

I'm always amazed when I arrive in Glenlo Abbey that I'm only a few minutes from the city but am surrounded by the countryside.

This is such a special place situated as it is in 134 acres of lakeside parkland, it has to be one of the most special hospitality options available in the whole country.

There has been a lot of refurbishment here in recent times and while there are innovations and new additions it has lost none of its charm.

One of the new additions is Rory O'Sullivan, who has recently been appointed General Manager. Rory is a native of Kenmare in Kerry and knows plenty about working in a five star environment having been General Manager of the Brennan's Park Hotel in Kenmare. I'd like to welcome Rory and look forward to working with him and his team.

Firstly I'd like to mention the wonderful tourism offering here at Glenlo. All of the elements I have mentioned along with excellent service and good rates make visitors come back, but there are challenges around regional tourism.

We need to attract more visitors to the regions. Unfortunately, recent growth in overseas visitors has not been spread evenly across the country.

Speaking recently Stephen McNally, President of the Irish Hotels Federation said that we need to create a more unified approach that gives tourism a stronger role in informing and influencing planning and development policy at national and local levels.

He also said that while he welcomed the significant progress that is already being made in this area, more needs to be done to ensure greater collaboration between tourism industry partners, including businesses, local communities, state agencies and local authorities.

As President of Galway Chamber and mindful of the importance of our members in the hospitality industry I would also like to stress the importance of this sort of collaboration.

Secondly I'd like to mention the business offering here at Glenlo. Those of you here this evening are involved in business. Should you have a need to meet or conference, what better place to have it. Ranging from the Corrib state of the art conference suite, to the Abbey to the fully equipped meeting rooms, there's something to suit all business needs. Have a look around, study the brochures. As we know Glenlo is an exciting sum of its parts. There are the guest rooms and suites, the sitting rooms and the function rooms. There are several dining options from the River Room to the Oak bar and the Pullman Carriage which has hosted Sir Laurence Olivier, Sir Winston Churchill and the 1974 cast of the film version of Murder on the Orient Express. It's not often we can sit in their seats, so to speak.

I like golf, that's a bit of an understatement, and I'm glad to hear that the course here is playing superbly well!

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This evening's event gives us a chance to network, to meet new people, to see first-hand how a business is developing and expanding and ultimately to do business.

I'd like to thank Rory for his hospitality and also Margaret Monaghan, Sales and Marketing Executive, Vicky Smith and Eveanna Ryan, for their help in organizing the event.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.