



**Tralee Chamber
Alliance**
Advancing business together

Strategic Plan: Current Initiatives and Early Outcomes

2024 - 2027



Membership Impact

Sustained Programming

- **Annual Program Development:** An annual program of activities was developed based on member input, offering both in-person and online events throughout 2024.
 - **Networking Events:** Three in-person networking-only events, including one specifically for new members.
 - **Expert HR Webinar Series:** A three-part online series on HR best practices.
 - **Regional Chamber Collaboration:** An online networking event with Cork Chamber allowed 30 members from each chamber to connect.
 - **Community and Social Events:** The Summer BBQ brought together members, partners, volunteers, and stakeholders; the Budget Breakfast Series provided economic insights.
 - **Sector-Focused Seminars:** Held the first-ever Charities Information Seminar featuring presentations from four financial institutions, and the first Agricultural Event held in January attended by over 200 members of the farming community. The Presidents Lunch closes out events for the year held in November.
 - **Garda Workshops:** Initiated safety and security workshops in collaboration with local Gardaí.

Governance

- **Steering Sub-Committee Review:** In alignment with the strategic plan, the steering committee structure was updated with new leadership for each sub-committee
 - **Education Group:** Chaired by Anne Looney of MTU, this group supports the University Town pillar and aims to enhance Tralee's status as a higher education hub highlighting the work of MTU and Kerry ETB including support in promoting Tralee as a Gaeltacht Service Town.
 - **Vibrant Tralee Group:** Led by Pamela Prendiville of Ashe and Manor West Hotels, focusing on Tralee's day and night economy. The group oversees events like Christmas in Tralee, the St. Patrick's Day Parade, and works with the Kerry Tourism Industry Federation feeding information relating Tralee attractions and events.
 - **Enterprise Group:** Chaired by David Pierse of Pierse Fitzgibbon, with a focus on strategic chamber development, monitoring progress, and maintaining partnerships with stakeholders such as Kerry County Council, IDA, and Chambers Ireland.

Lobbying and Advocacy

- **Pre-Budget Submission:** This year, the Chamber made a comprehensive pre-budget submission to the government, focusing on key issues affecting local businesses, such as rising operational costs and workforce retention. The Chamber conducted extensive lobbying efforts with local politicians and government representatives to ensure that the concerns of Tralee's business community were voiced and considered in the budget. This advocacy reflects the Chamber's commitment to supporting its members by influencing policy decisions that directly impact the local economy.
- **Local Elections Debate:** In May of this year ahead of the local elections, the Chamber members were surveyed, asking what they wanted addressed by the elected members. The results of the survey were used for a live radio debate moderated by Jerry O'Sullivan on Kerry Today.

Communications

Membership Insights Survey

- **Survey Implementation:** Conducted in partnership with MTU, the survey provided essential insights into member needs and satisfaction.
 - **Respondent Demographics:** Over 25% have been members for over 10 years, and 50% joined within the past two years.
 - **Key Interests:** Members expressed a desire for events on funding, fraud prevention, and local business success stories.
 - **Business Challenges:** Rising costs, inflation, and staff retention were noted as primary concerns for members.

Communication Channels

- **Newsletter:** Sent bi-weekly, the Chamber newsletter is the primary communication tool, offering members opportunities to share announcements and receive updates on Tralee activities.
- **Social media:** With a combined Facebook following of 25,000 across the Visit Tralee and Tralee Chamber Alliance accounts and also a strong presence on Instagram and LinkedIn, the Chamber effectively disseminates updates and event news, boasting one of the largest social followings for a destination in the county.

University Town

Community Engagement and Promotion

- **University Town Signage:** Advocacy efforts are ongoing to introduce signage throughout Tralee, highlighting its status as a university town.
- **Celebration of Academic Milestones:** Graduation events are marked with festive bunting throughout Tralee, creating a welcoming environment for graduates and their families.
- **Vocational Education Expansion:** Kerry College's apprenticeship programs at Monavalley Campus have grown, with over 240 apprentices enrolled this summer, enhancing Tralee's reputation as a key destination for vocational training.

Vibrant Tralee

Event Management and Community Engagement

- **Major Events:** Organized the St. Patrick's Day celebrations and managed the Christmas in Tralee full programme in partnership with Kerry County Council while also, supporting festivals such as the Kingdom County Fair, TedX Tralee and Féile Thrá Lí.
- **Advocacy and Support for Businesses:** Engaged with town centre businesses to address issues such as business support and anti-social behaviour, fostering a safer, more vibrant environment for businesses and residents.
- **Welcoming Streets:** raising of flags and bunting throughout the town for National League Games and the Sigerson Cup
- **ASIAM:** Tralee has begun its journey to becoming an Autism Friendly Town with progress updates scheduled for Q1 of 2025

Heritage and Revitalization Projects

- **Castle Street Heritage Project:** In collaboration with Tralee Tidy Towns, the Chamber led a heritage preservation project for Castle Street. The project, managed by JCA Architects, focused on educating property owners about available refurbishment grants and featured several community events, bringing together residents and business owners to celebrate the area's history and architecture.

Tralee Tidy Towns Collaboration and Environmental Recognition

- **Gold Medal Achievement:** Tralee Tidy Towns received another Gold Medal in 2024, improving its score by 17 points and coming within 3 points of the national winner, Ballincollig. The collaboration between the Chamber and Tidy Towns was key in reaching this milestone, thanks to joint projects and the active participation of Chamber members and partners.
- **Community Initiatives:** Chamber members contributed to multiple Tidy Towns projects, including planting initiatives, painting public spaces, weekly litter-picking events, and heritage preservation activities, such as the Castle Street project.
- **Chambers Ireland Award:** This year, Tralee Chamber won the Best in the Biodiversity and Sustainability Category at the Chambers Ireland Awards. This recognition highlights the Chamber's commitment to environmental stewardship, reinforcing its reputation as a leader in sustainable community development.
- **Steering Committee Participation:** The Chamber's active role in Tralee Tidy Towns includes three representatives on the Tidy Towns Steering Committee—the Chamber CEO, the Secretary, and a Retail Steering member—ensuring close alignment on sustainability goals and community beautification.

International Conference

- **Boutique Conference Destination:** Tralee hosted the 7th International Association of Wildland Fire Conference in April, establishing itself as a "Boutique Conference Destination." With over 130 international delegates, the four-day event highlighted Tralee's appeal as a unique conference location, with public funding support from Kerry County Council and the Heritage Council totalling €50,000 during 2024.

Conclusion

Through impactful partnerships with Tralee Tidy Towns, strategic event management, and award-winning sustainability initiatives, the Chamber is fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and environmentally conscious community. These efforts not only strengthen Tralee's community spirit but also enhance its reputation as a leading destination for residents, businesses, and visitors.