

Northern Ireland  
Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry

## President's Banquet

# Tonight's Programme

**Host** Alex Jones, Co-Host, BBC The One Show

7.10pm **Welcome**  
MC, ALEX JONES

**Interview with Communications Partner**  
SUZANNE WYLIE CEO, NI Chamber  
PAUL MURNAGHAN Regional Director, BT Enterprise NI

**Ministerial Speeches**

**President's Address**  
CAT MCCUSKER President, NI Chamber

8.00pm **Dinner is Served**

10.00pm **Alex Jones in Conversation  
with David Walliams**

11.00pm **Formalities Close / After Party in Hall 2**

12.30am **Bar Close**

1.00am **Event Close**

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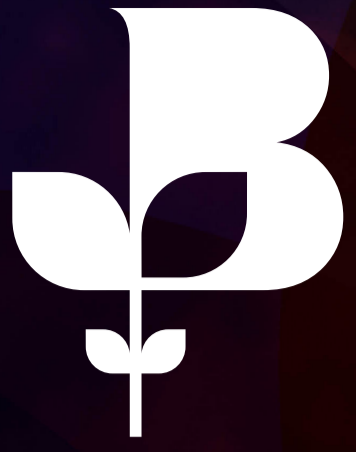
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## President's Welcome

# Caitroina McCusker

President, NI Chamber

**On behalf of the Board and Executive team of NI Chamber, it is my absolute pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 President's Banquet.**

This annual event is always one of the highlights of the business calendar and tonight will be no different, with more than 1,000 colleagues and friends gathered to enjoy our biggest-ever Banquet.

Since 1783, NI Chamber has been at the epicentre of innovation and enterprise in Northern Ireland. Its founders and past presidents were some of the region's finest innovators, entrepreneurs and philanthropists; leaders in engineering, banking, linen and shipbuilding, they, like so many of you, had great global ambitions.

This year's banquet is all about thinking big; looking at how we, as businesspeople, can use imaginations to identify opportunities that others may overlook, to challenge the status quo, lift our sights and raise our ambition.

We want tonight to be about positivity for the future. It is intended to be a demonstration of the collective commitment that we will all put our shoulders to the wheel, alongside our politicians, to create what we know is possible – a globally competitive and sustainable economy, where all our people can thrive.

Great occasions such as these are made possible with the help of our sponsors and we are grateful for their support. They include NI Chamber's Communications Partner BT and this evening's supporting sponsors ABL Group, Barclays, Mattioli Woods and Tughans, as well as drinks reception sponsor Vanrath, Media Partner, Bauer Media Group and drinks providers Diageo and Jawbox.

On an evening like this, it is also right that we thank our twenty Chamber Patrons for their ongoing support. They are Agnew Leasing, Balcas, Belfast International Airport, Caterpillar, Danske Bank, Eakin Healthcare, Encirc, Galgorm Resort & Spa, Henry Group, Legacy Wealth Management, Moy Park, Narratology, Pinsent Masons, Power NI, PwC NI, Queen's University Belfast, Radox, Ulster Bank, Ulster Carpets and Ulster University Business School.

This night is designed to be a celebration of the possible, of the future. We believe that businesspeople across Northern Ireland deserve to be commended for the brilliant ideas they are bringing to the world and for the hugely positive message they send about Northern Ireland as a place to do business.

So for tonight, as we gather in the company of our imaginative, innovative and most creative colleagues and friends, let us enjoy doing just that.

Have a wonderful evening.

Caitroina  
McCusker



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**Paul Murnaghan**

**Communications Partner**

# Paul Murnaghan

Regional Director, BT Enterprise NI

BT is pleased to once again be sharing this evening with the business community across Northern Ireland as we come together to celebrate the President's Banquet - with a theme of 'Beyond Imagination.'

Northern Ireland may be small in size but it continues to make a big impact on the global stage. It has never been more important that leading local businesses continue to work together in order to lead the way in innovation, forward-thinking solutions, and retaining talent here. This will help to ensure that we drive investment in a time of geopolitical uncertainty, in order to rebuild our businesses and our local economy.

At BT, we are a UK company, with a local presence, and we are excited for the year ahead. We remain committed to Northern Ireland through employment opportunities as well as the recent reopening of our flagship Riverside Tower office in Belfast following a multi-million-pound investment. Around 2000 colleagues are now benefiting from the new workspace. We'll also be continuing to support the next generation of connectivity for homes, businesses, and the public and third sectors.

We are proud that we have been working in partnership with the Chamber now for the past 18 years and want to thank them for their continued support, visionary approach, and strong leadership for businesses here. Together, we can push beyond imagination and achieve unparalleled success.

Have a great evening.

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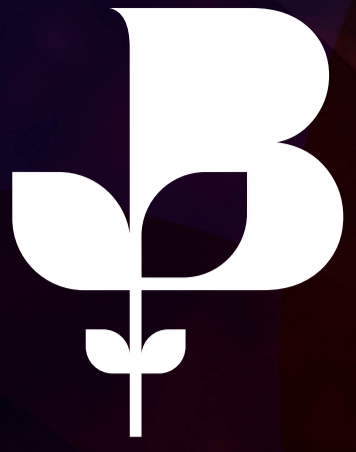
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Alex  
Jones

Host

# Alex Jones

Co-Host of The One Show

Co-Host of the BBC's flagship show The One Show since 2010, Alex Jones is one of the UK's best-loved presenters.

Alex has fronted several programmes for the BBC such as Shop Well For Less, Let's Dance For Comic Relief, and the Invictus Games.

She has hosted her own critically acclaimed documentary, Alex Jones - Fertility and Me, and was a part of the BBC team that covered the Royal Wedding in 2018.

Alongside her TV work, Alex authored the best-selling baby book, Winging It, based on her own personal experiences and works actively alongside a number of charities.

Most recently, Alex fronted two new series: Reunion Hotel for BBC Two and Alex Jones - Making Babies for the W Channel.

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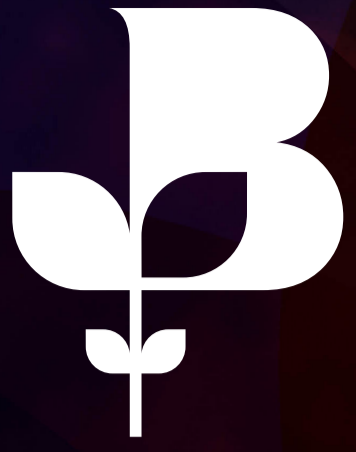
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David  
Walliams

## Guest Speaker

# David Walliams

Comedian, Author, Presenter and Actor

Comedian, author, presenter, and actor David Walliams has been one of Britain's best-loved entertainers since the '90s.

Alongside Matt Lucas, David created and starred in the sketch comedy Little Britain, which won three BAFTA awards and has gone on to air in over 100 countries. That was followed by one of the most-watched comedies of all time on British television, Come Fly With Me.

David was a judge on Britain's Got Talent for ten years and won numerous National TV Awards for Best TV Judge. On film, he has starred in Stardust, Dinner For Schmucks and Murder Mystery. He provided vocals for the Oscar-nominated animation Missing Link.

Alongside his acting and writing, David swam the English Channel in 2006 and the length of the Thames in 2011, raising over £1 million and £2.5 million for Sport Relief respectively.

A best-selling children's author with 41 titles to his name and global sales exceeding 56 million copies, David's books have now been translated into 55 languages. Many of his titles have been adapted for television and the stage including a hugely acclaimed Royal Shakespeare Company musical of The Boy in the Dress. Others are being developed as feature films or animation series.

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# Shauna Graham

Managing Director, ABL Group

As a company rooted in Northern Ireland, ABL Group is delighted to support tonight's celebration of the future of Northern Ireland businesses.

While we're honoured to be part of the global Brown & Brown family and will soon reflect this partnership more visibly, our commitment to serving clients here remains as strong as ever. Our clients will continue to benefit from a team deeply connected to local values and dedicated to this community.

Community spirit is at the heart of our global brand and also at the Northern Ireland Chamber - an invaluable resource connecting businesses, fostering collaboration, and unlocking growth opportunities for us all. We're proud to stand with the Chamber in recognising the strength and ambition shaping Northern Ireland's economic landscape.



Shauna  
Graham

 **BARCLAYS**

Supporting Sponsor

# John Mathers

Head of Corporate Banking, Northern Ireland

Barclays is proud to sponsor tonight's event, one of the most prestigious in the business calendar.

As we celebrate the achievements of the past year and look to the opportunities, we can do so with renewed confidence. With local government restored and world-leading educational establishments, we all have an opportunity - and responsibility - to collectively drive the local economy and lift our society higher.

At Barclays, we are proud to play our part. It is our privilege to support hundreds of businesses to expand their own business horizons. Importantly, we're also engaged in the local community, with initiatives like LifeSkills, which has seen over 20,000 children from disadvantaged backgrounds in N.I. improve their employability skills.

With our local knowledge, hands-on specialists and eagerness to build long-lasting relationships, we strive to support you with your long-term business ambitions. So, get in touch, let's work together to show you the bigger picture.

Please do reach out if we can help, and in the meantime, I hope you enjoy your night!



John  
Mathers



Supporting Sponsor

## Iain McKenzie

Chief Operating Officer

Mattioli Woods is one of the UK's leading wealth management and employee benefits providers, advising over 11,000 clients with more than £15 billion in assets under management, administration, and advice. Our mission is to keep clients at the heart of all we do, helping them grow and preserve their assets while empowering them with clear financial insight and control.

We are proud to sponsor the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce's Annual President's Banquet as we expand our presence in Northern Ireland. Since acquiring Doherty Pension & Investment Consultancy Ltd in April 2023, we have deepened our commitment to delivering holistic financial planning from our new Belfast office. Managing over £600 million in local client assets, supported by Mattioli Woods' broader expertise, we look forward to building lasting relationships across the region and supporting individuals, businesses, and the wider Northern Ireland community with tailored financial solutions.

Iain McKenzie

## Tughans

Supporting Sponsor

## Fiona Kirkpatrick

Director, Tughans



We are pleased to once again support the President's banquet, a key event in the business calendar, and a terrific opportunity for local businesses to get together to celebrate the achievements and success of our business community.

Tughans advises many of Northern Ireland's most innovative companies, from publicly listed businesses to lean start-ups, at all stages of their growth. Our market-leading practice also supports businesses as they take 'home-grown' ideas from Northern Ireland to the global stage. This is why we have acted in more of the major corporate, real estate and finance transactions in Northern Ireland than any other law firm each year, for the past nine years.

Fiona Kirkpatrick

# VANRATH™

Drinks Reception Sponsor

## Barbara McKiernan

Managing Director



VANRATH is excited to once again support the NI Chamber President's Banquet - a fantastic celebration of the best of Northern Ireland's business community.

Our world is always evolving and so coming together has never been more important.

Join us as we celebrate the success of local businesses with a memorable evening of entertainment and insights. We look forward to sharing this inspiring night with all of you.

On behalf of the VANRATH team, we hope you have an unforgettable night!

Barbara McKiernan

Tonight's Entertainment

## Riff Shop

RIFF SHOP

Dublin-based Riff Shop combines SteveO (DJ), Aran Johnston (Drums/Percussion) & Sean O'Brien (Sax). What started as a spontaneous jam in one of Dublin's most popular clubs, Riff Shop have grown to become one of the biggest acts in Ireland.

They emerged from Dublin's nightclub scene 6 years ago, and are now embarking on growing their international reputation. They are regulars in the Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort, and 2022 is set to be the biggest year for Riff Shop with dates in Ibiza, Marbella, London, & Nice.

They continue to evolve their truly unique and fresh sound, and you can expect some new releases from the band coming later this year.

Riff Shop

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## Drinks Partner

# DIAGEO

Diageo is a global leader in premium drinks. With over 200 brands including Guinness, Rockshore, Tanqueray and Don Julio and sales in nearly 180 countries, our portfolio has remarkable breadth and depth. From centuries-old names to the latest innovations, we're committed to building and sustaining exceptional brands.

With a strong commitment to sustainability and innovation, Diageo plays a pivotal role in the local economy, supporting jobs and contributing to community development. The company is dedicated to responsible drinking and environmental stewardship, ensuring a positive impact on society and the environment.

## Drinks Partner

**JAWBOX**  
*Jawbox Spirits Co. Ltd*  
**CLASSIC DRY GIN**  
SMALL BATCH

Jawbox Gin, founded in Belfast by Gerry White, is celebrated for its classic dry gin profile. Distilled at the Echlinville Distillery, it features 11 botanicals, including local Black Mountain heather. Jawbox pays homage to Belfast's industrial heritage, with its name inspired by the city's iconic deep, boxy sinks. Since its launch, it has become a staple in the local drinks scene, known for its smooth, balanced flavour, versatility in cocktails and the popular Jawbox and ginger serve.

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# Horatio's Garden

## President's Charity

Horatio's Garden builds and looks after extraordinary gardens in the heart of NHS spinal injury rehabilitation centres.

Spinal injury can happen to anyone at any time. The results are life-changing and devastating. Our gardens outside the hospital wards offer a place for reflection and adjustment, privacy and solace, joy and companionship for people and their families.

From gardening sessions and arts workshops to live music, Horatio's Garden Northern Ireland is a warm and welcoming place all year round.

We believe everyone with a spinal injury should have access to a Horatio's Garden as part of their rehabilitation care.

Our gardens are made possible entirely by donations. Thank you to NI Chamber for their generous support of Horatio's Garden Northern Ireland.

[horatiosgarden.org.uk](http://horatiosgarden.org.uk)

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# Raffle Prizes



## STAR PRIZE

Return flights to New York City  
Courtesy of Beyond Business Travel

### Prize 1

Donated by:



Overnight stay at The Rabbit Hotel for two with a Duo Clay Ritual Experience and a full Irish Breakfast

### Prize 2

Donated by:



Overnight Stay for two in a Studio Room courtesy of Room2

### Prize 3



Midweek overnight stay for two at the Fitzwilliam Hotel

### Prize 4



Overnight stay for two including breakfast at the Roe Park Resort

### Prize 5



Apple iPad Pro 5G LTE courtesy of BT

### Prize 6



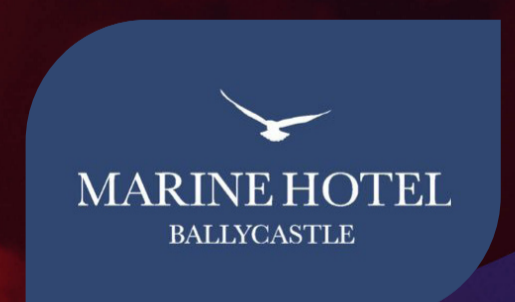
Two Tickets for Snow Patrol on 27th February at SSE Arena, Belfast

### Prize 7



Signed Premier League football shirt courtesy of Barclays

### Prize 8



Overnight stay with dinner, bed and breakfast at the Marine Hotel, Ballycastle

### Prize 9



Christmas Hamper worth £400 courtesy of Belleek Pottery

### Prize 10



£250 voucher for The Ivy courtesy of Vanrath

# Thank you for joining us.

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