance lies in whether they help create the conditions for sustainable growth.

As Ireland leads discussions on competitiveness across Europe, it also has an opportunity to strengthen competitiveness at home. Let's reward Ireland's entrepreneurs who take appropriate business risk. For many, three priorities stand out: better access to capital, greater simplicity and certainty, and incentives that encourage successful entrepreneurs to reinvest in the next generation of businesses.

From the perspective of regional businesses, the success of Budget 2027 will be measured by whether it makes it easier to invest, innovate, reinvest and grow for the long term in Waterford and across the South-East.

If you would like to hear more about any of these topics, please contact:

Brian O'Malley
Tax Senior Manager,
Private Client Services
– Tax & Law,
EY Waterford
Brian.OMalley@ie.ey.com



**Shape the future
with confidence**

Regional Chambers unite to demand Government commitment to deliver the N24 corridor

Waterford Chamber, along with the Chambers of Commerce representing Kilkenny, Limerick, Tipperary and Wexford have jointly called on Government to make an urgent commitment to delivering the N24 as a single strategic transport corridor linking Limerick and Waterford during the lifetime of the current Government. Together, the five Chambers represent more than 2,220 member businesses employing approximately 111,000 people across the Southern Region.

A joint letter signed by the CEOs of the five chambers was issued to Minister for Transport Darragh O'Brien and Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation Jack Chambers, in which the Chambers outlined the significant economic and regional development benefits of progressing the N24 project and warned that continued delays are undermining business competitiveness, investment, and regional connectivity.

According to Gerald Hurley, CEO Waterford Chamber, "The current N24 route is a major constraint on economic growth, with unreliable journey times, congestion in towns along the corridor, and poor network resilience increasing costs for businesses and reducing access to labour, markets, and key infrastructure such as ports. They contend that businesses need clarity and confidence regarding the delivery timeline for the project.

"The N24 has been talked about for 20 years, that's long enough. Businesses across the region now need certainty, a clear timeline and a commitment from Government to get this road delivered. It is essential for balanced regional development, attracting investment and ensuring the South East and Mid-West can reach their full economic potential.

While welcoming the Government's commitment to accelerating infrastructure delivery through the *Critical Infrastructure Bill*, the Chambers



stressed that projects of strategic regional importance, such as the N24, must not be left behind. They highlighted that the entire N24 corridor is essential to achieving the balanced regional development objectives set out in *Project Ireland 2040* and should be viewed as a critical implementation tool for national policy.

The Chambers noted that support for the N24 exists across national and regional policy frameworks, including successive National Development Plans, the Programme for Government, the *Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*, and multiple local authority development plans. However, they stated that despite years of policy endorsement, project delivery remains fragmented, underfunded and unacceptably slow.

In particular, the Chambers expressed concern that the Cahir to Limerick Junction project is only expected to complete Phase 3 in the third quarter of 2026, while the Waterford to Cahir project received just €500,000 in funding this year to enter Phase 3. They warned that a 2030+ construction horizon for one section, combined with the absence of a comparable timetable for the other, does not represent a credible end-to-end delivery programme.

The group has put forward four key recommendations:

1. The N24 should be treated as a single strategic Limerick-Waterford corridor rather than two separate schemes.
2. The Cahir-Limerick project should proceed to statutory planning without further delay, supported by adequate funding and timely approvals.
3. The Waterford-Cahir project should receive a multi-annual Phase 3 and Phase 4 funding commitment to provide certainty on its progression.
4. The Waterford-Cahir scheme should be included in the next national project delivery schedule, with clear milestones for appraisal, planning, procurement and construction.

Speaking on behalf of the five Chambers, Gerald said: "The N24 represents one of the most important regional infrastructure investments required to strengthen economic links between the south-east and mid-west regions, improve connectivity between the cities of Limerick and Waterford, and support continued economic growth and investment along the corridor."

The Chambers have requested a meeting with both Ministers and their officials to discuss the project and to outline the importance of delivering a clear, funded and time-bound programme for the N24 corridor.



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■ Find out more at www.TheInnovators.ie



HUMANEDGE+

IMELDA MORRISSEY is Co-Founder of HumanEdge+, an AI governance company helping organisations adopt Artificial Intelligence safely, responsibly and strategically. Her work focuses on developing practical governance frameworks, improving AI literacy and implementing the policies and processes needed for effective AI adoption. Through HumanEdge+, she helps bridge the gap between AI innovation and responsible implementation, supporting organisations to adopt AI safely, effectively and with the right governance in place.



SCREEN WATERFORD

FLAVIA PORDOMINSKY is an Italian-Argentinian film producer with over a decade of experience on productions for RTÉ, BBC, Netflix, Amazon Prime and TG4. She founded IRIT Productions, an independent film and television production company, and Screen Waterford, Waterford's film commission office. Combining industry expertise with an entrepreneurial outlook, Flavia builds partnerships between Waterford and international markets, attracting productions, investment and opportunities to the region.



PEPPER HUSTLE ON DEMAND

LYNNE WARD is rewriting the rules of midlife wellness. The Waterford-based fitness expert founded Pepper Hustle On Demand to give women over 40 the support the fitness industry was missing. Her award-winning platform tackles the realities of perimenopause, muscle loss and low energy and is now trusted by over 10,000 women worldwide. Pepper Hustle combines science-backed workouts, nutrition and expert coaching to deliver sustainable results designed to last for life. Her philosophy is simple: fitness and nutrition should enhance your life, not consume it. Built for busy women who want real results without the overwhelm.

**COCOABYJUDIT**

JUDIT MCNALLY is the founder and chocolatier behind CocoabyJudit, a family-run artisan chocolate business in West Waterford. Drawing on more than 20 years in confectionery and hospitality, Judit creates small-batch chocolates celebrating local ingredients, provenance and collaboration. Since launching in 2024, CocoabyJudit has earned national recognition, including Blas na hÉireann Gold and a Great Taste Award.

**WAYNE HUTCHINSON
ENERGY ADVISORY GROUP**

is an independent energy advisory firm supporting businesses across Ireland in reducing commercial energy costs, improving efficiency, and securing grant funding. Specialising in energy procurement, SEAI and LEO grant consultancy, the firm guides small and medium enterprises from initial assessment through to sustainable, long-term savings. Using ongoing energy data to track results, their aim is always about identifying future cost saving opportunities for existing and future clients.

**HELLOWORLD**

BRYAN HURLEY has been building websites, digital products and online learning experiences for more than ten years, working across web development, software, design and education. That combination of technology, education and practical web experience led to HelloWorld. HelloWorld helps businesses understand how they appear when customers ask ChatGPT, Google, Perplexity and other AI tools which businesses they should choose. If a business is not being mentioned, it can be difficult to know those opportunities are being missed. Bryan examines what AI systems can currently see about a business, identifies what is missing, and improves the signals that make it easier to find, understand and recommend.

**PRS**

OONAGH MILLER is Founder of PRS, a boutique recruitment consultancy specialising in senior Mechanical & Electrical appointments across Ireland and the EU. With over 20 years' recruitment experience, she has built trusted partnerships with contractors and specialist M&E firms delivering complex projects across Life Sciences, data centres and advanced manufacturing. Known for her relationship-led, consultative approach, Oonagh founded PRS to provide a more personal, transparent recruitment service, connecting businesses with commercially critical talent while building partnerships designed to last.

**VERNEXA**

BEN CURHAM is the founder of Vernexa, an AI implementation business that helps organisations turn AI into practical business value. Drawing on experience in sales, marketing and software development, he partners with businesses to identify high-impact opportunities and support teams in adopting AI with confidence. Since launching earlier this year, Ben has been working with clients while developing a repeatable implementation approach designed to help businesses improve performance, increase productivity and stay competitive in an AI-driven world.

**SEAHORSE AUTOMATION**

JAMES O'NEILL of Seahorse Automation has spent the last five years as an individual contributor at a business process automation and AI company. Powered by his expertise of SMBs in Europe, James is helping companies streamline their operations. A workflow he built attracted and won a \$1,200 coaching package for a client before the project was completed; since then, James has explored this avenue of work.



FMOPs

FIONN MURPHY is the founder of FMOPs, an Irish consultancy helping local businesses get found and chosen—on Google and in AI tools like ChatGPT. FMOPs builds websites optimised for search and AI answers, manages Google Business Profiles, and automates enquiry follow-up so owners never miss a lead. Fionn believes the best business in town shouldn't lose out to whoever is easiest to find, and is now helping Irish firms show up in AI search.



LOCUS THERAPY

JAGDISH PRASAD is the Founder of Locus Therapy and Co-Founder of Newbee Hub. He is a Senior Occupational Therapist with over 30 years of clinical experience. His clinical expertise forms the foundation of the Locus Therapy App: structured, evidence-informed, parent-guided home programmes that help families begin practical support while waiting for assessment or therapy services.



EZMAR EVENT MANAGEMENT

EVELYN FITZMAURICE is the founder of Ezmar Event Management, a 360-degree events business specialising in purposeful corporate experiences. She transforms business objectives into meaningful experiences that strengthen workplace connection, develop leaders, spark engagement and drive organisational performance. Working closely with each client, Evelyn designs every event with intention, ensuring it delivers lasting impact for people, teams and organisations.



DAIRYTECH

RICHARD SCANLON graduated from UCD with Master's Degree in Ag Science in 2004. After 10 years working in milk processing in New Zealand, France and Ireland, Richard returned to the family business in 2015 where they provide dairy technology solutions and service to farmers in Waterford. In 2025, Wm Scanlan DairyTech started manufacturing automation focused on cow health and on farm efficiency from their HQ in Cappoquin, with ambitions of exporting these innovation solutions by 2027.



LOCUS THERAPY

RICHA YADAV is the Founder & CEO of Newbee Hub and Co-Founder of Locus Therapy. She brings more than 10 years' experience teaching in an inclusive secondary school, alongside her work as a special educator, author, yoga instructor and entrepreneur. Her work brings together education, creativity and practical problem-solving. Through Newbee Hub, she has developed books, wellbeing resources and digital tools for families and professionals. With Locus Therapy, Richa leads the parent-focused vision: making child development guidance easier to understand, more accessible and more supportive for families at home.



INFRABID

MICHAEL MCAULIFFE is the Co-Founder of InfraBid and a senior infrastructure executive with over 20 years' experience delivering major utilities and infrastructure programmes across Ireland, the UK and Australia. He is leading the development of InfraBid, an AI-powered platform that gives estimators and commercial teams more time to focus on strategy, commercial decision-making and winning work by automating the time-consuming foundations of tender preparation.

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Every business has a reputation. The question is – do people recognise it?

Your reputation is earned through the quality of your work and the experience people have of your business.

The role of branding is to make that reputation recognisable. In competitive markets, organisations compete on trust, clarity and distinction. The businesses that grow are those whose value is quickly understood and consistently remembered.

TOTEM brings clarity to what your business stands for, what makes it meaningfully different, and why customers should choose you. Helping transform your reputation into a clear competitive advantage that will last.

The result is a brand that strengthens trust, attracts the right customers and creates a strong foundation for sustainable business growth.





Media Connect is Virgin Media Ireland's new wholesale division – opening its broadband network to retail partners (DigiWeb, Sky and Vodafone) for the first time.

TOTEM positioned the business, internally and externally, as an independent, trusted partner. The brand promise – **Simply Switched On** – communicates both capability and approachability. The brand identity, messaging framework and digital experience built confidence and created a strong platform to win new business.



Whitewater Group designs, engineers, manufactures and supports critical water and cooling infrastructure in the world's most demanding environments. The business is expanding globally and needed an identity with authority that expresses what makes it distinctively different. **Water, engineered** – sums up their focus on engineering smarter, more resilient systems that reduce risk, improve resource efficiency and performance.



Following a change in ownership, **HCS** had ambitious plans to grow into a leading technology partner for enterprise organisations. TOTEM worked with leadership to define a distinctive market position, centred on technical expertise and an agile, personal service – global standards, local savvy. **Empowering Progress** refined this further, bringing clarity and consistency to how HCS communicates its reputation.





Colin Byrne, Founder and Creative Director, TOTEM

Branding that builds business

You are probably better than you look. Not in person – on paper, online, in the pitch deck, in the first impression a prospect forms before they ever pick up the phone. Most businesses we meet have earned a reputation for excellence the hard way: through delivery, integrity and results built up over years. Far fewer have a brand that actually shows it. The distance between what you have earned and what people see costs real money – in deals lost, talent overlooked, and value nobody credits you for.

That gap – between the reputation a business has actually earned and the reputation the market perceives – is where TOTEM does its work. For more than two decades we have helped B2B organisations close that gap: turning hard-won credibility into a clear, recognisable competitive advantage.

WHY THIS MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

In competitive markets, organisations compete on trust, clarity and distinction. The businesses that grow are those whose value is quickly understood and consistently remembered. Customers, partners, investors and future employees are all making fast judgements about who to work with, buy from or join. If your reputation isn't reflected clearly in how you present yourself, that judgement can go the wrong way, no matter how good the underlying work is.

This is a particularly live issue for businesses in our region. The south-east is home to an extraordinary concentration of ambitious, high-performing companies – engineering firms, technology providers, life sciences businesses, professional

services – many of whom are quietly excelling at what they do, but haven't always invested the same rigour into how that excellence is communicated. As these businesses expand into new markets, win larger contracts, or compete against multinational rivals for talent, an unclear or dated brand becomes a genuine commercial constraint. It slows down sales conversations, makes recruitment harder, and leaves value on the table.

Branding, done properly, isn't decoration. It is the discipline of making sure the market understands what you're actually worth.

WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

We recently worked with Whitewater Group, a business that designs, engineers and supports critical water and cooling infrastructure in some of the world's most demanding environments. As the company expanded internationally, it needed an identity with real authority – one that expressed what made its engineering distinctively different. The result, "Water, engineered," gave the business a platform that reflects the precision and resilience customers already experienced first-hand, now expressed consistently wherever the business shows up.

We saw a similar challenge with HCS, a leading Irish IT provider with offices in Dublin, Waterford and Cork. Following a change in ownership, HCS had ambitious plans to become a tier-one partner for enterprise organisations. Working closely with leadership, we defined a distinctive market position built on technical expertise and an agile, personal service

– global standards, local savvy. The brand promise "Empowering Progress" refined this further, bringing clarity and consistency to how HCS communicates its reputation, which it needed to compete confidently at a much higher level.

BRAND THINKING

At TOTEM, we believe every business has a story worth telling, and that a great story has real meaning. For more than 24 years we've helped organisations across diverse sectors shape stronger reputations by putting customers at the centre and seeing every brand from the outside in. We get to the heart of what a business truly means to the people it wants to reach. By defining what makes a business distinctively different, we bring clarity to its positioning, so it becomes known for the one thing that matters most to the right people.

If your business has grown, changed, or is entering a more competitive phase it might be time to ask a simple question – is your reputation recognisable to your (existing and potential) customers?

TOTEM brings clarity to what your business stands for, what makes it meaningfully different, and why customers should choose you. Helping transform your reputation into a clear competitive advantage that will last.

The result is a brand that strengthens trust, attracts the right customers and creates a strong foundation for sustainable business growth.

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Giving the Plaza a purpose

■ BY LYNDIA LAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

Waterford Chamber has welcomed Waterford City and County Council's commitment to reinvest in the William Vincent Wallace Plaza, recognising the opportunity to transform one of the city's most prominent waterfront spaces into a destination that drives footfall, dwell time and economic activity.

Following 25 years without significant reinvestment in the site, the Chamber believes the refurbishment presents an opportunity to create one of Waterford's finest public spaces. However, in its submission to the Council's public consultation, the Chamber has argued that the Plaza needs purpose as well as planting.

According to Gerald Hurley, CEO Waterford Chamber: "Waterford Council's vision is for a distinctive, landscape-led public space, placing people and nature at its centre, with a strong emphasis on planting and enhancing the landscape character. While the Chamber supports this approach, we believe landscaping alone will not provide a reason for people to visit, linger and return. Given the Plaza's location on the River Suir, beside Reginald's Tower and at the historic heart of the city, the space should first be defined by what it does for residents and visitors, before considering how it is landscaped."

"After all, successful cities create reasons to visit that can't be replicated online or in out-of-town retail parks."

WHERE THE GREENWAY BEGINS

Waterford Chamber believes there is already a compelling purpose available: making the Plaza the formal city-centre starting point of the Waterford Greenway.

Waterford Chamber previously commissioned a concept for the site, then known as Millennium Plaza, under the banner 'Where Ireland Began, The Greenway Begins.' The concept envisaged the Plaza as both the starting point for a journey and an anchor point for visitors. Cycle stands, wayfinding and signage would mark the beginning or end of a Greenway journey, while heritage interpretation, Viking-inspired public art and a dedicated photography point would encourage visitors to stop, explore and share their experience.

This would give the Plaza a clear identity while complementing a high-quality landscape design. Seating, planting and attractive materials would become part of a wider experience, rather than being the sole reason for the investment.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

The Chamber is also proposing a practical solution to the long-term maintenance of the space. A significant public realm investment will inevitably require ongoing expenditure on planting, cleaning, horticulture and asset renewal. The submission asks the Council to clarify whether a dedicated annual maintenance budget will be provided following completion.

Importantly, the Chamber believes the Plaza could partially contribute towards its own upkeep. It proposes incorporating carefully designed food and beverage kiosks or units, with concession or rental income contributing directly to maintenance costs. Such facilities would also add vibrancy, encourage people to stay longer and create an additional amenity for residents and visitors.

The Chamber's three key requests are therefore straightforward:

- give the Plaza a clear functional purpose as the gateway to the Waterford Greenway
- design food and beverage provision into the refurbishment with a potential concession model
- provide clarity on the Council's long-term maintenance commitment.

The objective is not simply to create a more attractive space. It is to create a destination: somewhere people want to visit, spend time and return to, strengthening the connection between Waterford's waterfront, heritage, tourism and city centre businesses. As the submission makes clear, the opportunity is to create a lasting civic space that works for the city both socially and economically.

■ To view the submission in full, go to www.waterfordchamber.ie

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Since 1995, Suir Clean has built its reputation as a trusted leader in professional contract cleaning, delivering consistently high standards across some of Ireland's most demanding sectors.

From pharmaceutical and commercial facilities to industrial, transportation, food and beverage environments, Suir Clean understands that professional cleaning is about

far more than appearance. It is about safety, compliance, reliability and creating environments where people can work with confidence.

That commitment is underpinned by ISO certification across Quality, Health & Safety and Environment, giving clients assurance that high standards are not simply promised, but embedded in the way Suir Clean operates.

At the heart of the business

is a client-led approach. Suir Clean works closely with every customer to understand their specific requirements and deliver a service that works for them. That personal approach has resulted in long-standing relationships, with some clients continuing to work with the company for more than twenty years.

For Suir Clean, personal service means exactly that. There are no call centres or layers of bureaucracy. Clients have direct, reliable access to senior managers who understand their business and are available when needed.

Behind the service is a skilled and stable team. Low staff turnover, combined with ongoing training and development, helps ensure consistency, professionalism and attention to detail across every contract.

Sustainability is also an increasingly important part of the Suir Clean approach. The company actively monitors the chemicals it uses, seeks less impactful alternatives, has introduced uniforms made from recycled materials and is moving towards a paperless operation.

After more than three decades in business, Suir Clean continues to evolve while remaining true to the principles that built its reputation: quality, reliability, personal service and a genuine understanding of its clients.

For businesses looking for a cleaning partner they can trust, Suir Clean offers experience, expertise and a service built around their needs.

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www.dmbca.ie

Make your Christmas gift work harder for Waterford

■ BY LYNDALAWTON, WATERFORD CHAMBER

As we move towards Christmas, businesses across Waterford are beginning to think about staff gifts, customer rewards and how best to recognise the people who have supported their business throughout the year.

This year, there is a simple opportunity to do something that benefits your employees, your business and the wider Waterford economy, Think Waterford First Gift Cards.

The Think Waterford First Gift Card is a credit card style gift card that can be spent with participating businesses across Waterford, giving employees the freedom to choose what they want while ensuring that the money continues to circulate within our local economy.

Personally, I have used mine to replace my tyres in Tramore Tyre Centre, book a holiday with Harvey Travel, feed my extended family for Christmas in SuperValu, get a much-needed night away in Faithlegg, a suit for work in Shaws and endless books in The Book Centre, among many other purchases. And get this—I don't live in Waterford! It doesn't matter. I plan ahead, use the card and keep my cash in my pocket.

A MEANINGFUL GIFT

For many businesses, the annual Christmas gift is an important way of saying thank you to employees for their

contribution throughout the year. Why not make that gift work harder?

By choosing Think Waterford First Gift Cards, businesses can give their employees a meaningful and flexible Christmas gift, while encouraging them to spend locally across Waterford, whether they live here or not. It is a practical way to support the shops, restaurants, cafés, services and other businesses that make up our local economy.

And importantly, it is not just about Christmas. The gift card can be used throughout the year, giving employees the opportunity to spend their gift on something they genuinely want or need, while keeping that spending within the Waterford business community.

NEED TO THINK WATERFORD FIRST

Waterford continues to experience significant retail leakage, with an estimated €600 million leaving the local economy each year. That figure should concern everyone.

Every euro spent locally has the potential to support another local business, another employee and another family. When we choose to spend locally, we are helping to sustain the economic ecosystem that supports all of us.

Think Waterford First is about changing that behaviour. It is about asking businesses and consumers to consider

whether there is a Waterford option before spending elsewhere.

USE THE TAX FREE BENEFIT

The *Small Benefit Exemption Scheme* also provides businesses with an excellent opportunity to use their employee benefit budget to support local spending.

Businesses can provide eligible employees with tax free benefits within the scheme, making the Think Waterford First Gift Card an attractive option for Christmas gifting.

If businesses across Waterford committed even a portion of their annual employee benefit spending to Think Waterford First Gift Cards, the impact could be significant. If just half of Waterford's employees received €500 through the scheme, that could put €7.5 million directly back into the local economy. That is the scale of opportunity we are talking about.

This Christmas, Waterford Chamber is asking businesses to Think Waterford First. Choose local when you can. Gift local when you can. And help ensure that more of the money generated by Waterford businesses stays in Waterford.

■ Visit www.ThinkWaterfordFirst.ie or contact Waterford Chamber for more information.

Think
Waterford
First

The gift of unbeatable local choice!



Think Waterford First for shopping and support local businesses.

The **Think Waterford First Gift Card** is easy to purchase, use or send as a gift, no matter what the occasion. Give the gift of choice and flexibility to your employees or loved ones and support the Waterford local economy, making our city and county a better place to live, work and do business.

WaterfordGiftCard.ie



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Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Phort Láirge
Waterford City
& County Council

Autumn Review

Cappoquin Bridge — *The Regeneration of Cappoquin* is shortlisted in the Urban Revival category in the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards.



LONG-SERVING COUNCILLOR, LIAM BRAZIL, ELECTED MAYOR OF WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY

Cllr. Liam Brazil was elected Mayor of Waterford City and County at the Annual General Meeting of Waterford City and County Council. Mayor Brazil has served as a public representative since 2004 and was previously County Mayor in 2011 and Cathaoirleach of the Comeragh District last year. Cllr. Jim Darcy was elected for the position of Deputy Mayor with Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan elected as Deputy Mayor of Waterford Metropolitan District. Cllr. John Pratt will serve as Cathaoirleach for Dungarvan/Lismore and Cllr. Seáníe Power as Cathaoirleach for the Comeragh District.

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*. Most of the sites surveyed received a Grade A ranking and these, amongst others, included the residential area of Ard Cluain, Bolton Street Carpark, Morgan Street, and the Waterford Viking and Cultural Quarters.



MINISTER DARA CALLEARY TD VISITS WATERFORD TO OPEN KEY RURAL REGENERATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION PROJECTS

Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, visited a range of Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) and Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) projects across County Waterford.

The projects visited throughout the day demonstrate the significant impact of Government investment programmes in supporting sustainable rural development, enhancing community facilities, improving outdoor recreation

infrastructure and strengthening towns and villages across Waterford.

Waterford secures Infrastructure Investment to support Housing Growth
Waterford City and County Council has secured funding for three strategic infrastructure schemes that will help accelerate housing delivery and support sustainable growth across the county.

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne TD, and the Minister of State for Planning and Local Government, John Cummins TD, announced the 82 infrastructure projects that will receive support under the first phase of the Government's €1 billion Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund.

Speaking following the announcement, Sean McKeown, Chief Executive of Waterford City and County Council, welcomed the investment, saying, "This investment represents a major vote of confidence by the Government in Waterford's future growth and development."





WATERFORD WELCOMES DENMARK TO MARK IRELAND'S PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

From July 1st until December 31st, 2026, Ireland holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), assuming a central leadership role at the heart of EU decision-making. Ireland will chair Council meetings, guide negotiations, broker agreement between Member States and help shape EU laws and policies that impact the daily lives of more than 450 million people.

Waterford has been paired with Denmark for the duration of the Presidency, creating opportunities to build lasting local partnerships, strengthen community connections and celebrate shared European values.

NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN'S WATERFORD COMPLETION

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, and Waterford City and County Council announced the completion of the National Broadband Plan's main infrastructure build works in Co. Waterford. Waterford is now fully built under the National Broadband Plan, with the main fibre broadband network completed across the county with around 15,500 homes, farms and business having access to high-speed fibre broadband.

WATERFORD LAUNCHES FIRST PLAN FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

The *Waterford Outdoor Recreation Plan 2026–2030* is Waterford city and county's first dedicated outdoor recreation plan, providing a coordinated framework for the sustainable development, management and promotion of outdoor recreation throughout Waterford.

The five-year plan sets out a coordinated framework to increase participation in outdoor recreation, improve access and infrastructure, support inclusive opportunities and

protect Waterford's natural environment. Inclusivity is a central principle of the plan, recognising that outdoor recreation should be accessible to everyone regardless of age, ability or background.

GRANT SCHEME TO SUPPORT NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

The Night-Time Economy (NTE) Grant programme is designed to support creative, cultural, and community activity during off-peak evening hours in Waterford City.

This scheme seeks to energise the city's Purple Flag Zone with fresh, engaging events that will take place between Sunday and Thursday after 5pm, bringing new life to Waterford after dark and diversifying its cultural and social offering for residents and visitors alike.

Waterford City and County Council has a long-standing commitment to support the cultural and creative life of Waterford. In 2026, the elected members approved a budget of almost €1.7million to support festivals, cultural events, and artistic programming across the city and county. The NTE grant reflects and compliments that same commitment, with a specific focus on stimulating safe, inclusive and imaginative activity during traditionally quieter hours.



CARRICKPHIERISH RECREATION PARK WORKS COMMENCE

The development of Carrickphierish Recreation Park, with €450,000 in funding provided through the Community Recognition Fund (CRF), and €100,000 from the *Making Places for and with Teenagers Initiative*, will provide a range of new recreational facilities for the local community. The project includes the design and construction of a new playground, multi-use games area, landscaping, footpaths and lighting, creating an enhanced and inclusive outdoor space for people of all ages. The project is jointly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, and Waterford City and County Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS

Waterford City and County Council has been shortlisted in five categories of the *Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2026*. The awards recognise best practice across local authorities, celebrating innovative projects, public services and initiatives that strengthen communities across Ireland. The *Ballymacarbry Community Solar Sharing Project* has been shortlisted in the Climate Change Category; *Cad As Duit? Placenames of the Déise Community Roadshow* is shortlisted in the Celebrating Irish Language and Culture Category; the *Regeneration of Cappoquin* was shortlisted in the Urban Revival Category; the category for Promoting Economic Development has shortlisted the *Waterford Enterprise Ecosystem Collaboration Initiative*, while Waterford's *Community Climate Action Programme* has been shortlisted in the Supporting Sustainable Communities category.

Landmark deal bags Dawn Meats top accolade



Dawn Meats has been awarded the Gold Award for *Deal of the Year* at the eir Business Chambers Ireland Awards 2026, recognising the company's landmark €133 million strategic partnership with New Zealand-based meat processor Alliance Group Limited.

The winners were officially announced at a prestigious gala ceremony at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre recently, where leading businesses from across Ireland were celebrated for excellence, innovation and impact.

Dawn Meats received the Gold Award for its acquisition of a 65% stake in Alliance Group Limited, a transaction that marks one of the most strategically significant international agribusiness deals completed by an Irish company.

Paul Nolan, Group Development Manager, Dawn Meats said: "We are delighted to have won the Gold Award for *Deal of the Year* at the eir Business Chambers Ireland Awards. This recognition reflects the strategic importance of our partnership with Alliance Group Limited. We are incredibly proud to have received national recognition for a deal that supports long-term growth, resilience and opportunity across the agri-food sector."

This year's eir Business Chambers Ireland Awards winners were selected across 29 categories following a rigorous judging process. Entries were assessed on criteria including business performance, innovation, customer focus, leadership and overall impact.

The awards programme honours businesses demonstrating excellence in areas such as innovation, technological advancement, sustainability, customer service and employee engagement, showcasing organisations that are setting new standards and driving positive change within their industries.

Women in Engineering

Waterford Chamber has announced details of its Women in Engineering Breakfast, a special event celebrating *National Women's Enterprise Day*, which will take place on 15 October 2026, from 9am–10am at SETU Arena, Waterford.

Sponsored by Tonn Nua Offshore Wind, the complimentary breakfast will bring together women from across engineering, construction, manufacturing, technology and infrastructure to celebrate the achievements of women in the sector while encouraging greater female participation in engineering careers.

The event will be hosted by Marian Walsh, incoming President of Waterford Chamber and Managing Director of Carron + Walsh, who has long championed innovation, diversity and professional development within the built environment. Joining Marian will be

an expert panel featuring Moira Walsh, Project Director with Tonn Nua, who is leading the delivery of one of Ireland's most significant offshore wind energy projects, and Dr Frances Hardiman of South East Technological University (SETU), who will share insights into education, research and the future opportunities available for women pursuing careers in engineering and STEM disciplines.

The breakfast forms part of the wider Engineering the South East Conference & Expo, taking place later that day at the SETU Arena, and highlights the region's commitment to developing a diverse, skilled and future-focused engineering workforce.

■ The event is free to attend, but advance registration is essential via www.waterfordchamber.ie



Marian Walsh, Carron + Walsh

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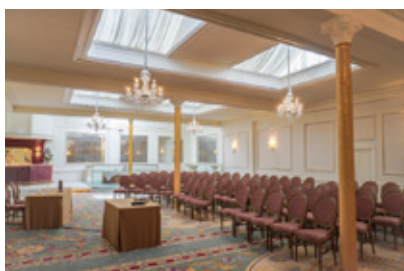
DESIGN &
PRINT



PROMO
PRODUCTS



Inspired by history, welcoming the future



In the heart of Waterford, Ireland's oldest city, the Granville Hotel offers a distinctive blend of history, character and warm Irish hospitality. With its elegant interiors, traditional bar, renowned *Bianconi Restaurant* and versatile event spaces, the hotel provides a memorable setting for both leisure and business.

Dining is central to the Granville experience. The hotel's *Bianconi Restaurant* offers breakfast and dinner daily, with Sunday lunch also available. The focus is on authentic, locally sourced produce, imaginatively prepared and served in a relaxed and comfortable environment. Private dining options are also available, with menus tailored to individual requirements.

The Granville is also an established venue for meetings, conferences and celebrations. Its *Parnell Room* and *Trinity Suite* provide elegant, naturally lit spaces suitable for everything from smaller meetings to larger gatherings. The experienced team works closely with organisers to ensure each event runs smoothly, while the hotel's city centre location and nearby parking add to its convenience. Whether hosting an intimate gathering or a larger event, the Granville team can tailor the experience to suit the occasion, creating an event that feels personal and memorable.

For guests to relax and unwind, the *Thomas Francis Meagher Bar* captures the traditional character of the hotel. A welcoming space centred around one of the hotel's two open fires, it serves traditional Irish food throughout the day, alongside a carefully selected drinks offering. Eclectic historical artwork adds to the atmosphere, while live music every Friday and Saturday night brings the bar to life.

EXCEPTIONAL HOSPITALITY

At the heart of the hotel is a commitment to exceptional hospitality. The Granville's 98 guest bedrooms provide a comfortable base from which to explore Waterford, while thoughtful touches and attentive service ensure guests feel looked after throughout their stay.

The hotel's sense of place is an important part of its appeal. Located on Meagher Quay, guests are immersed in the history and character of Waterford while remaining within easy reach of the city's attractions, businesses and waterfront.

Whether it is a relaxing overnight stay, dinner with friends, a business meeting, a special celebration or a larger event, the Granville Hotel offers a welcoming experience in one of Waterford's most distinctive settings.

Inclusive Employment...

Stronger Waterford

Employability is a service that helps people with disabilities, mental health challenges, or those recovering from illness or injury to find and keep a job that suits them.

Turas Nua delivers this service for the **Department of Social Protection**, supporting jobseekers and employers across Waterford with teams in Waterford City and Dungarvan. Alongside our wider employment services in the region, **Employability** provides specialist, personalised support to help people prepare for, find and sustain meaningful employment.

As Ireland prepares for Work & Skills events this October, Turas Nua is encouraging Waterford employers to look more widely at the talent available in our community, and at the support available to help make inclusive recruitment work.



Learn more about how Employability can work for your business...



turas nua
A proud part of the RPS Group



Employability

Supporting employers as well as jobseekers

Inclusive recruitment does not have to mean making the recruitment process more complicated. Employability works with employers to understand their vacancies, identify suitable candidates and support both the employer and employee as they move into the workplace.

This can include candidate matching, advice around accessible recruitment, workplace preparation and ongoing in-employment support. Where appropriate, our team can also help employers understand the wider supports available to remove barriers and sustain employment.

The aim is to help create sustainable employment that works for both sides.

A timely conversation for Waterford

This October's national Work & Skills activities offer an opportunity to look at how we connect people, skills and employers across Ireland. In Waterford, inclusive employment has an important role to play in strengthening our local labour market. Businesses benefit from reaching a wider talent pool, while individuals benefit when barriers to employment are identified and addressed.

The Government's Work and Access programme can provide practical supports for eligible employers and employees, including workplace needs assessments, equipment and adaptations, in-work supports, communication supports and disability equality and inclusion training.

If you're recruiting, looking to make your workplace more inclusive or simply want to understand the supports available to you, our Employability team is ready to help.



Access talent

Connect with suitable candidates.



Recruit confidently

Get matching and recruitment support.



Build inclusion

Access practical workplace guidance.



Support retention

Get ongoing post-placement support.

Employability Waterford

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An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

Waterford's Blue Plaque Trail

■ RESEARCHED BY MARCUS COPLEY, WATERFORD CIVIC TRUST



A Heritage Blue Plaque was unveiled at Coach House Coffee, The Workhouse, Kilmacthomas, on Thursday, 8th August 2019 commemorating the humanitarian work of John Patrick Coghlan MD. It was attended by Coghlan's extended family, his great great granddaughter Ms Claire Coghlan, relatives from the local community, Councillor John Pratt, and Sean Murphy, a local historian.

Coghlan was born at South Lodge, County Tipperary in 1804. He studied medicine at Edinburgh and Trinity College Dublin. He started work in Kilmacthomas in 1833—becoming the most highly regarded and respected medical practitioner by that community.

The workhouse was administered by a Board of Guardians who included Thomas Meagher MP, Dr. TL Mackesy, Terence O'Reilly and of course Dr. John Patrick Coghlan. It was completed in 1851, although it did not actually admit paupers (as the poor were known) until 1853. Dr. Coghlan's salary was £100 per annum. Much of the day-to-day business involved dealing with requests from the Poor Law Commissioners for returns on rates; the

conditions of the paupers or 'inmates' was rarely mentioned.

Waterford News, dated 15th November 1850, listed 1,690 inmates, 2 babies born, 83 discharged, and 10 deaths. A hospital patient 'cost' two shillings a week. There was £2,611 4s and 5½d with the treasurer. 110 patients languished in the 'Fever Hospital Sheds'.

Soon, plans for the fever hospital were approved with the board accepting the tender from Mr. Terence O'Reilly. £1,400 was borrowed to defray the cost of erecting the hospital. It was completed on the 9th December 1854.

On 14th January 1854 Coghlan described the hospital as overcrowded... with children suffering from hooping cough. He stated that "it is in fact used as a district hospital." Contaminated bedclothes were washed separately; the doctors were aware of cross-contamination.

Crotty's research shows us that "the food was meagre" and was continually criticised by the medical officers. An account from 1859 shows the diet to consist of Indian meal, buttermilk, oatmeal, vegetables, white bread, cocoa and sweet milk.

Claire Coghlan noted that: workhouse doctors were often unpopular...conditions often deplorable. Dr. Coghlan was a fierce voice for those who had none. He didn't fear the wrath of the powerful—loss of popularity, patronage or profession—to speak the inconvenient truth. Whether it was arguing for more rations so the occupants could grow strong enough to work the garden and grow their own food and become self-sufficient, or more medicines for the infirmary...Dr. Coghlan spoke up.

The March/July 1854 Board of Guardians Minute Book stated: "When differences of opinion did occur and the Board refused to comply with the commission's wishes; the latter resorted to sealed orders with invariable success. The appointment of the workhouse doctor caused a level of disagreement between the Board and the Commissioners. Following his resignation, he re-applied for the position and was approved by the Guardians but the Commissioners refused

to sanction his appointment." Clearly, Dr. Coghlan had challenged, and had been challenged by the Commissioners.

During his time at Kilmacthomas, Dr. Coghlan had to endure accusations too. In 1869, a Mr. Hamilton, Poor Law Inspector, questioned the neglect of duty by Dr. Coghlan in relation to vaccines and vaccination contained within the *Medical Charities Act*. In response, Coghlan wrote a detailed letter pointing out the deficiencies in the Act. However, there was a decline in the ravages of cholera, smallpox and other contagious diseases. By 1872, state medicine was firmly established in Ireland. Dr. Coghlan died in 1874.

Claire Coghlan said, "It wasn't through his words, his letters, that I came to know who Dr. Coghlan was, it was through the words, and letters, of others—his sons, his daughters...it was owing to the relationships Dr. Coghlan developed with his private patients, that he was able to rally their support for projects that tackled the poverty, squalor, disease and hunger prevalent in the district." With Lady Waterford, they established a textile industry, vegetable gardens, soup kitchens, cottage renovations and much more. "Dr. Coghlan never gave up...it's important that Dr. Coghlan's and other stories are told, to ensure that Waterford's history is appreciated and preserved."

Thanks to: Crotty, G. (2008).

Kilmacthomas Union: The Administration of Poor Law in a County Waterford Workhouse 1851-1872. Decies 64. Waterford Archaeological and Historical Society, pages 105-147; Coghlan, Claire, descendant of Dr. John Coghlan, August 8th 2019; Mac Cártaigh, Stiofán. (2023). *The Remarkable Career of Dr. John Coghlan in Kilmacthomas*. Steps Back Thru Time. October 5th 2023; *Waterford News & Star* for *Waterford News* articles of the 1800s; Waterford Libraries staff.

■ 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

Think
Waterford
First

**For Business
& Investment**

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UP, THINK WATERFORD FIRST FOR
BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT.**

Waterford is rapidly transforming which provides the opportunity for businesses to be part of that transformation.

For investment support and advice on doing business in Waterford, visit **waterford2040.com** to learn how we can facilitate introductions to economic development agencies, private industry, academia and government.



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BITE SIZE NEWS



ENGINEERING THE SOUTH EAST CONFERENCE & EXPO

Plans are well under way to bring the engineering, manufacturing, technology and innovation community together for Engineering the South East Conference & Expo, taking place on Thursday, October 15th at SETU Arena, Waterford, from 10am to 4pm.

Formerly known as Toys4Engineers, the event has been reimagined and expanded as Engineering the South East Conference & Expo to reflect the breadth of industries, businesses and opportunities now driving the engineering and technology sector.

The Expo will bring together engineering and manufacturing companies, technology businesses, innovators, educators, engineers and industry leaders, providing an opportunity to discover the businesses and technologies shaping the future of industry across Waterford, the South East and beyond.

From advanced manufacturing and engineering to automation, AI, energy and innovation, the event will highlight the depth of expertise and experience among the exhibitors. Exhibitor spaces are available now. To book your stand, visit www.engineeringthesoutheastexpo.ie. Entry is free and there is no need to register. Visitors can simply come along on the day.

The event is open to businesses, engineers, students, educators, technology professionals and anyone interested in the future of engineering, manufacturing and technology. For further information, visit www.engineeringthesoutheastexpo.ie



A LIFE BEHIND THE BAR

After more than four decades of pulling pints, sharing stories and welcoming generations of guests and locals, one of The Tower Hotel's most familiar faces has officially called last orders. Kieran O'Reilly has retired after an incredible 42 years behind the bar at The Tower Hotel, leaving behind a legacy built on friendship, humour, hard work and unwavering dedication. To celebrate the occasion, colleagues past and present gathered for a heartfelt retirement celebration, raising a glass to a man whose name has become synonymous with the hotel itself.

Michael O'Neill, General Manager said, "On behalf of the entire team, I want to thank you for your incredible dedication, reliability and professionalism you brought to every shift. You built a loyal community of regular guests and welcomed all our international visitors with a warm Waterford welcome. You have left a lasting legacy in the hotel."

ADHD IN BUSINESS

What happens when we look at ADHD through a business lens? That is the question behind the inaugural ADHD in Business Conference, taking place on 19th November at the Tower Hotel, Waterford. Founded by Evelyn of Ezmar Event Management, the conference was created in response to a gap in the conversation around ADHD. While awareness of ADHD has grown significantly, there is far less discussion about what it means in the workplace—for entrepreneurs, business leaders, managers, employees and HR professionals. ADHD exists across every industry and at every level of seniority, including among people who have never



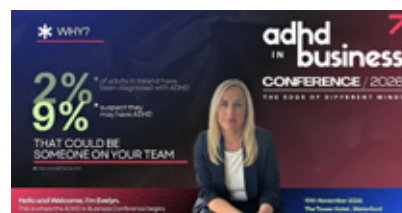
WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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- BCF Lending
- Bohemians FC Waterford
- CRS Technics
- Elevate Float
- Frission Creative
- GOMA Waterford
- RJ Keighery Antiques Ireland
- Suir Clean
- Tidal Marine
- Waterford Distilling Group



ISO AWARD FOR HARTLEY PEOPLE

Hartley People Group has recently been awarded ISO 14001 certification, the internationally recognised standard for environmental management systems. The certification reflects the company's ongoing commitment to reducing its environmental impact, improving sustainability across all operations and ingraining responsible environmental practices. For the Hartley People Group, the certification forms part of a broader company approach to responsible business and long-term sustainability. The ISO 14001 certification was independently awarded by Management Systems Certification Ltd.



received a diagnosis. For businesses, understanding different ways of thinking can be an important part of creating effective teams and workplaces. The conference will explore how different minds can be a genuine business asset when the right structures and supports are in place. Tickets are now available at www.ezmarevents.ie



NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN ROLLOUT ENTERS FINAL PHASE ACROSS WATERFORD

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), in partnership with the Department of

Culture, Communications and Sport and Waterford City and County Council, has announced the completion of the National Broadband Plan's main infrastructure works. The rollout means approximately 15,500 homes, farms and businesses can now access high-speed fibre broadband, providing a major boost for rural communities by supporting business growth, remote and hybrid working, online learning and improved access to digital public services. The investment marks a significant milestone in strengthening Waterford's digital infrastructure and enhancing connectivity across the county.

COCOABYJUDIT NAMED FOOD FINALIST IN IRISH MADE AWARDS

West Waterford artisan chocolate producer CocoabyJudit has been named a finalist in the Food category of the Irish Country Magazine Irish Made Awards 2026, a national celebration of Irish-made products, creativity and craftsmanship.

Based in Cappoquin, Co. Waterford, CocoabyJudit is a small family-run business producing premium artisan chocolates in small batches. Founded by chocolatier Judit McNally, the business places a strong emphasis on quality, provenance and collaboration, incorporating ingredients from Waterford and other Irish artisan producers wherever possible.

The national recognition comes during an exciting period of growth for CocoabyJudit, as the business continues to develop its retail, corporate gifting and food tourism markets while remaining firmly rooted in West Waterford.



Local provenance is central to the CocoabyJudit story, with ingredients and collaborations including Waterford butter, seaweed, locally grown berries and Irish spirits. The business has also worked with Waterford artist Brigid Shelly, whose distinctive artwork features on selected CocoabyJudit packaging.

The Irish Made Awards finalist announcement adds to a growing list of national recognition for CocoabyJudit and provides another opportunity to showcase the quality and creativity of artisan food being produced in County Waterford.



PAROLLA ACHIEVES ISO 27001 CERTIFICATION

Waterford-based payroll software company Parolla has achieved ISO 27001 certification, the internationally recognised standard for information security management. The certification independently verifies Parolla's commitment to protecting sensitive payroll and employee data through robust, externally audited security processes.

Receiving the certificate is an important achievement, but it is not the end of the process. Maintaining ISO 27001 certification requires continued surveillance audits, internal reviews, management reviews, risk assessments and evidence that our controls remain effective. Parolla will continue investing in the security, availability and resilience of the Parolla platform as the business grows and the threat landscape changes.

Parolla would like to thank everyone who contributed to the certification process, including our staff, advisers, auditors, suppliers and customers.

SOUTH EAST TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY AND KINETIC LABS SIGN MOU

South East Technological University (SETU) and Kinetic Labs have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to deliver a comprehensive ecosystem for laboratory-based and life sciences companies across the South East.

SETU and Kinetic Labs have an established track record of collaboration, having formed the delivery partnership for the INCUPHARM project under the Enterprise Ireland Regional Enterprise Development Fund 2017–2020. Located in workLAB Waterford, the project provides bespoke laboratory space at the IDA Business Park to support life sciences start-ups.

The MoU builds on that successful partnership, creating an integrated innovation ecosystem to support research,

entrepreneurship, and business growth in the region. This new agreement brings together SETU, Kinetic Labs, Xcelerate, Glassworks, and the Pharmaceutical and Molecular Biotechnology Research Centre (PMBRC) as a coherent, mutually reinforcing ecosystem rather than standalone initiatives.

Each partner contributes a distinct strength. Kinetic Labs drives applied innovation through specialist laboratory incubation, Xcelerate enables venture acceleration and commercialisation, Glassworks fosters creativity, collaboration, and business engagement, while PMBRC provides internationally recognised bioscience research expertise. Together they will support SETU's One Health vision.



Speaking at the signing, Dr James O'Sullivan, Head of Innovation and Commercialisation at SETU said, "By bringing together the expertise of Kinetic Labs, Xcelerate, Glassworks, and PMBRC under our One Health vision, we are strengthening the supports available to life sciences innovators at every stage of their journey, from discovery and incubation through to commercialisation and growth."

gallery

President's Summer Gala
@ Majestic Hotel, Tramore



Business After Hours @ Buíon Phort Láirge



Waterford Chamber
meet the new Mayor of
Waterford City and County,
Cllr. Liam Brazil



Golf Classic @ Faithlegg



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
Bohemians FC Waterford
Christ Church Cathedral
Coastguard Cultural Centre
Garter Lane Arts Centre
GOMA Waterford
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
EveryEvent
Frontline Audio Visual
Hi-Lite Television Productions

BANKING & FINANCIAL

Adelphi Financial Brokers
AIB Bank
Anita Cambie Financial
Bank of Ireland
BCF Lending
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
Suir Clean
Tramore Dry Cleaners

COMMUNITY

Autism Friendly Waterford
Ballybeg Greens
Buíon 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

Aerolnfra
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
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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
LCE Workplace Safety
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
SolarSure
South East Energy Agency
Visor Construction Solutions
Wayne Hutchinson Energy
Advisory Group

FOOD & DRINK

Blackwater Distillery
Blue Butterfly Coffee Company
Brady's Quality Foods
Coffee House Lane
Curraghmore Whiskey
Dawn Meats Group
Flahavan's
Grantstown 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

Waterford Distilling Group

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

James Falconer Undertakers
Robert Thompson Funeral Directors

GRAPHIC DESIGN

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

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Autastic
Colm Morrissey Hair Salon
Connecting to Nature
Elevate Float
Eyeworks Opticians
Nolke Opticians & Hearing Care
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 & Associates
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
Fitzwilton 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
Hartley People Group
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
BMC 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

Apparel Supply
APS Materials, Inc.
Ball Beverage Packaging Ireland
Bausch + Lomb
Carten Controls
CMC Hygea
Codicco 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
Waterford Distilling Group
West Pharma

MARKETING & PR

Agora Integrated Marketing
Creating Momentum
The Forest
Frission Creative
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
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
Dooley's
Everett's Restaurant
High Horse Coffee
The Holiday Shops
Mol's
One the Waterfront
Piper's Café & Churro Bar
The Reg
The Riverside Cottage
Shirley's Delicatessen
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
The Holiday Shops
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
RJ Keighery Antiques Ireland
Satina Boutique
Seagull Bakery
Sheridan Motor Group
The Shoe Centre
Sienna Home Furnishings
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

AeroClima Refrigeration & HVAC
Agora Publishing Ireland
Arc Mediation
Boxworks
Browne Fire and Security
Cantec Group
Clem Jacob Hire
CRS Technics
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

Bluefin Payment Systems Ireland
Cantec Group
CGM
Compar
Dataworks
Digital[Partner]
Euro Tachograph Solutions
Euryka

Fyrefli
HiSpeed Wireless Broadband
Honeywell Aerospace Technologies
HumanEdge+
Klearcom
Li4
NEG8 Carbon
Passion For Creative
Pimbroke Software
Red Hat
Sedicii Innovations
Sun Life
Threefold Systems

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
LCE Workplace Safety
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
Tidal Marine
Thomas Carey T&T Coaches
Trans-Stock Warehousing & Cold Storage
U Store It
Waterford Airport

WEBSITE SERVICES

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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