

CHAMBER AGM

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry held its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 16th April.

A large number of members were present to hear outgoing President William McKean give an upbeat speech on the past year,

highlighting the number of successful events which the Chamber had run. Members of the Management committee also gave reports on the projects and working groups in which they had been involved. The Rev. Robert Coulter chaired the meeting for the election of officers, congratulating the Chamber on a very successful year.

The following officers were elected for 2008/9:

President: Alison Moore

Vice President: Raymond Ruck

Hon. Secretary: Audrey Wales

Hon. Treasurer: Thomas McKillen

Management Committee: David McKinney, Alan Stewart, Annie Millar, Neil Holland, Robin Cherry, Johnny Black, Damien McGinley and William McKean (Immediate Past President).

Roy Bonar was awarded Life Membership of the Chamber in recognition of the many years of service and the support which he has given Chamber.



CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- **Ballymena Credit Union** on the opening of their new office extension.
- **Riada Recruitment** on the opening of their new office at 36 Broughshane Street, Ballymena.
- **Wrightbus** on securing several export orders in recent months.
- **The Patton Group** on winning a Considerate Constructors Scheme Gold Award.
- **Michelin** on the announcement of a £14 million investment in Ballymena.
- **Moore Concrete Products** on the opening of their headquarters in Caherty House following a £4 million investment.
- **The Robinson Group** on being awarded a third successive Investor in People Award.
- **Paul Patton** on his appointment as Manager of Ballymena Credit Union and best wishes to **Annie Millar** on her retirement.



For more information on Ballymena Chamber, visit our website:

www.ballymenachamber.co.uk



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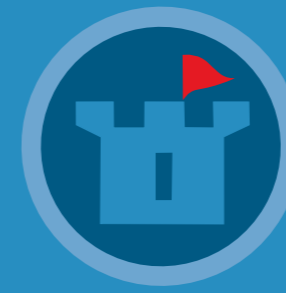


- **Conference theatre with state of the art AV facilities**
- **Meeting rooms**
- **Unique exhibition areas**
- **Natural parkland for team building**
- **Excellent location**
- **Free parking**
- **Range of menus to suit all dietary needs**
- **Suitable venue for corporate fun days**
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Ballymena

Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Newsletter

Issue 8: August 2008



PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

Welcome to our August Newsletter bringing you all the latest news from the Chamber. We are delighted that over the past few months we have welcomed on board 12 new members, hosted a lunch at which the First Minister was the guest speaker, launched the business awards and had a representative from Chamber at the Sister Cities convention in Kansas so we have had a busy period.

We are planning various events over the next few months so keep an eye on our website (www.ballymenachamber.co.uk) for all the latest information.

I would especially encourage all of you to enter the business awards and to attend the gala evening on 23rd October. Enjoy the Newsletter.

Alison Moore
President

2008 BUSINESS AWARDS LAUNCHED



The 2008 Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards, which are organised by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry have been officially launched at a reception held in the Michelin Athletic Club.

Chamber President Alison Moore welcomed everyone. She said "I am delighted to see so many sponsors and guests here today for the launch of the 2008 business awards. This clearly demonstrates the high esteem in which the awards are now held. This is the sixth year of the awards and they continue to go from strength to strength. I want to thank all the sponsors because without them there would be no awards."

Special thanks go to Michelin Tyre PLC who is our major sponsor this year".

Graham Whitehurst, Factory Manager in Michelin Ballymena said "Michelin are very happy to be the major sponsor for the 2008 awards. Michelin have been involved with the awards since their inception and I wish the Chamber every success in their organisation of the awards this year". He continued "Michelin are heavily involved in many areas in the community. I would like to mention Michelin Development who provide assistance to small businesses in the area. This assistance can be in the form of advice on a range of topics or a loan at very competitive rates. In the last three

years we have helped to create 160 jobs in the Borough".

The Mayor, Maurice Mills congratulated and thanked the Chamber for organising the awards once again this year. He said "The business awards are now a major event in the Ballymena calendar. Ballymena has great commerce and industry and the awards help to recognise and celebrate all that is best in the Borough. Ballymena Borough Council is pleased to be associated with the awards again this year. I wish the Chamber and all businesses which enter every success for the 2008 awards".

Full details of all the awards and how to enter are contained in the awards brochure which has been widely distributed throughout the Borough. Any business which has not yet received a copy of the brochure, or if you have any queries, please contact office@ballymenachamber.co.uk or telephone Chris Wales on 07876 758797 and a copy will be forwarded to you.

The awards gala evening will be held this year in Tullyglass House Hotel on Thursday 23rd October. Last year 430 people attended this making it one of the most important events in the Ballymena business calendar. The compere this year will be Ken Reid (UTV) followed by dancing to House M8s. This promises to be another superb evening so put the date in your diary now.

SISTER CITIES

Audrey Wales has just returned from a trip to Kansas City where she attended the annual Sister Cities Conference, an event which promotes relationships between towns and cities across the world.

The aim of Audrey's trip, which was sponsored by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was to promote tourism in the Borough. Five local councillors and a Council officer were also in Kansas. The 2009 conference is being held in Belfast, the first time outside America.

Audrey said "The 2009 conference will be attended by up to 2000 people and the Chamber felt that this was an excellent

opportunity to promote the Borough. The visitors to the conference come not only from America but from all over the world and many will add on a few days either before or after the conference. The Chamber wants these people to visit Ballymena and this was the ideal time for me to tell them how good a town Ballymena is".

The Chamber had put together a marketing brochure for the Borough. This contained places of local interest, special offers from local hotels and discount packages from retailers in the Borough. Audrey said that the brochure had been very well received by the

hundreds of delegates that she had spoken to over the 3 days of the conference.

"Having a brochure with hotel packages really gave Ballymena an advantage in that I was able to give them an idea how much a few extra days would cost. I would like to thank the Chamber for giving me this opportunity to go to Kansas. It clearly demonstrates the commitment of Chamber to promoting the Borough of Ballymena".

CHAMBER WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Chamber held an informal meeting in May in Galgorm Resort and Spa to welcome new members.

Alison Moore, Chamber President said that new members are the lifeblood of any organisation. "I am very pleased to meet you today. I hope you enjoy your time as members of Chamber and that you find your membership to be beneficial". She went on to outline some of the benefits of Chamber membership.

The new members present were Riada Recruitment Ltd., Cllr. Deirdre Nelson and Onus (NI) Ltd. Any business which is interested in Chamber membership can contact Chamber at office@ballymenachamber.co.uk or phone Chris Wales on 07876 758797.



BUSINESS LUNCH WITH FIRST MINISTER



The First Minister, the Rev. and Rt. Hon. Ian Paisley was the guest speaker at a business lunch organised by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry and sponsored by NIE Energy. After an excellent lunch he addressed a large gathering of Ballymena business people saying he was delighted to be back in Ballymena, the town where he grew up and of which he had many fond memories.

Speaking on the topic "Creating a vibrant and sustainable economy" he said that there had been much change in Northern Ireland in recent years, but warned that a lot remained to be done. He congratulated Ballymena Chamber of Commerce on its efforts in promoting industry and commerce in the Borough saying that "the way forward is

partnership between public and private bodies". He continued "This is a time of great hope and opportunity. Are we prepared to rise to the challenge and face change, get out of the rut and do a job for today and for the future? Everyone is needed in this battle for change. If we can change the future we will be building a better future for everyone".

He made it very clear that we cannot do this on our own. "Northern Ireland's future depends on building and developing our economy - with local businesses and those from the rest of the UK, Ireland, Europe and the USA. The economy must be made to grow and employment needs to rise from 70 to 75 per cent, we need to secure high value-added businesses creating 6500 high value jobs".

He had been in the USA the week previous preparing for the visit of the US delegation on the 8/9th May which would be made up of over 60 senior business executives. The Mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg, would also be present and he was bringing business executives with him. Most had never even visited Northern Ireland and he said "We will take them to every corner of Northern Ireland and I am sure they will be impressed by what we have to offer.

This will put Northern Ireland firmly on the agenda of US investors".

He summed up with a warning "There is no quick fix. Vision without delivery is no more than a daydream. Action is required now".

At the conclusion of his address he answered a series of questions and gave the guarantee that Borough of Ballymena would not be overlooked or forgotten when investment decisions were being made. Chamber President William McKean then presented the First Minister with a Chamber plaque and a tie. He also presented Alison Moore, Business Support Manager from NIE Energy with a Chamber plaque and flowers and thanked NIE Energy for their generous sponsorship.



THE BRAID AND GALGORM RESORT AND SPA HOST CHAMBER

The Management Committee of the Chamber was the guest of the Mayor, Maurice Mills for their May meeting and Galgorm Resort and Spa for their June meeting. The Chamber members were given a tour of the facilities at both locations and were then provided with light refreshments and a boardroom for their meetings.

Alison Moore, Chamber President said that Chamber was delighted to accept both invites. Speaking after the tour of the new Braid she said "Everything we have seen here today is truly impressive. The museum is excellent and the theatres are both superb. What impressed me most today is the number of groups and schools

who are making use of the Braid, and the list of events planned for the near future. No other town in Northern Ireland has a town hall complex as good as this".

After the tour of Galgorm Resort and Spa, Alison said "This is a world class facility. We have been very impressed with everything we have seen today, especially the new Spa and the conferencing facilities. Ballymena can be proud to have a resort of this standard and it will undoubtedly bring visitors to the Borough. I would have absolutely no hesitation in recommending Galgorm Resort and Spa to any business looking for an excellent venue to host a conference".



CHAMBER PRESENTS CERTIFICATES TO LIFE MEMBERS

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented certificates to four Life Members in May.

Alison Moore, Chamber President, welcomed the Life Members to a meeting in the Adair Arms. The Chamber can award Life Membership to someone who has given exceptional service to the Chamber. Over the last few years Life Membership has been awarded to four people and it was decided that it would be appropriate to present them with certificates to mark the achievement.

Alison said "The fact that Life membership has only been awarded four times in recent years demonstrates that it is not awarded lightly. The four of you present today have given great service to Chamber over many years and on behalf of Chamber I would like to express my gratitude to you all".

Life membership certificates were then presented to George Leith, Audrey Wales, Mervyn Rankin and Roy Bonar.



CHAMBER ORGANISES SEVEN FM BUSINESS BREAKFAST



Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised another very successful business breakfast on Tuesday 11th March in the Adair Arms Hotel.

Chamber President William McKean welcomed everyone. He said "It is great to see so many people here this morning. This is the latest in our series of breakfasts and the large turnout today reflects their growing popularity. I want to thank Seven

FM for coming here this morning and hosting this breakfast and I look forward to their presentation".

Before the Seven FM presentation Bob Esler interviewed William in a live link with the Seven FM breakfast show.

Damien McGinley, Station Manager said that Seven FM was delighted to host the breakfast. He said "Seven FM have worked with the Chamber of Commerce on a number of projects before. We have an excellent working relationship and I look forward to continuing and developing this relationship in the future".

Fiona Clerkin, Regional Business Development Manager for Seven FM then gave a very interesting presentation. She gave a profile of Seven FM detailing the areas in which their transmissions were received and a breakdown of their shows. She continued "Seven FM has made a huge investment in areas such as staff, journalists, management and technology. The News

Centre for all the radio stations in the group is now centred in Ballymena. Seven FM now has 18000 regular listeners every week which is excellent as we are only 2 years old".

Everyone present was given a pack containing special advertising rates only available to those who had attended the breakfast. Seven FM had been running a competition for £3000 worth of free advertising. William McKean drew the winner at the breakfast. The winner was Robin Adair Jewellers, Church Street, Ballymena.

At the end of the breakfast Paul Muir from Riada Recruitment said that it had been an excellent event. "We are new members of Chamber and this is the first of these breakfasts I have attended. I found it to be very informative and it was good to meet other Chamber members. I would recommend this type of event to all Chamber members".