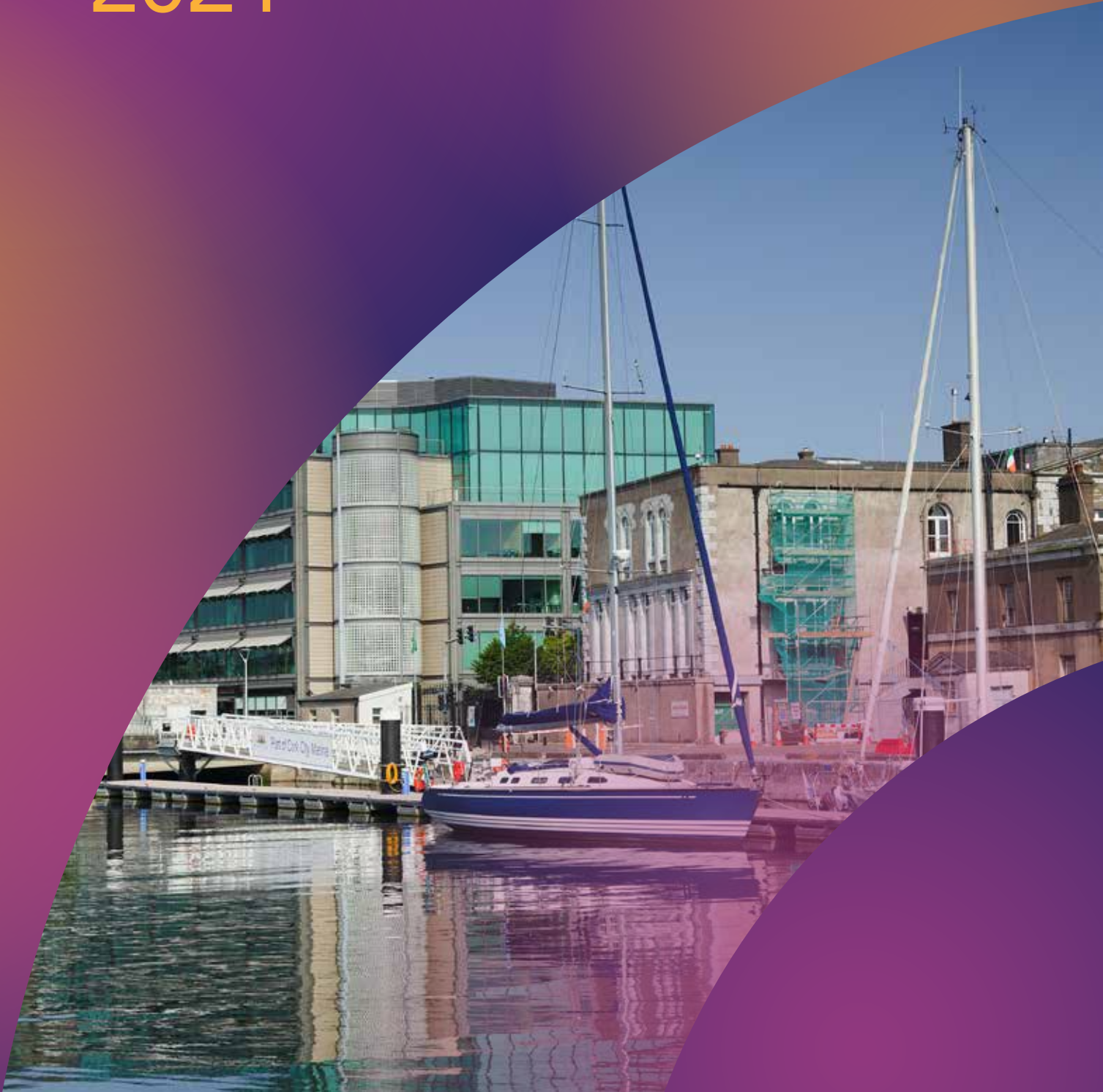




**Cork  
Chamber**  
Advancing business together

# Annual Report 2024





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SECTION ONE

# Introduction

# President's Message

As President of Cork Chamber, it is my honour to reflect on what has been a remarkable year of momentum, resilience and ambition for our region. In 2024, Cork has not only continued to grow, Cork has led.

We are a community that embraces opportunity, adapts to challenge and above all, believes in a shared future built on partnership and purpose. From the vibrant startup ecosystem to our world-class multinationals, the strength and spirit of our business community is unmistakable.

This past year, we've seen our city and county take bold steps forward in essential infrastructure, innovation and connectivity. From the Docklands regeneration to renewed ambition for light rail and housing solutions, the energy in Cork is that of a region with unmatched ambition.

To realise the ambitions set out for our region and maintain its attractiveness, Cork must become a beacon for sustainable urban living. We envision a city connected by reliable, modern public transport, light rail, buses and cycling infrastructure, that makes moving through our city easier and greener.

To truly unlock Cork's potential, we must continue to enhance its competitiveness and appeal on the global stage. That means positioning our city and county as the location of choice — not just for investors, but for startups, students, professionals and families alike. From dynamic urban centres to thriving rural towns, Cork offers an ecosystem where innovation thrives, talent is nurtured, and opportunity flourishes. With world-class

educational institutions, a highly skilled workforce and a quality of life that's second to none, Cork is not just keeping pace, it's setting the pace.

I want to acknowledge the exceptional contribution of our Chamber Board, our dedicated partners and the incredible Cork Chamber team. Your commitment, expertise and vision help drive every initiative and success story. But above all, I acknowledge the businesses, of all sizes and sectors, who are the heartbeat of this region. It is your ingenuity, courage and community-mindedness that shape Cork's extraordinary journey.

Cork has always punched above its weight. Our role as a regional powerhouse in life sciences, ICT, food, financial services and tourism is a testament to decades of hard work and collaboration. And with Cork positioned at the forefront of Ireland's renewable energy revolution, we are shaping not just the future of our city, but the future of our country.

Looking ahead, Cork Chamber's new Strategic Plan 2025–2028 will serve as a clear and confident framework to guide this next phase. It reflects our shared ambition to drive sustainable growth, foster innovation and strengthen Cork's global competitiveness, all while staying true to our values.

As we look to the horizon, we remain ambitious, united and forward-looking. The best chapters of Cork's story are yet to be written and I have no doubt that together, we will write them with pride.

Here's to progress, partnership and the power of Cork.



Rob Horgan



# CEO's Message

2024 was a landmark year for Cork Chamber, a year defined by meaningful impact, strategic evolution and a renewed sense of purpose. Through close collaboration with our members, board and partners, we delivered on key priorities while laying the groundwork for a bold new phase of growth.

At the heart of our work was the successful creation of the Chamber's Strategic Plan 2025–2028. This strategy outlines our roadmap to drive economic, social and sustainable development in the Cork region for the years ahead.

This ambition was underscored by year was fast-paced, impactful and brimming with momentum. The Chamber's work throughout 2024 reflects the collective energy and ambition of our network, and the tangible results that follow when we act with clarity and collaboration.

With over 100 impactful events, 4,000+ training days and the launch of DigiEventGuide, we elevated how businesses connect, learn and grow.

Our focused international strategy brought Cork to global audiences, nurtured our deep and valued connections across the globe and enhanced the reputation of Cork as a place for business.

We didn't stop there. As Ireland's most active regional advocacy body, we published policy-shaping submissions and amplified member voices where it matters most, from local elections to national strategy.

Our role as an SDG Champion reflects a core belief: that a sustainable future is non-negotiable. We backed this up through real actions, events, a transformed Fitzgerald House and practical business supports.

The progress made in 2024 has created a powerful foundation for our next chapter.

Cork Chamber is privileged to be supported by an outstanding volunteer board, chaired by President Rob Horgan. Their guidance and strategic input have been vital. We are incredibly grateful for the time, expertise and commitment they bring.

A sincere thank you to the exceptional Cork Chamber team, a group of passionate professionals who go above and beyond for our members every single day. Their work embodies the values we live by: dynamic, inspiring, responsible, purposeful and member centric.

And of course, to our members, partners, sponsors and stakeholders - thank you. Your trust, engagement and collaboration power everything we do. Together, we are shaping Cork's future and that future looks brighter than ever.

Let's keep up the momentum. Let's keep pushing forward. Together, we go further.



Conor Healy



# About Cork Chamber

Founded in 1819, Cork Chamber of Commerce has remained a driving force in the region's business community for over two centuries. On November 8, 1819, a group of business leaders convened in Shinkwin's rooms on Patrick Street—later the site of the Victoria Hotel—to discuss the formation of a new commercial organisation. Just days later, on November 13, the decision was made to establish the Cork Chamber of Commerce, laying the foundation for what has become one of Ireland's most influential business networks.

Over the past 205 years, Cork Chamber has been at the heart of the city's economic and commercial evolution. In 2019, we proudly celebrated our bicentenary, reflecting on our history while embracing the limitless possibilities of the future.

Cork Chamber has recently launched its Strategic Plan 2025-2028, setting out a bold vision for the future of business in the region. This plan focuses on driving sustainable economic growth, fostering innovation and

strengthening Cork's position as a globally competitive business hub. Through strategic advocacy, collaboration and forward-thinking initiatives, we aim to address key challenges and seize emerging opportunities, ensuring a thriving and resilient business environment.

As we embark on this next chapter, Cork Chamber remains committed to empowering our members, shaping policy, and championing Cork as a dynamic place to live, work and do business.





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## Our Vision

To lead a transforming and ambitious Cork City and County.

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## Our Purpose

To unite, represent and support our members and community.

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## Our Values

### Member Centric

#### RELATIONSHIP FOCUSED

Our members are our motivation. Working together we support a successful and inclusive membership who drive a thriving Cork.

### Inspiring

#### RESPECTED THOUGHT LEADERS

We work not only to support, but also to provoke and inspire more ambitious, braver decisions that can positively impact business. Together we push the issues that make us competitive.

### Dynamic

#### CHANGE MAKERS

Dynamism is about constant innovation, progress, agility and momentum. We work on the understanding that the way we do things today will not be the way we do things tomorrow.

### Responsible

#### SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE

We believe in the power of sustainability, inclusivity, equality, diversity and belonging for the greater good. We do the right things for the right reasons. For members, the community and future generations, we are here for the long run and the big picture.

### Purposeful

#### FORWARD THINKERS

For over 200 years the Chamber has stood with members and championed Cork. We work with passion and purpose to achieve economic, social and environmental resilience. We make our contribution count.

# Strategic Action Areas

Our vision and purpose guide daily activities and strategic decision-making at Cork Chamber as we strive to embody our values in all our work. Our strategic actions are designed to meet the needs of all our members.

## Securing Cork's Future

Cork Chamber is deeply committed to sustainability, embedding it within all our activities and initiatives. We have formally pledged to uphold five Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and our efforts have been recognised by the Government with our appointment as an SDG Champion for 2024–2025. Cork Chamber will continue to strengthen this commitment by further integrating the SDGs across our work with businesses, charities and not-for-profits. We are dedicated to enhancing our sustainability offerings for our members and the broader community.

### We will:

1. Develop Cork Chamber as a Sustainability Hub
2. Create a Cork Chamber Sustainability Strategy to further embed Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) principles throughout our work
3. Enhance our Sustainability Committee to shape our impactful sustainability agenda
4. Further develop the impact of a successful Sustainable Cork Programme
5. Champion and elevate Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging efforts across our members, our team and the wider community
6. Drive an impactful Cork Offshore Renewables Industry Forum and REEValue Programme

## The Voice of Business in Cork

Cork Chamber is the voice of business in Cork and Ireland's most active regional advocacy group. Our advocacy priorities are driven by the needs of our members. Through our partner and member engagement, we hold a unique understanding of the economic and social needs of businesses in Cork. We engage positively, collaboratively and proactively on business issues such as connectivity, talent and skills and energy, to create an ecosystem where all businesses can thrive.

### We will:

1. Continue to be the most active regional lobby group in Ireland
2. Strengthen our public affairs member interactions by setting up an SME forum
3. Communicate with members to inform them of relevant and critical updates and progress made on public affairs priorities
4. Continuously work with our partners, members and Board of Directors to identify the key business priorities for Cork on which to focus our advocacy agenda
5. Proactively and collaboratively engage with all key stakeholders across central and local government, regional bodies, state agencies and decision makers

## Enhance Membership Development, Engagement and Support

With members as our motivation, we are dedicated to the growth and success of our vibrant business community. We work to empower, connect and support an inclusive membership that drives a thriving Cork. Our member centric approach to our services and activities allows us to optimise our members' business success.

### We will:

1. Nurture and build on the vibrancy and diversity of our cross-sectoral member community across Cork City and County working closely with our membership committee
2. Ensure the membership offering remains relevant through increased segmentation and provision of dynamic events, supports and training opportunities dependent on members' evolving needs
3. Future proof Cork Chamber by deepening engagement with NextGen leaders across the membership base
4. Analyse member patterns and trends on an ongoing basis to evolve supports and services by industry with a particular focus on SMEs
5. Provide enhanced promotional opportunities across digital platforms and communications channels enabling members to achieve greater visibility and reach a targeted audience

## Global Engagement

Cork Chamber connects Cork internationally and promotes the city and county for investment, collaboration, talent and trade. Through our international Chamber connections, business networks and international programmes, we help SMEs to grow globally and collaborate with businesses across Europe and beyond.

### We will:

1. Build deeper connections with Chambers of Commerce in strategically targeted regions around the world
2. Help SMEs to grow and collaborate internationally through our international network and programmes. Identify additional internationally funded initiatives that align with Chamber priorities
3. Promote Cork City and County as a premier destination for investment, talent, trade and collaboration.
4. Grow the work of the Cork Financial Services Forum and build on Cork's reputation as a European hub for international financial services

## Optimise Communications

Effective communication and the utilisation of technology are vital to delivering value to members. By leveraging digital tools, we will enhance engagement, personalise outreach and improve efficiency to better support our members' needs. Cork Chamber's reputation amongst the media is strong; we will continue to work with them to deliver our message on behalf of our members.

### We will:

1. Leverage technology and digital tools to create a better understanding of members' communication preferences
2. Enhance our communications output through the use of AI and digitalisation
3. Implement tailored communication strategies to address diverse member needs, focusing on the balance between content relevance and frequency
4. Heighten the Cork Chamber website user experience
5. Deepen strong media relations, maintain the reputation of Cork Chamber among media network
6. Execute our external communications to ensure coherent and consistent messaging

## Our People

Our people are the heart of Cork Chamber. We are committed to creating a supportive, dynamic and inclusive workplace that empowers each individual to reach their full potential. Through a commitment to continuous development, meaningful engagement and a strong culture of wellbeing, we strive to maintain an exceptional team that is resilient, motivated and equipped to excel.

### We will:

1. Advance the ChamberCare Employee Wellbeing Programme to meet the evolving needs of a diverse team
2. Prioritise team development through continuous learning and upskilling opportunities
3. Strengthen employee engagement and growth through initiatives that support a sense of belonging, diversity, equity and inclusion
4. Embed and live by our core values, ensuring they guide our actions, decisions and interactions at every level
5. Promote a culture of cross-team collaboration and mutual respect, encouraging open communication and knowledge sharing across all departments
6. Position Cork Chamber as an employer of choice by developing and implementing a strong employer value proposition to attract, retain and develop top talent

## Finance & Governance

Effective governance is essential to achieve our mission. By adopting best practices, enhancing board diversity and ensuring comprehensive compliance, we strengthen accountability and inclusivity. Optimised financial stewardship, structured reporting and sustainable revenue growth enabling us to serve our members effectively and deliver lasting community impact.

### We will:

1. Lead in adopting and implementing best-in-class governance practices
2. Ensure structured reporting on strategic plan progress to the board
3. Enhance the diversity of our board to reflect our membership, to foster inclusive representation to better serve and advocate for all members.
4. Prioritise comprehensive compliance in Health & Safety, HR, Technology and GDPR across the organisation
5. Optimise financial performance and reporting
6. Drive financial sustainability by enhancing revenue streams and optimising resources

## Memberships/Affiliations



# Securing the Future: Our Dedication to Sustainability

The implementation of our Strategic Plan is shaped, directed and guided by our formal commitment to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We are dedicated to continually integrate, adapt and actively drive these goals forward with a sense of urgency. As the global sustainability agenda undergoes rapid transformation, encompassing topics such as the energy transition, CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive), the Green Deal and ESG, our aspiration is to lead the way.

## **Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, Our Commitments Include:**

1. Enabling our Sustainability Committee to drive an impactful agenda
2. Delivering an informative and impactful Sustainable Cork event series
3. Sustainable operations, Diversity, Equality, Inclusion & Belonging
4. Advancing Environmental, Social and Governance principles (ESG)
5. Supporting societal cohesion, community development and integration





SECTION TWO

# Governance Structure

# Governance

Cork Chamber is committed to upholding the highest standards of efficient and effective corporate governance. Strong governance is the foundation of a transparent, accountable and purpose-driven organisation, ensuring independence, financial sustainability and a thriving, diverse membership base. It enables us to deliver high-quality services, advocate effectively for our members and act as responsible stewards of our resources. By maintaining robust governance structures, Cork Chamber strengthens its ability to influence public policy, support business growth and champion the interests of our members with integrity.

## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Rob Horgan, President
- Ronan Murray, Immediate Past President
- Michael Nolan, Honorary Treasurer
- Susie Horgan, Honorary Secretary
- Fiona Kearney
- Raymond Kelleher
- Brian Fitzgerald
- Michael Harte
- Catherine Sheridan
- Richard Morrissey
- David Swinburne
- Maria Desmond
- Anne-Marie Linehan
- Paul Hourican
- Noreen Walsh
- Gillian Bergin (Elected May 2024)
- Garrett O’Keeffe (Elected May 2024)
- Carmel Lonergan (Elected May 2024)
- Conor O’Toole (Elected May 2024)
- Dr Jean van Sinderen-Law (Elected May 2024)
- James McGrath (Co-Opted December 2024)
- Thia Hennessy (Retired May 2024)

- Gerard O’Donovan (Retired May 2024)
- Debbie Power (Retired May 2024)
- Maxine Hyde (Retired May 2024)

## BOARD COMMITTEES

- Executive Committee
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Governance & Nominations Committee
- Membership Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- Remuneration Committee

## REGISTERED NUMBER

13918

## REGISTERED OFFICE

Fitzgerald House, Summerhill North,  
Cork, T23 TD90

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

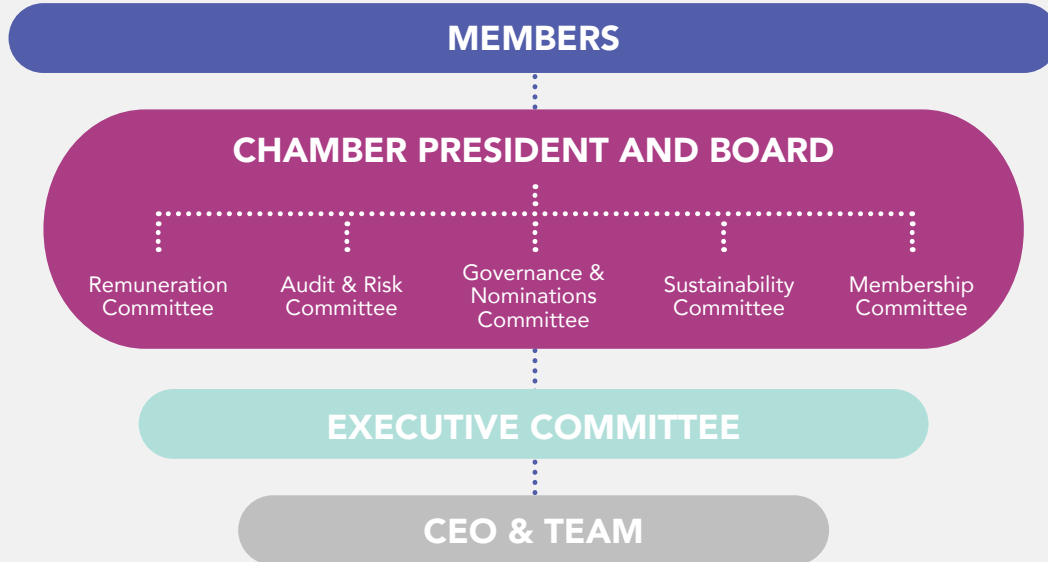
PWC, One Albert Quay, Cork

## SOLICITORS

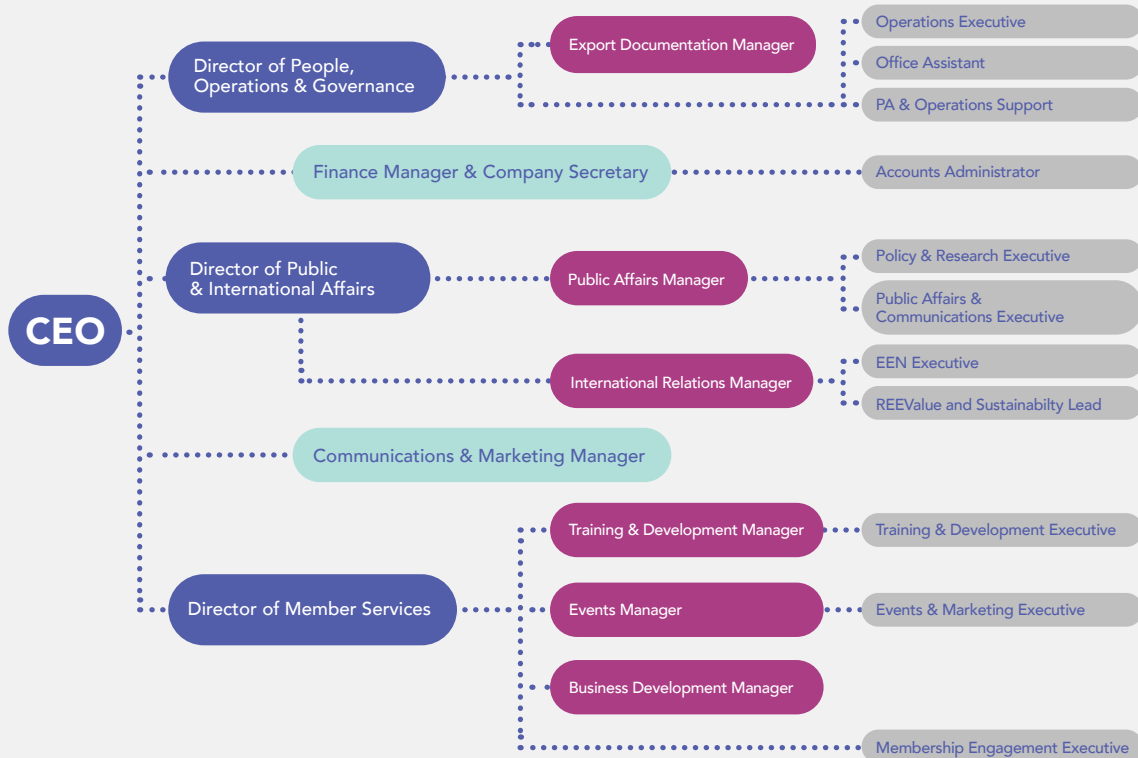
JRAP O’Meara  
89/90 South Mall, Cork



# Cork Chamber Governance Structure



# Organisational Structure



# Board of Directors



**Rob Horgan**  
President  
Velo Coffee Roasters



**Ronan Murray**  
Immediate Past  
President  
EY Ireland



**Susie Horgan**  
Honorary Secretary  
Springboard  
Communications



**Michael Nolan**  
Honorary Treasurer  
Grant Thornton



**Gillian Bergin**  
Dell Technologies



**Maria Desmond**  
Enable Ireland



**Captain Brian  
Fitzgerald**  
South Coast  
Designated Maritime  
Area Plan



**Michael Harte**  
Dairygold



**Paul Hourican**  
PFH Technology  
Group



**Fiona Kearney**  
The Glucksman UCC



**Jim McGrath**  
Abbvie Cork



**Ray Kelleher**  
The Montenotte



**Anne-Marie Linehan**  
J.W. O'Donovan  
Solicitors



**Carmel Lonergan**  
Trigon Hotels



**Richard Morrissey**  
Moneycorp



**Garrett O'Keeffe**  
Solarwinds



**Conor O'Toole**  
Clayton Hotel  
Cork City



**Catherine Sheridan**  
Enviroguide DNV



**David Swinburne**  
Forvis Mazars



**Dr Jean van  
Sinderen-Law**  
UCC



**Noreen Walsh**  
AIB Bank

## BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE 2024

Board Member	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jul	Sep	Oct	Dec
Rob Horgan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ronan Murray	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Fiona Kearney	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brian Fitzgerald	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Michael Nolan	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Ray Kelleher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Susie Horgan	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Michael Harte	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Catherine Sheridan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Richard Morrissey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
David Swinburne	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anne-Marie Linehan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Paul Hourican	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓
Noreen Walsh	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Maria Desmond	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

### Mid-Year App May 2024

Gillian Bergin					✓	✓	✓	X
Garrett O'Keeffe					✓	✓	X	✓
Carmel Lonergan					✓	✓	✓	✓
Conor O'Toole					✓	✓	✓	✓
Dr Jean van Sinderen-Law					✓	✓	✓	✓

### Resigned May 2024

Maxine Hyde	✓	X	✓	✓				
Debbie Power	✓	✓	✓	X				
Gerard O'Donovan	X	✓	✓	✓				
Thia Hennessy	✓	X	✓	✓				

## BOARD COMPOSITION

The key role of the Board of the Chamber is to provide efficient and effective leadership for Cork Chamber within a framework of practical controls. The Board performs two roles. It firstly provides strategic direction to the Chamber, based on listening to, understanding and representing the needs of the Chamber's members and Cork's business community. Secondly, it has specific oversight responsibilities in respect of executive functions.

The composition of the Board should be balanced and reflect, as far as possible, the Chamber membership having regard to company size, diversity and skillset.

The Board shall consist of not more than 24 members as follows:

- The President
- The Immediate Past President or the Vice President (if appointed)
- The Honorary Secretary
- The Honorary Treasurer

12 elected members if a Vice-President has been appointed and otherwise 13 elected members in addition to members co-opted under Articles 24 and 25. Not more than 7 coopted members as provided for under Article 24. The Elected members of the Board shall hold office for a period of four years and shall not be eligible for re-election to the Board other than as President until a period of three years has elapsed. All Directors are non-executive and sit on the board on a voluntary basis, receiving no remuneration for their time and contribution.

As soon as possible, following their appointments, all new Board members including co-option's shall receive an induction during which they shall be advised about the Chamber's key policies and work programme, and the provisions of the Chambers Code of Governance. They shall also be invited to meet with the President, CEO and Chamber Team to gain a deeper understanding of the daily operations of Cork Chamber. They will also be provided with an induction pack which will include:

- Code of Governance
- The Constitution
- Financial Statements & Management Accounts
- Budget
- Access to minutes of previous board meetings
- Strategic Plan
- Strategy Delivery Plan
- Annual Report.

## BOARD MEETINGS

The Board seeks to meet on at least 8 occasions in each calendar year. A schedule of yearly Board meetings is circulated at the beginning of the year. Meetings are scheduled for a duration of 1.5/2 hours. From time to time it may be necessary for meetings to be extended to allow sufficient time for discussion of issues in an appropriate manner. A themed agenda for the Board is drawn up to make best use of the time available and ensure that there is the appropriate focus on policy and strategy. Supporting material is circulated with the draft agenda to provide background to any topics included, such as minutes of previous meetings, management accounts, risk register and relevant reports etc.

Cork Chamber has a conflict-of-interest policy in place which is reviewed annually. Board members should identify and promptly declare any actual or potential conflicts of Interest which arise at board meetings. Such declarations should be made at the beginning of each board meeting at which the matter is discussed and should be recorded in the board minutes. Where a material conflict of interest arises, the Board member concerned should not participate in discussions nor may the Board member participate in any vote in respect of any contract in which they have an interest. They should also offer to withdraw from the meeting and the Board should decide if this is required.

## BOARD COMMITTEES

The Chamber has 6 Board Committees:

- Executive Committee
- Remuneration Committee
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Governance & Nominations Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- Membership Committee

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is appointed by Board and consists of at least four Board members. Its members include the President, (who shall be the Chair), the Immediate Past President/Vice-President, the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. The CEO shall, ex officio, attend Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee is authorised to meet and take action between board meetings when it is impractical to get the full board together.

### REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

The Remuneration Committee is appointed by the Board and shall consist of at least 4 members including the Chair and President of Cork Chamber. The Remuneration Committee have delegated responsibility for setting the remuneration for the CEO and the pay policy for the Senior Management Team of the Chamber. There is a formal and clear procedure for developing policy on executive remuneration. No executive will be involved in setting their own remuneration. The CEO brings to the committee, proposals for Senior Management and team remuneration for consideration by the Committee.

### AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

The Audit & Risk Committee is a committee of the Board of Cork Chamber. Where it is necessary to augment the necessary skillset of the committee, the committee may contain a member or members who are not part of the Board of Cork Chamber. There are formal and clear arrangements for considering how the Board should apply financial reporting and internal control principles and for maintaining an appropriate relationship with the Chamber's auditors. This is delegated by the Board.

### GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Governance & Nominations Committee is a committee of the Board of Cork Chamber. The Governance & Nominations Committee has a leadership role related to board effectiveness and governance. It's duties extend to board succession planning, including identifying potential candidates for election or co-option onto the board.

### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee is a committee of the Board of Cork Chamber. The Membership Committee will consist of representatives from the Board and a smaller number of Chamber members from the wider membership who will focus on the delivery of the main Membership Development priorities of Cork Chamber.

### SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

The Sustainability Committee is a committee of the Board of Cork Chamber. The committee will serve in a practical way to structure and support Cork Chamber's sustainability strategy and actions through an impactful Sustainable Cork Programme. It will assist in informing and developing strategy on Sustainability, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and specifically on Cork Chamber's leadership and actions on five selected UN Sustainable Development.

## CASE STUDY

# Strategic Plan 2025-2028

**In 2024, Cork Chamber undertook a comprehensive review of its strategy, ensuring that the voice of every key stakeholder was heard in shaping the organisation's direction for the coming years. This process has laid the groundwork for the development of a new Strategic Plan which launched in January 2025.**

Recognising the importance of a clear, inclusive and forward-looking strategy, we engaged Board Excellence to support and facilitate the review process. Their expertise helped guide a structured and thorough approach to consultation and reflection.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF THE REVIEW PROCESS INCLUDED:



### Board Survey and Board Strategy Day

Engaging our Board to assess current priorities, identify future opportunities and align on strategic goals



### Chamber Partner Survey

Gathered insights from our valued chamber partners to inform how we collaborate and deliver shared value



### One-on-One Interviews

Conducted with all Board members and the Senior Management Team to gather in-depth, individual perspectives



### Chamber Member Survey

Listening to our diverse membership to ensure our future direction supports their evolving needs



### Team Survey and Team Strategy Session

Involving the wider Chamber team in shaping the organisation's vision and ensuring internal alignment.



### External Stakeholder Survey

Seeking input from key external organisations, local authorities and agencies etc who engage with and support our vision



All feedback from this wide-ranging engagement was reviewed and collated. The Chamber's Senior Management Team and Board then lead the development of a Strategic Plan that reflects the insights, ambitions and priorities shared throughout this process.

The final plan was approved by the board in December 2024 and launched in January 2025.



# Chamber Team



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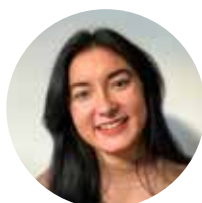




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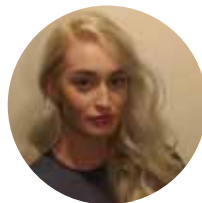
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SECTION THREE

# Our Work

# Public Affairs

Our Public Affairs team pursued and advocated for the priorities set by our Chamber partners, members and board, advocating at the highest level to ensure these objectives remain on the agenda.

Cork Chamber worked closely with key local and national politicians, stakeholders and other decision-makers, to progress key areas of focus, including transport and infrastructure, housing, sustainability, renewable energy, talent and skills, planning reform, research and development and support for SMEs.

The work of the public affairs team is guided by our formal pledge to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and as a 2024-2025 SDG Champion, all of our public policy positions aim to work in support of these goals.

2024 was a significant year in Ireland's political sphere which included local, European and General Elections. Cork Chamber worked tirelessly to advocate for Cork Chamber's members through direct engagement with

candidates and successfully elected councillors and TDs, including webinars, hustings events, manifestos, communication campaigns and subsequent submissions to the process of preparing a Programme for Government.

As well as our advocacy, we run and participate in a range of forums on matters of local and national importance. These include the Cork Development Forum, which seeks to align the vision of key stakeholders for the future of Cork and the Cork Offshore Renewable Industry Forum, which brings together representatives of the offshore renewables industry in Cork to identify and advocate for key policy and infrastructure enablers to ensure Cork and Ireland capitalise fully on the development of offshore renewables.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



### Elections 2025

We launched General and Local & European Election manifestos, delivered targeted communications campaigns, hosted a hustings event and submitted Programme for Government priorities.



## 26

Consultations on policy and advocacy and in-depth policy submissions, including the National Planning Framework



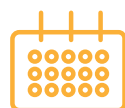
## #1

Verified as Ireland's most active regional advocacy body



### Tri-Region Partnership

Initiative launched with Northern Ireland and Dublin Chambers - focused on enhancing connectivity and fostering economic growth on the island of Ireland



## 161

Lobbying engagements, including written submissions, meetings and statements



4

Economic Trends Surveys and publications informing business leaders and government decision makers



### Budget 2025

A comprehensive submission focusing on housing, energy and renewables, support for small businesses, urban evolution and more



### Cork Development Forum

10+ meetings with Government ministers, department heads and decisionmakers



### Forums

Your voice at regional groups and forums, including Cork City Centre Forum, Airport Council, Visit Cork and South West Regional Skills Forum and several Regional Enterprise Plan working groups

## CASE STUDY

# CORIF

**The potential for Ireland to grow its domestic renewable energy sector is immense and nowhere is this more evident than in Cork. Cork can become the first of the national hubs to support the national renewable energy sector, bringing significant economic benefits, as well as helping to meet national and European level climate goals.**

In June 2024, Cork Chamber established the Cork Offshore Renewable Industry Forum, CORIF, to bring together key industry stakeholders active in the offshore renewables sector in Cork. CORIF members work to identify and advocate for the key policy and infrastructure enablers that will ensure both Cork and Ireland capitalise fully on the development of offshore renewables.

Cork City and County has a long history in the energy sector and many of the key industry players are well-established in the region. Building on the existing infrastructure, expertise and talent present in the region, Cork can unlock the significant economic opportunity associated with renewables development. For the region to reach its full potential, enabling infrastructure and supportive policy from central Government is needed.

## Cork Offshore Renewable Industry Forum

2024 has been a pivotal year for the offshore renewables industry. The approval of the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP), the first of its kind to be approved, by the Oireachtas in October 2024 paved the way for the development of critical offshore renewable assets off the coast of Cork. Earlier in the year, the Port of Cork received significant funding under the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) to finance the development of port infrastructure to facilitate offshore renewable energy (ORE).

CORIF has engaged with elected representatives and other key stakeholders in the energy space, including EirGrid, the National Maritime College of Ireland and the Port of Cork, since its establishment and will continue to build on this work and maintain momentum around the development of Cork as a renewable energy hub. Ongoing infrastructure developments need continued support, particularly in the area of talent and skills for the green energy sector, to allow Ireland to take full advantage of the significant economic opportunities offered by the growth of the renewables sector.

# Communications

At Cork Chamber, communications is a pillar that drives engagement, builds brand equity and amplifies the voice of the Cork business community.

Through dynamic multi-channel strategies, we connect with members, stakeholders and the wider public, sharing key messages, promoting opportunities and enhancing the Chamber's leadership position regionally and nationally.

Whether through media relations, social media, digital content or flagship events, communications plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions, telling our shared story, and strengthening connections across our network.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



### €1.3m

Media value achieved through regional and national media, across broadcast, print, online and television platforms



### 25k

Engagements on Cork Chamber LinkedIn – with an exceptional engagement rate exceeding 15%, well above industry benchmarks



### 4.5k

Recipients of member newsletters and flyers, sharing timely updates and opportunities.



### 5k

Followers on Connecting Cork social media channels, promoting Cork internationally



### 15k

Impressions of online Chamberlink content, in addition to 5k print circulation



### 113k

Users of corkchamber.ie reflecting its importance as an information and engagement hub for members and the public



### 50k

Followers across all Cork Chamber social media channels



## CASE STUDY

# Annual Dinner

**The Cork Chamber Annual Dinner is the business community's most anticipated networking occasion, hosting over 1,000 guests in the iconic Cork City Hall. A sell-out event year-on-year, it stands as a testament to the strength of the Chamber's network and the power of its communications.**

### Strategic Communications Approach

Our communications plan for the Annual Dinner is both comprehensive and coordinated, encompassing:

- Pre-event build-up: Leveraging direct member communications, earned media, social buzz and strategic sponsorship messaging to generate anticipation.
- On-the-day coverage: Executing a live, multimedia approach across social media and traditional media to capture the energy and profile of the event.
- Post-event momentum: Sharing professional photography, releasing social albums and amplifying key moments ensures sustained engagement and enhances reputation.

### Key Communications Tactics

**President's Speech:** A cornerstone of the evening, thoughtfully crafted to reflect Chamber values and address the current business landscape.

- **Keynote Speaker:** A high-profile, briefed guest speaker delivers a compelling message aligned with the evening's theme.
- **Media & PR:** Targeted press releases and photography accompany coverage across national and local outlets.
- **Social Media:** A real-time social media plan uses photos, videos, live updates and branded hashtags to maximise reach and engagement.
- **Photography:** From red carpet moments to sponsor and VIP shots, professional photography captures the event's prestige and creates valuable post-event content.

All of these elements work in harmony with direct communications, the digital event guide, guest list coordination and cohesive on-site branding to deliver an impactful and memorable event experience that reflects the very best of the Cork business community.



# Training & Development

Cork Chamber Skillnet is a multi-sector regional business training network offering subsidised training and development opportunities to businesses within the southwest region.

With over 20 years of training delivery expertise, the Cork Chamber Skillnet team are passionately committed to supporting businesses throughout the talent development journey of their most valued asset, their people.



## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



### 123

Trainee sessions delivered in 2024



### 15

Complimentary L&D webinars



### 85

Bespoke in-house training courses



### 6

Non-formal events



### 23

Public courses

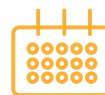


### 389

Participant member companies



Continued high demand for online delivery



### 4,267

Training days



### 1,182

Trainees



Continue to identify emerging training patterns/trends





Launch of “Skillful Futures: Strengthening Cork’s Role as a Leading IFS Destination”



IMI, MTU, UCC offerings continue to evolve



New sponsorship of Industry Insights Cork Chamber event



4

New Cork Chamber Skillnet Steering Group members

## CASE STUDY

# UCC Introduction to Sustainability in Business - Micro Cred 5ECTS

**In collaboration with UCC, Cork Chamber Skillnet and Waterford Chamber Skillnet designed, developed and delivered this new unique micro cred offering.**

It was offered out to 20 companies on a first come first served basis and was 100% fully funded via funding from Skillnet Ireland. The course explored key issues for sustainability in each business, which issues to prioritise,

and identified sustainability KPIs for their business (scorecard) which can be used for ESG and sustainability reporting. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were also used as a lens in which to frame sustainability in each company. Upon completion companies had a far greater strategic understanding of the sustainability response required.



# Events

Cork Chamber's dynamic events calendar provides an essential and ongoing platform for our members to establish key connections. We offer a diverse mix of in-person and online events, thoughtfully designed to cater to our members' wide-ranging interests. Featuring insightful content and distinguished speakers, our events create exceptional opportunities to build meaningful business relationships.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



**100**

Events



**1**

Shop & Social



**32**

Event sponsors



**300**

Entries to Cork Digital Marketing Awards 2024



**1**

Sustainable Cork Programme in-person event



**240**

Attendees at Cork Digital Marketing Awards 2024



**3**

New 'Featured Event' Promos



**Digital Marketing Legend**

Griffith College Cork



**39,600+**

ConnectMe page views

**40,800+**

DigiEventGuide views



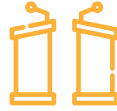
**Partnerships in 2024**

MII Cork, Employment & Recruitment Federation, France Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Cork Chamber Skillnet. Partnered with Dell to deliver a Powering AI event and with UCC to support the launch of their Business Engagement Platform



# 45

'Upcoming Events' flyers sent



# 1

Hustings - The Great Debate:  
General Election 2024



Jim Barry was honoured  
with the Cork Chamber  
'Outstanding Contribution to  
Business Award 2024'



Strategic HR partnership with  
Adare continued providing  
several benefits for members  
along with revenue line for the  
organisation



# 6,400+

Member registrations



## Sold out Events

- Cork Chamber Annual Dinner
- Cork Chamber Dublin Dinner
- Cork Chamber Christmas Lunch



# 2

HR Leadership Forum sessions



## Views

- 2,700+ Gallery page
- 2,400+ Events Overview
- 26,000+ Upcoming Events



# 3

Industry Insights for SMEs

## CASE STUDY

# DigiEventGuide

**DigiEventGuide is a mobile responsive, digital networking tool which was developed and launched by Cork Chamber at the end of Q3 2024.**

It acts primarily as an attendee list to allow easier and more strategic networking for Cork Chamber members and their guests. The fully customisable, easy-to-navigate DigiEventGuide can also be purchased by external organisations looking to sustainably professionalise their event and enhance their attendee experience through the immediate access to event data and a dynamic attendee list.

**For more information contact  
[info@digieventguide.com](mailto:info@digieventguide.com)**



# Membership Engagement

At Cork Chamber, we connect, support and empower members through events, advocacy and valuable initiatives. We ensure every member maximises their experience, driving business success within a thriving, engaged community.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



**1,200**

Active members employing

**130,000+**

People



**2**

Membership Committee Meetings



**162**

New members recruited



**6**

Business Owners Forum sessions with active group of 15+ SMEs



**5**

New Chamber Partners



Revised subscription rates implemented across five membership categories



**8**

Virtual Maximise Your Membership sessions with 118 members logging on



Continued successful strategic partnership with Adare Trusted People Partners who provide HR support and expertise to members



**120,000**

Visits to Member Directory and Member Pages incorporating new banner placement



**7**

New Members Breakfast meetings



Approximately 1,040 members uploaded communications via the Members Portal, leveraging our channels to promote their businesses and organisations

## CASE STUDY

# Membership Promotion – Reasons to join

Membership promotional content and testimonials were shared across channels to promote joining Cork Chamber.

“

The friendly and approachable team at Cork Chamber have been an invaluable support to us from an educational and networking perspective. The varied events along with real networking opportunities which have translated into obtaining new business, have made our membership of Cork Chamber a must for us on an annual basis.

**Karen O'Reilly,**  
Founder, EmployFlex

“

It has enhanced my professional life and has brought numerous advantages to both me and Investwise Financial Planning Cork.... the networking opportunities, resources, advocacy and business community involvement have not only helped my business but have also created a new circle of friends in my personal and professional life in ways I didn't expect.

**Liam O'Riordan,**  
Head of Cork Office, Investwise

“

The Chamber's advocacy efforts and lobbying initiatives have ensured that Morgan McKinley has stayed informed about key policy developments and regulatory changes that could impact our business. This level of insight and guidance has been invaluable in navigating the ever-changing business landscape and staying ahead of the curve.

**Bryan Hyland,**  
Commercial Director, Morgan McKinley

“

Cork Chamber membership is of great value to Ballymaloe Foods. It has brought together such a diverse range of businesses to form a powerful and supportive network. Driving progress for Cork businesses through meetings, lobbying and policy briefings. To a smaller business like ours the training offered is invaluable where we don't have the scale to do the same training in house, as well as the export documentation service and advice. While the Cork Chamber works hard to achieve all of these services for Cork businesses and organisations, there are also wonderful friendships created through the events, bringing an element of fun, conviviality and motivation to our working lives.”

**Maxine Hyde,**  
General Manager, Ballymaloe Foods

# International Relations

Cork Chamber connects Cork internationally and promotes the City and County for investment, collaboration, talent and trade. Through our international Chamber connections, business networks and international programmes, we help businesses to grow globally and collaborate with businesses across Europe and beyond.

## Connecting Cork

Connecting Cork is the initiative used within Cork Chamber to expand and develop our international relationships. We work closely with the Diplomatic Corps, both at home and abroad, to support the promotion of bilateral trade and international relationship building.

Cork Chamber is hosts of the Cork Financial Services Forum (CFSF). This industry led forum

work together to enhance a vibrant International Financial Services ecosystem, promote Cork as a destination for talent, and provide a supportive environment for existing businesses, potential new entrants and their teams. Connecting Cork is the umbrella branding and initiative used for the CFSF.

### SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



#### Skillnet Report Launch

Identifying Current and Future IFS Skills Needs: The Cork FS Forum worked alongside Cork Chamber Skillnet to deliver the report providing an in-depth analytical report



#### Events

The Forum collaborated with the Institute of Banking, the Compliance Institute and the Central Bank at three separate events. The Forum also organised their flagship Annual Summit event



#### Commissioner Mairéad McGuinness Roundtable

Roundtable discussion with the Cork FS Forum.



#### Emerging Leaders Taskforce (ELT)

ELT organised three well attended events and created further awareness through a ChamberLink interview with ELT Chair David O'Shea



### Minister Neale Richmond Roundtable

Roundtable discussion with the Cork FS Forum.



### Ireland for Finance Action Plan 2025

The Forum submitted three proposals



### Promoting #CorkforIFS Internationally

Cork Chamber travelled to Boston, New York and London to represent the Cork Financial Services Forum at the Irish Funds North American seminars



### Fund Sector 2030

This report was launched in Oct 2024, which included the Forum's contribution



19

Meetings with ambassadors and diplomats from around the world



9

Outbound delegation visits, including Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, Washington, New Jersey, Boston, New York, Atlanta, Austin, London, Shanghai and Shenzhen.



7

Inward delegation visits, including the US, UK, Italy, Ukraine and the Netherlands.



## Connecting Cork is supported by:





## CASE STUDY

# Cork Financial Services Forum Annual Summit 2024

**Cork Chamber and the Cork Financial Services Forum hosted the Cork Financial Services Forum Annual Summit 2024, which took place in November 2024. This event brought together industry members from the Southwest and financial services thought leaders from across Ireland for a morning of insightful discussion and networking.**

Late last year, Cork Chamber Skillnet commissioned an in-depth analysis of the IFS landscape in Cork, aimed to assess current talent needs, anticipated future requirements and propose actionable

recommendations to bridge gaps and ensure the sectors viability and secure its future through a consistent supply of skilled talent. The event saw the launch of this report "Skillfull Futures: Strengthening Cork's Role as a Leading IFS Destination".

The goal of the event was to showcase Cork and the southwest as a destination for investment to organisations who do not already have a footprint here. The sold-out event hosted over 160 attendees from throughout the region and Dublin.



## CASE STUDY

# Indiana delegation visit to Cork

In October 2024, the Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb facilitated a delegation visit to Cork.

During the visit, the Ports of Indiana and Port of Cork signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen trade, economic and academic cooperation between Indiana and Ireland. Through this new partnership, the two ports commit to exploring the feasibility of a new shipping connection between Cork, Ireland and Ports of Indiana-Burns Harbor in northwest

Indiana, supporting the port's new container initiative that will create an international sea cargo container terminal. Cork Chamber was delighted to co-host this MoU signing with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, which was in attendance by the Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb. Indiana now shares direct links with Ireland via flight and cargo ship.



# Enterprise Europe Network

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is a European Commission funded programme, with over 400 contact points in over 40 countries worldwide.

As the largest support network for SMEs, it's aim is to help SMEs innovate and grow internationally. The EEN's services for SMEs

include business partnership, innovation, sustainability, digitalisation, resilience, internationalisation and single market advisory.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



### EEN Promotion

Promoted EEN Cork Chamber services to 142 companies



### New business collaborations

EEN Cork Chamber helped three companies partner with international organisations through individual collaborative projects



## 31

Companies received tailored one-to-one business support



## 2

Companies who received advisory services resulted in expansion into a new market, as well as receiving a VAT reclaim to the value of €30,000



## 5

Companies received funding approval for a European Commission funded grant to the value of €10,000 to help them invest in equipment to improve their energy efficiency



## 15

Events throughout the year



### New international business contracts

EEN Cork Chamber helped three companies acquire new international contracts through our contacts and tailored B2B meetings



Launched a communication campaign in collaboration with Hopkins Communication. This initiative highlighted EEN's offerings and success stories, reaching approximately 54,660 users during the first three months of the campaign



## CASE STUDY

## Food and Drink Mission to Birmingham

**The EEN at Cork Chamber partnered with the three Local Enterprise Offices in Cork City and County, to organise the Food and Drink Mission to Birmingham.**

The collaborative initiative brought eleven food and drink companies from Cork to showcase their products at the Food & Drink Expo. Running over three days at Birmingham's NEC, this event attracted more than 25,000 visitors and 1,200 exhibitors, providing exhibitors the opportunity to showcase their products on an international platform.

Having worked with the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to organise B2B meetings at the show, this mission resulted in one of the Cork exhibitors receiving orders from three UK suppliers; one, a vending machine supplier, requesting an initial order of 15,000 items and the other two requesting an initial order of 25,000 items.



# REEValue

REEValue is a European co-funded LIFE project (2023–2026) dedicated to empowering SMEs and large organisations in the food, beverage and logistics industries to adopt energy efficiency measures and invest in renewable energy solutions. By providing tailored support, REEValue accelerates the energy transition across key energy intensive industries.

As a key partner in the nine-organisation European consortium spanning Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Italy and Portugal, Cork Chamber is at the forefront of this initiative. We lead on project communications,

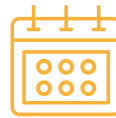
the development of the REEValue online platform and business engagement in Ireland, connecting businesses with energy grants and shift towards more sustainable value chains.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



### 12

Irish organisations received one-to-one support on the first year of the project



### 3

REEValue events, including a workshop, focus group and webinar in collaboration with a major supermarket/retailer (LIDL)



### 100+

Registrations for REEValue events



# Export Documentation

Cork Chamber is a leading provider of export documentation services. We are officially authorised by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Chambers Ireland to issue and certify export documentation.

The export team provide a bespoke certification service to a number of clients. We provide the facilities for companies to have documentation authenticated with the Department of Foreign Affairs and legalised with several embassies.

We issue regular communications on export services, international trade information and keep up to date on developments in relation to trading with the UK.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



**17,983**

Export documents certified



### Top 5 Countries

Turkey, China, Saudi Arabia, Oman and India



**95%**

Certified online



**6**

ICC certified signatories



**5**

New clients



### Top products

Food & drink, technology, pharmaceuticals and animal nutrition

# Recognising Your Success

Cork Chamber is proud to celebrate our members and highlight their achievements. Each year, we host three awards programmes to spotlight remarkable success stories, showcasing the diverse and dynamic businesses that make up the Cork business community. These awards provide an excellent platform for businesses to share their journey, growth and future ambitions.

## Cork Company of the Year Awards 2024



"It is an honour to receive this prestigious award and a testament to our tremendous teams who make PepsiCo Ireland the powerhouse it is today. Over the years, through amazing partnerships with professional institutes, universities and our local communities, our teams have built an international business that we are very proud of. Receiving this award is a fantastic way to kick off our 50-year celebrations."

*Mary Lane, Senior Director Commercialisation, PepsiCo*

### Outstanding Contribution to Business Award



"I am honoured to be the recipient of this year's Outstanding Contribution Award. While this is a personal achievement, it is great recognition for Barry Group and family business alike. Having spent my professional career in our family business, I am delighted to represent our past, present and future when receiving this award. I am extremely proud of the journey we have been on as we celebrate 70 years in business in 2025 and look forward to collaborating with Cork Chamber for many more years to come"

*Jim Barry, Managing Director of Barry Group*

"We are delighted and honoured to receive the Digital Marketing Legend award for 2024 along with the Best Digital Marketing Team award. It is testimony to the superb work undertaken by the team here at Griffith College Cork. Digital platforms are a key way in which the College promotes its undergraduate, postgraduate and professional courses to potential learners nationwide. We have invested considerable resources to ensure our digital marketing activity is both engaging and impactful, and we benefit greatly from working with our colleagues nationally and with a range of fantastic agency partners. Thank you to Cork Chamber and our industry colleagues for this recognition in what is Griffith College's 50th anniversary year."

*Griffith College Cork, Sinéad O'Dea, Deputy Head of Campus*

### Cork Digital Marketing Awards 2024



# Sustainability

At Cork Chamber, sustainability is not a standalone initiative, it is a core principle that informs everything we do. As we strive to make Cork the best place for business, we are equally committed to building a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for our region.

We recognise that long-term economic prosperity must go hand in hand with environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Internally, we are embedding sustainability across our operations, governance and culture—ensuring that our actions reflect our values. Externally, we are strong advocates for sustainable development, supporting policies and practices that enable responsible

growth, innovation and resilience across the Cork region. From climate action and energy transition to inclusive growth and community well-being, we are dedicated to fostering a business environment that is fit for the future. This commitment guides our work every day, ensuring that sustainability remains at the heart of decision-making — for our members, our community and the generations to come.

## SDG CHAMPIONS

In June 2024, Cork Chamber was selected by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications as one of twenty organisations nationwide to become a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Champion for the 2024 – 2025 programme. This recognition marks our commitment to embedding the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across our organisation. Over 12 months, we are advocating for the SDGs, integrating them into our activities and organising an event during SDG Week.



## SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Our Sustainability Committee convened for the first time under new Chair to help drive forward the Chamber's sustainability agenda.

Sustainability is at the heart of all of Cork Chamber's activities and the Sustainability Committee will play an important role in supporting progress on sustainability within the Chamber and throughout the wider Cork business community. The Committee's work is supporting progress towards a sustainable future for Cork, one of the EU mission cities for climate neutrality to 2030.

## SUSTAINABLE CORK PROGRAMME



The Sustainable Cork Programme is designed to set a vision for a more sustainable and resilient Cork, empowered by a thriving business community. In 2024, we hosted three webinars and explored a diverse range of topics such as Gender balance, Climate Adaption and Sustainable supply chains and one in person event on Biodiversity & Infrastructure at Fota Wildlife Park. We also organised an exclusive 1-hour tour of the ESB Aghada Power Station following our in-person event providing a unique insight into the operations of one of Ireland's key energy facilities and showcase advancements in sustainable energy.



# Social

In 2024, we made significant strides in fostering a more inclusive, equitable and socially responsible organisation. Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEI&B) remained at the heart of our initiatives, driving meaningful progress in workforce & board representation, community engagement and employee well-being.

From expanding programs for underrepresented talent to launching impactful partnerships that uplift diverse communities, we have taken bold steps toward building a more inclusive future. We also continued to prioritise mental health and well-being, ensuring our people feel valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

These achievements reflect our unwavering dedication to creating a workplace—and a world—where everyone belongs.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS...



### 250+

Registrations for Sustainable Cork Programme events



### Inclusive

Employer Workplace Pledge



### Accessibility

Improvements incorporated into the retrofit of Fitzgerald House



### Intreo

Youth Employment Charter



### PSYCHED

Accreditation



### Community

Initiatives & Support



### AADI

Fáilte Programme

## CORK ACCESS NETWORK

In 2024, Cork Chamber reinforced its commitment to education and workforce development by becoming the first business community partner to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cork City's Education and Lifelong Learning Partners—Munster Technological University (MTU), University College Cork (UCC), Cork Education and Training Board (Cork ETB) and Cork City Council.

This milestone strengthens Cork's reputation as an International Learning City and underscores the vital role of businesses in fostering a culture of lifelong learning. The MOU builds on Cork's achievements as a UNESCO Learning City, reflecting a decade of global recognition for innovative approaches to education since adopting the UNESCO Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities in 2014.

As SDG Champions, we are particularly committed to advancing SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). By bringing education, government and industry together, this partnership is a powerful step toward a brighter, more sustainable future—one where Cork continues to lead globally in education, innovation and opportunity.





## CASE STUDY

# WorkAbility Cork: Inclusive Pathways to Employment

At Cork Chamber, we are dedicated to making Cork the best place for business. We play a pivotal role in fostering economic growth and advocating for the interests of local businesses.

In line with our commitment to inclusivity and economic development and in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities), we were delighted to partner with SECAD to launch the WorkAbility Cork: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme in September 2024.

This ambitious five-year initiative, running from 2024 to 2028, aims to enhance career progression and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Cork.

The WorkAbility Programme is part of a broader effort to support people with disabilities in achieving their employment goals.

The initiative is structured around three core objectives: improving the employment prospects of individuals with disabilities who are distant from the labour market, building the capacity of employers to recruit, retain and progress employees with disabilities and fostering partnerships among stakeholders, including disability services, employment services and employers.

# Environment

## Fitzgerald House: A Sustainable Transformation

### Lending Heritage with innovation

Fitzgerald House underwent a remarkable retrofit in 2024, seamlessly integrating modern sustainability with its rich historical charm. Once a traditional Georgian home, this restoration project highlights how thoughtful innovation can breathe new life into a historic structure while preserving its timeless character. These elements not only reflect the building's historical grandeur but also serve as a link to Cork's rich architectural heritage.

### Preserving history, enhancing comfort - Thoughtful Restoration & Modern Upgrades

Fitzgerald House retains its elegant symmetrical façade, traditional sash windows, high ceilings and intricate plasterwork, all hallmarks of its Georgian roots. Careful restoration of original woodwork and architectural details ensures that it remains intact while offering a warm, inviting atmosphere.

### A home for everyone: accessibility and inclusivity

The building's recent upgrades improve accessibility for individuals of all abilities, making it welcoming and functional for everyone. These enhancements reflect a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, showcasing how heritage and modern values can coexist within a historically significant space.

### Symbolising core values

The Cork Chamber building is a symbol of our values—member-centric, dynamic, inspiring, responsible and purposeful. It honours our heritage, embraces innovation and reflects our commitment to sustainability, inclusivity and long-term resilience.

### SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CORE

Sustainability remains a driving force behind the house retrofit, ensuring that this historic building continues to embrace eco-conscious living while preserving its rich heritage.

- Energy-efficient windows enhance insulation while maintaining the building's traditional charm.
- Solar panels discreetly integrated into the roof help reduce energy consumption and lower carbon emissions.
- The building features a pollinator-friendly garden, contributing to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan by attracting bees and butterflies.
- An electric vehicle charging point supports sustainable transport solutions.
- Thanks to these continued efforts, Fitzgerald House has once again been awarded the EcoMerit certification, reaffirming its long-term commitment to sustainability.







SECTION FOUR

Finance,  
Partners  
& Sponsors

# Financial Statements

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Income</b>	<b>3,436,510</b>	3,099,684
Cost of Sales	<b>(1,478,237)</b>	(1,322,408)
<b>Gross surplus</b>	<b>1,958,273</b>	1,777,276
Administrative expenses	<b>(1,954,318)</b>	(1,728,569)
Other operating income	<b>3,448</b>	-
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>7,403</b>	48,707
Other interest receivable and similar income	<b>29</b>	-
<b>Surplus before taxation</b>	<b>7,432</b>	48,707
Taxation on surplus	-	-
<b>Surplus for the financial year</b>	<b>7,432</b>	48,707

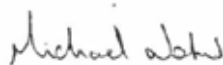
There are no items of comprehensive income in the financial year or preceding financial year other than those dealt with in the income and expenditure account. Accordingly, no statement of other comprehensive income has been prepared.

The financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 28th April 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

**Rob Horgan**  
President



**Michael Nolan**  
Honorary Treasurer





## BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 December 2024

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible assets	<b>636,820</b>	367,135
Intangible assets	<b>13,870</b>	8,512
	<b>650,690</b>	375,647
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	<b>384,320</b>	235,498
Cash at bank and in hand	<b>1,277,977</b>	1,859,726
	<b>1,662,297</b>	2,095,224
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<b>(658,089)</b>	(823,405)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>1,004,208</b>	1,271,819
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,654,898</b>	1,647,466
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Revaluation reserve	<b>124,751</b>	124,751
Income and expenditure account	<b>1,530,147</b>	1,522,715
<b>Total members' funds</b>	<b>1,654,898</b>	1,647,466

The financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 28th April 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

**Rob Horgan**  
President

**Michael Nolan**  
Honorary Treasurer

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