

## British Ambassador Visits Waterford

We often ask the question do we make enough effort promoting Waterford and the south east in the UK.

The British Ambassador was in Waterford last week and stresses their wish to make stronger connections with Ireland.

Given how Waterford is struggling, we have a neighbour, whose economy has turned around.

Failte Ireland were in Waterford last week for a board meeting and they market in the UK.

But could we get more from family visitors to golfers, retirees, ethnic connections and others?

The Gathering last year, where people contacted friends and relations living abroad, proved most successful.

Perhaps we need to do more on this. Local tourism interests could consider marketing more effectively in the UK.

Failte Ireland do go to the major travel events.

Perhaps however, more could be done with the airport links connecting Waterford with Birmingham and Manchester.

We badly need the London service to re-start as that can also attract more industry and investment to Waterford.

There is also another point of contact with the Connect Ireland network.

This is where people with friends, relations and business connections can get paid thousands of euro per job if they can attract new business to locate here in the South East.

Waterford is close to the UK and with expansion again in the Financial Services sector, Waterford could be a location for low cost back office activities for major institutions.

This already happens in Belfast, Newcastle and Leeds so why not Waterford.

We already have Sun Life of Canada here and Eishtec providing call support services.

Sun Life do fund administration services for the USA so why not for UK too with another firm.

IDA and Enterprise Ireland are under pressure to provide more jobs and with the troubles in Bausch and Lomb, we should be widening our scope for job creation.

As the British Ambassador says, UK - Irish relations have never been better with peace in Northern Ireland and state visits by the Queen and our President to the UK in the spring; great goodwill is now there.

We also have Dan Mulhall, a Waterford man, as Irish Ambassador to UK and he would be very willing to help his home city and promote more business in Waterford.

Now that the merger of the councils is done, the Irish UK connection could be prioritized and maximized with our Ambassador in London, there to assist us in trade and tourism promotion.