



YEARS
OF ADVANCING
BUSINESS TOGETHER



Review of the Year 2025

***Advocacy, Engagement
and Regional Impact***



Honouring Our Past, Advancing Our Future

As we reflect on 2025, we are proud to introduce this Review of 2025, which captures a year of strong advocacy, proactive engagement, and collective progress for Shannon Chamber and the wider region we represent.



This was a particularly significant year for the Chamber as we marked our 30th anniversary, a milestone that offered us the opportunity not only to celebrate three decades of collaboration and achievement, but to also reflect on the purpose of Shannon Chamber as the voice of enterprise in Shannon and the wider region. While the business environment has evolved considerably since our establishment in 1995, many of the core issues that matter most to our members remain consistent: balanced regional development, strong infrastructure, international connectivity, access to skills and talent, and a policy environment that enables businesses to grow and compete.

Throughout 2025, Shannon Chamber maintained a strong and consistent advocacy presence at national, regional and local levels. We engaged proactively with Government, elected representatives, State agencies and stakeholders to advance priorities critical to Shannon's continued development, including the revitalisation of Shannon Town Centre, recognition of the strategic importance of Shannon Airport, the delivery of critical transport infrastructure, accelerated housing delivery, and the development of the west coast as a hub for renewable energy. Our Programme for Government and Pre-Budget submissions set out clear, practical recommendations to support economic resilience and regional competitiveness.

Alongside our advocacy work, the Chamber delivered an extensive programme of events, networks and learning opportunities that brought our members together to share knowledge, build connections and respond to emerging challenges. Through Shannon Chamber Skillnet, we continued to invest in skills, leadership and workforce development, ensuring that businesses across the region are supported in dealing with digital, environmental and organisational change.

None of this work would have been possible without the commitment and engagement of our members. We would like to thank our 350-plus member companies for their continued trust, participation and belief in the value of a strong, representative Chamber. We also extend my sincere thanks to our Board, committees and the Chamber executive team for their dedication and professionalism throughout the year.

As we look ahead to 2026, the challenges facing business and society remain complex, but so too are the opportunities. Shannon Chamber will continue to be a consistent, constructive and determined voice for our region, working collaboratively to ensure that Shannon remains a vibrant, competitive and attractive place to do business, to work and to live.

Mark Nolan
President

Helen Downes
Chief Executive



Shannon
Chamber



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Thirty Years Strong: A Year of Reflection and Projection for Shannon Chamber

Thirty years ago, Shannon Chamber was established as *the voice of commercial activity in Shannon*. We took time in November 2024 to reflect on three decades of achievement and to consider how the Chamber has evolved into a dynamic, influential organisation representing a thriving and diverse business community.

From humble beginnings with just 70 members in its inaugural year, Shannon Chamber now represents more than 350 companies employing over 20,000 people across the region.

While a year in the life of the Chamber today looks very different to what it was three decades ago, many of its core challenges remain remarkably familiar.

As noted during our 30th anniversary celebrations, issues such as the ongoing development of Shannon Town, the promotion of Shannon Airport as a catalyst for economic growth, and the long-standing call for a rail spur connecting Shannon to the Limerick–Ennis line continue to feature prominently on the Chamber's agenda.

The strategic importance of these infrastructural assets for Shannon and the wider region underpinned many of the Chamber's engagements with Government, elected representatives and State agencies throughout 2025.

**350
COMPANIES
EMPLOYING
OVER 20,000
PEOPLE**



A Consistent Voice for the Region

Advocating on issues that impact our members' operations allows us to fulfil our core role as a Chamber of Commerce, which is to strengthen the economic heartbeat of Shannon and the wider region. This means consistently bringing issues to Government's attention where action is required.

Shannon Chamber's 2025 submissions repeatedly highlighted the need for balanced regional development, improved connectivity and transport integration, renewable energy growth and grid capacity, skills and labour market readiness, and employment policies that support business sustainability.

Some of these issues remain unresolved and will continue to feature on our advocacy agenda into 2026, most notably the need for sustained investment to revitalise Shannon Town Centre, as outlined in multiple plans over the past three decades. We will continue to make our case until results are delivered for our members and for the people of Shannon.



Advocacy and Policy Priorities

A central pillar of Shannon Chamber's work in 2025 was its advocacy activity, most notably through our **Programme for Government** submission in January. Key strategic requests included:

- Continued **URDF funding** to support the implementation of the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan, including the OneShannonHub project.
- A review of **National Aviation Policy** to better integrate Shannon Airport into national connectivity planning and reduce over-reliance on Dublin Airport.
- The permanent inclusion of **Shannon Airport** in the Regional Airports Programme to ensure long-term investment in capacity and services.
- Capitalising on the potential of **floating offshore wind** by positioning the west coast as a hub for offshore renewable energy development.
- Urgent action on the **housing** crisis, highlighting its growing impact on business competitiveness and workforce retention.

These priorities were reinforced in the Chamber's **Pre-Budget 2026 Submission**, which set out **six key policy areas** focused on economic resilience, infrastructure delivery and skills development:

1. **Deliver critical regional infrastructure** through immediate capital investment in the OneShannonHub and other transformative projects.
2. **Accelerate housing investment** by supporting affordable worker housing, low-cost finance for SME developers, modular construction and procurement reform.
3. **Reform national aviation strategy** and airport connectivity by fully integrating Shannon Airport into the national transport network, including rail connectivity and permanent inclusion in the Regional Airports Programme.
4. **Scale renewable energy infrastructure** by prioritising floating offshore wind on the west coast, advancing grid upgrades and strengthening incentives for green investment.
5. **Enhance enterprise supports** by reducing costs for SMEs and strengthening innovation measures such as monthly VAT refunds, improved R&D tax credits and enhanced entrepreneurial reliefs.
6. **Expand skills development** through increased funding for digital and green transition skills, AI-focused initiatives and training voucher schemes to support SMEs adapting to technological change.

Celebrating 30 Years of Collaboration

Shannon Chamber was privileged to mark its 30th anniversary with a celebratory dinner at Dromoland Castle Hotel in November 2025, welcoming founding directors, past and present board members, and a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders.

Shannon Chamber has always been about people, collaboration, connection, and the belief that when we work together, we can achieve extraordinary things. Over the past 30 years, we have supported industries through change, welcomed new companies into the region, fostered global partnerships, and provided a platform where ideas become initiatives and initiatives deliver impact.



2025 – In Review

Active engagement to tackle issues affecting business

Influencing change to strengthen the business environment for its members is a central focus of Shannon Chamber.

Key issues raised with Government, regional Oireachtas and elected representatives, and local authorities in 2025 included requests to:

Provide funding for the delivery of Shannon Town Centre Masterplan: Reinstate URDF, or similar funding, to ensure the delivery of the first phase of the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan - the OneShannonHub.

Develop a new National Aviation Policy: Prioritise the sustainable growth across all State airports. We believe that Shannon and the region can deliver a lot more, to a lot more companies and overseas visitors, if there is a strategic shift in how we distribute air traffic across all state airports.

Include Shannon Airport in the Regional Airports Programme: Permanently include Shannon Airport in the Regional Airports Programme. Shannon Airport should be included in the Regional Airports Programme by raising the threshold to 3 million passengers ensuring equitable support for all of Ireland's regional airports.

Prioritise transport infrastructure, including a direct rail link to Shannon Airport: Develop reliable transport infrastructure to Shannon Airport, including setting a timeline for the development of a direct rail connection to the airport.



Capitalise on benefits offered by Floating Offshore Wind: Develop a clear, funded national plan to unlock floating offshore wind on Ireland's west coast, with defined actions, timelines and accountability, using Designated Marine Area Plan (DMAP) expertise in Clare County Council to speed up maritime mapping. Prioritise investment in marine area planning, ports, grid capacity and enabling infrastructure to support delivery. Strengthen links between industry, research and skills across the Atlantic Economic Corridor. Expand SEAI supports, energy-efficiency grants and targeted tax incentives to drive green investment and carbon-neutral growth.



Housing: Take urgent action to remove barriers to housing delivery by increasing residential land supply, reforming public procurement through a standardised national framework, and expanding access to low-cost finance, SME developer guarantees and modular construction to accelerate delivery.

General Employment Permit Visas: Review employment permit salary thresholds before further increases, informed by full consultation and data analysis, with sector-specific derogations where needed. Reassess mobility rules after nine months, permit bond/claw-back clauses, and align pay progression with service length and value-adding qualifications.

Shannon Airport Rail Link: Prioritise the development of reliable transport infrastructure, including setting a timeline for the development and delivery of a direct rail connection to Shannon Airport.

Tourism Ireland Funding: Increase funding to Tourism Ireland, ring-fenced for regional air access. Provide increased funding to Tourism Ireland to support regional air access. Increase the Regional Cooperative Access Scheme to the region of €5 million in Budget 2026 to support and augment regional air services.

Review fiscal supports to enterprise: Make monthly VAT returns standard for SMEs, under a threshold (e.g. €5m t/o) with an optout option. Allow SMEs to carry back 2026 trading losses for up to two years. Increase the R&D credit rate for SMEs. Amend entrepreneurial relief to allow for partial sales and shareholder to remain involved with the company to increase likelihood of company growing to scale.

Increase funding support for workforce training: Introduce a national training voucher scheme for employers and employees to enable companies to source training, accredited and non-accredited, to match their specific development needs. Expand National Training Fund (NTF) support for enterprise. Provide new or enhanced funding for emerging programmes - AI, Sustainability.

Remove the Revenue Restriction to Entrepreneur Relief in Finance Bill: Seek removal in the Finance Bill of the Revenue restriction on Entrepreneur Relief that excludes share disposals where the individual remains connected to the company, as it limits the relief to full exits rather than supporting entrepreneurs who retain a stake to grow their business. *This request was responded to by the Department of Finance.*

Where appropriate, Shannon Chamber prepares and submits responses and position papers to Government on matters of regional and national significance. These submissions are made independently and, where beneficial, in collaboration with Chambers Ireland and other relevant organisations within our sphere of influence.



Submissions made in 2025

(Submissions can be downloaded at www.shannonchamber.ie/policy-submissions/)

- Works Permits Consultation – January 2025
- Programme for Government – January 2025
- Uisce Eireann Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region – March 2025
- Consultation on the National Housing Plan 2025–2030 – April 2025
- Irish Aviation Authority: Statement of Strategy – May 2025
- Review of National Development Plan – June 2025
- Local Democracy Taskforce – via Chambers Ireland – August 2025
- Pre-Budget 2026 – August 2025



Comprehensive Programme of Events

Delivering high-calibre in-person and virtual events on topics relevant to and beneficial for member companies remains a core priority for Shannon Chamber. These events provide valuable opportunities for learning, collaboration, and networking. 2025 was a particularly active year in this regard. The 38 events held during the year included:

4 Lunch events with keynote speakers



- Conor McCarthy, Executive Chairman at Emerald Airlines & Dublin Aerospace
- Michael Lohan, CEO, IDA Ireland
- Mark Jordan, CEO Skillnet Ireland
- Willie Walsh, Director General of the International Air Transport Association

Annual Golf Classic with full timesheet involving 54 teams playing on the day



2 Conferences:



Mid-West Lean Network Conference 2025:
“Lean Thinking Across the Organisation – Empowering Every Level”



**Mid-West
Lean Network**



S4 Conference: Developing a Sustainability Mindset culmination event in the Mid-West Sustainability Week, September 2025.



**Mid-West
Sustainability Network**

S4

Conference

Developing a
Sustainability
Mindset

Thursday, 25 September 2025

24 seminars and business meetings held in association with a wide range of stakeholders including Deloitte, Adare, Climeaction, Intreo, Clare County Council, Department of Social Protection, Engineers Ireland Thomond Region, BDO, Bank of Ireland, Clare Haven, Skillnet Ireland, Willis Towers Watson.



Mid-West Lean Network

Mid-West Lean Network activities included:

- Hosting the Lean Business Ireland Conference in TUS Limerick in conjunction with BoxMedia
- 3 workshops / site tours with network members PPG Ireland Limited, Britvic Ireland and Cook Medical
- Half-day Lean Tour at Advanced Technical Concepts



Mid-West Sustainability Network

Mid-West Sustainability Network activities:

- 2 workshops
- Sustainability Week including 6 seminars and 2 site tours at Britvic Ireland and Ei Electronics



Shannon
Chamber

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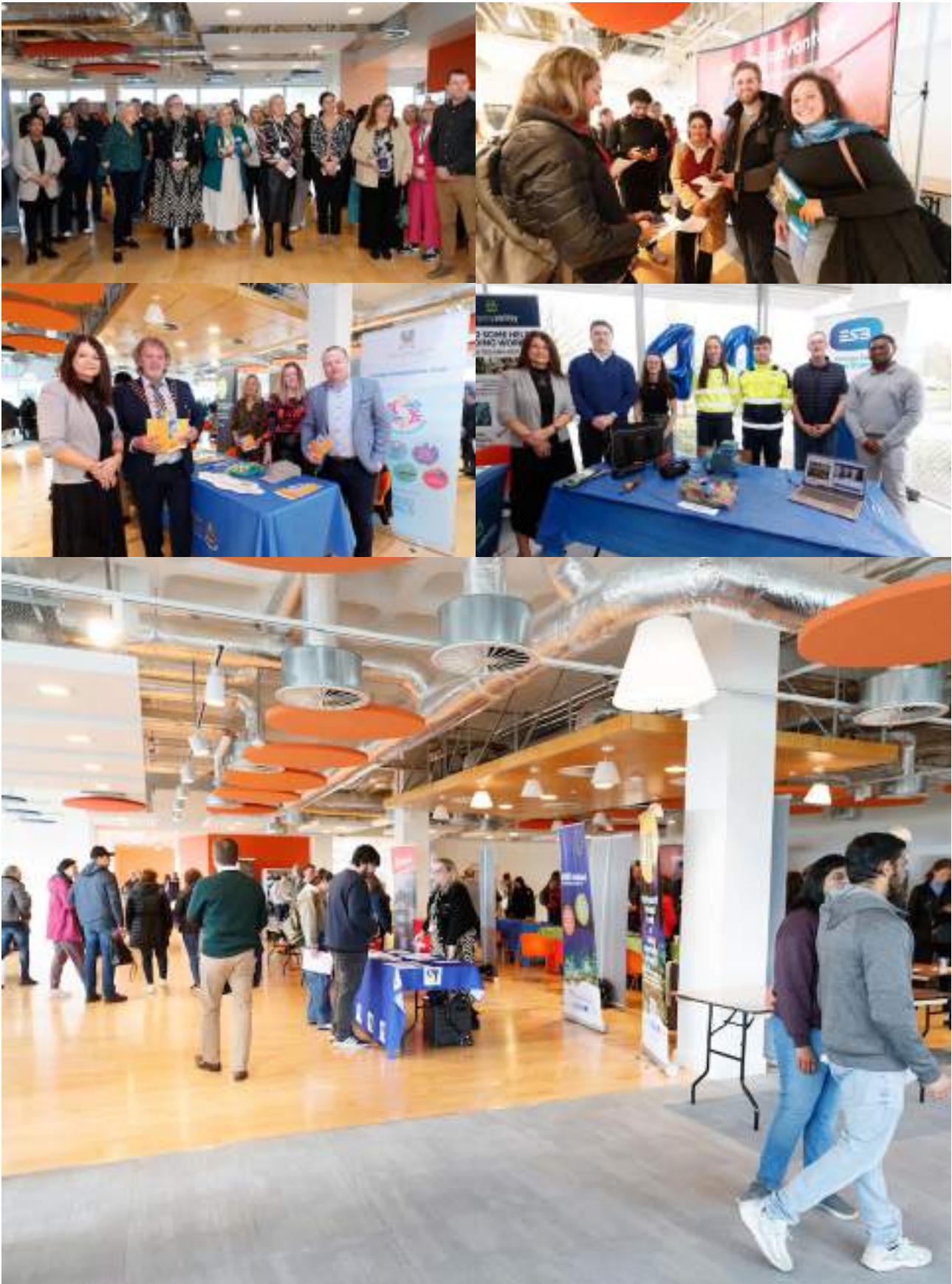
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Shannon Chamber's 30th Anniversary Celebration

where the outstanding achievements of Shannon Chamber over the past thirty years were celebrated at a special anniversary dinner held in Dromoland Castle Hotel on Friday, 28 November. Leaders, past and present, along with representatives from government and industry, gathered in the iconic Brian Boru Hall to honour the Chamber's significant role in shaping the development of Shannon and the wider region since its establishment in 1995. The celebratory event also featured a special presentation to former director, Dr Michael Guinee.



Jobs Fair Shannon – a new initiative introduced in 2025 which saw Shannon Chamber join forces with the Department of Social Protection and the Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) to host a Jobs Fair in Shannon as part of the Department's annual Work and Skills Campaign - over 600 people attended. Following the success of the 2025 event, Jobs Fair Shannon 2026 will take place in Westpark Shannon on Tuesday, 3 March 2026.





2025 marked another strong year for Shannon Chamber Skillnet, with 77 programmes, involving 2,700 training days, delivered to 415 employees in 82 companies.

These initiatives offered a broad range of learning and development opportunities, in areas such as management and leadership development, lean, project management, digital skills, communication, as well as industry-specific professional development.

Following the successful delivery of a new Level 7 EV Technology programme in 2024, the first of its kind in Ireland, Shannon Chamber Skillnet, in collaboration with the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), delivered a second programme in 2025, which, once again, attracted the attention of garages and mechanics throughout Ireland.



Graduation Ceremony: 22 executives from the 2024 and 2025 cohorts of the Level 8 Diploma in High Performance Leadership graduated from the programme, which was accredited by TU Dublin and delivered by Career Decisions Ireland. The programme was co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the European Social Fund (ESF+) and facilitated by Shannon Chamber Skillnet.

Project EAGLE Final Conference: "Bridging the Digital Skills Gap: Empowering SMEs for the Future" was held in December at the University of Limerick. This conference marked the conclusion of the three-year Project EAGLE, in which Shannon Chamber Skillnet was involved in focus groups, programme delivery, and the promotion and marketing of Project EAGLE activities



Skillnet Ireland Talent Landscape Roadshow: In conjunction with Skillnet Ireland and Future Mobility Campus Ireland, Shannon Chamber Skillnet hosted a Skillnet Ireland Talent Landscape Roadshow. Minister of State at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Marian Harkin TD, and Billy Kelleher, MEP for Ireland South, attended, as also did Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and at the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, Timmy Dooley TD.

Building an Attractive, Resilient and Innovative Region:

Shannon Chamber has long committed itself to supporting business, enterprise, workforce development and regional growth. One of the pillars of our Strategic Plan is to ensure that our region remains an attractive, resilient, and innovative place for business and talent. We are focused on helping companies build leadership capacity, supporting them in managing change to maintain Shannon's competitive edge as a hub for enterprise.

Through our Skillnet business network we will continue to support training and upskilling opportunities, because we believe that investing in people is investing in the future of our region.

Shannon Chamber Skillnet is co-funded by Skillnet Ireland and network companies. Having applied to Skillnet Ireland for funding to support our upskilling offerings we were delighted to be awarded funding in the order of €340,000 per annum for the next three years. This will be matched by funding from our member companies who participate in training programmes.

Shannon Chamber Skillnet is co-funded by Skillnet Ireland and network companies. Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund and the European Union through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.



Riailtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Co-funded by
the European Union

Shannon Chamber Board



Eoin Gavin



Mark Nolan



Helen Downes



Kevin Thompstone



Ian Barrett



Edmund Jennings



Ray O'Driscoll



Adrian Sylver



David Keating



Marlo Kearney



Colin MacDonald



Eoin Hctor

Mark Nolan, Board member and shareholder Dromoland Castle Resort - President

Eoin Gavin, Managing Director, Eoin Gavin Transport

Helen Downes, Chief Executive, Shannon Chamber

Kevin Thompstone, Managing Director, The Thompstone Group

Ian Barrett, Managing Director, Care About You Ltd.

Edmund Jennings, Managing Director, CREGG Group

Ray O'Driscoll, Interim CEO, The Shannon Airport Group

Adrian Sylver, Head of School, Shannon College of Hotel Management

Marlo Kearney, Head of Operations, PPG Shannon

Colin MacDonald, Founder and Chief Executive, Fine Grain Property

Eoin Hctor, former Managing Director, Eason Shannon

David Keating, Group Chief Operations Officer, Ei Electronics



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