

## Chinese Delegation Visits Waterford



A delegation from Haikou City in China visited Waterford recently accompanied by Mrs Katherine Chan Mullen, Chairman of Irish Chinese Council and Mr Tony Mullins, well known horse trainer. Included from the delegation were Consular Wu, Chinese Embassy, Xia Cheng, Xu Shenglan, Han Bin, Director General of Haikou Foreign Affairs Office, Xie Jiangbo and Ms Huang Fei, Culture Dept. Chinese Embassy.

A letter of intent has been signed between Waterford and Haikou City in the Hainan Province of the People's Republic of China which could lead to a formal twinning relationship between the two.

A delegation from Haikou visited Waterford recently accompanied by Mrs Katherine Chan Mullen, Mr Tony Mullins and Mr Phil Reddy who have been the driving forces in introducing both parties and met with the Mayor Lola O'Sullivan and Manager Michael Walsh. Mr. Walsh said the purpose of the meeting was to explore a potential relationship with Haikou which is the Capital City of the province of Hainan.

At this stage he said it's exploratory and looking to see what synergies there are.

Haikou he said are trying to develop a racehorse industry and they want to use Irish expertise but the purpose of the meeting was to see what other elements could be explored that would be of mutual benefit.

He said there was a whole host of areas like educational, agricultural and other niche industries that could be of benefit to both parties.

The Manager said any decision would be a matter for City Council and they have been requested through the Chinese embassy to consider it and will report to council over the next few months.

Mayor of Waterford City Lola O'Sullivan said the Chinese delegation were very interested in twinning with Waterford and she believes it could have huge potential both from both an investment and from a cultural point of view.

Well-known horse trainer Tony Mullins has been informally appointed to educate officials in Haikou about the horse racing industry. He says interest in horse-racing is growing and although betting was outlawed in China, Hong Kong has held its betting profile, and China is now seeing the financial benefits of racing and the hope is now to expand that to Haikou.

Initially he says the Chinese are very interested in being friends with Ireland and if that can lead to business it would be great for both.

He says hopefully a Waterford delegation will now make a visit to Haikou to build on the relationship between the two.

Katherine Chan Mullen who is involved in business exchange between Ireland and China says they are hoping to use Irish expertise to help set up a horse training industry and encourage trade between Hainan and Ireland.

Although Haikou has a population 20 times bigger than Waterford she says there are many other areas where there are synergies between the two.