

Dinner in honour of the Taoiseach

Mansion House

Friday 11th March 2022

Summary:

The Lord Mayor hosted the Taoiseach of Ireland, Micheál Martin, at Mansion House on 11th March. The Lord Mayor spoke of the unique UK-Ireland relationship and the importance of strengthening economic, technological and cultural cooperation.

Speech:

Taoiseach, ladies and gentlemen...

Failte romhaibh anseo go teach an ard-mheara!

It gives the Lady Mayoress and me great pleasure to welcome you all to Mansion House this evening.

As the first Irish citizen to become Lord Mayor of the City of London, it is an especially great honour for us to be able to host the Taoiseach and your wife Mary here tonight.

And it is a great honour for this country to host your visit, the first multiple day stay here by a Taoiseach in four and a half years.

This an important visit, at an important time.

Europe is being tested in ways few of us would have predicted just a few years ago.

The scenes we are witnessing in Ukraine are heart-breaking.

But the courage of the Ukrainian people is inspiring.

And the unity of the Western world in response to this act of aggression by Russia has been encouraging.

Ireland's response has been very strong, which I witnessed during my own visit to Dublin last week with the City of London's Policy Chair Catherine McGuinness and Sheriff Nicholas Lyons.

The whole engagement underlined the importance of like-minded allies working together – across all areas.

It was also a wonderful personal homecoming for me to return to the city of my birth, in my role as Lord Mayor of London, a proud Dubliner who has become a proud Londoner by adoption.

I had the honour of being received by the Lord Mayor of Dublin at Dublin's Mansion House - a building which has such an important place in Irish history.

And I know the Taoiseach himself has experience being a Lord Mayor, of the great city of Cork.

My time in Dublin also included nostalgic trips to Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin – where I myself was once a student.

I was interested to learn that – like the Lord Mayor of Dublin - the Taoiseach started his career as a teacher...

...Which reminds me of George Bernard Shaw's line:
"those who can do, those who can't, Taoiseach".

While in Dublin, Catherine McGuinness and I spoke at the UK-Irish Financial Dialogue, which the City of London runs jointly with IBEC.

We welcomed the EU's decisions to extend access to UK clearing houses for EU banks beyond this year, which will ensure financial stability for all, and to grant data adequacy for the UK, meaning data can continue to flow.

And we emphasised the importance of ongoing regulatory and supervisory cooperation.

The message which came through in all these discussions, and our meetings with Irish ministers and businesses, is just how closely aligned the UK and Ireland are in financial services.

London and Dublin are complementary financial centres, where the natural, market-driven collaboration in climate, green and sustainable finance and Fintech is stronger now than ever, even if we operate in different regulatory frameworks.

There are already great examples of British and Irish firms working together to keep both countries at the forefront of innovation.

Ireland's Health Service Executive and the UK's Department for International Trade are collaborating on digital healthcare.

London-based fintech firms like TrueLayer are opening European headquarters in Dublin.

Irish tech firms like Version 1 and Tekenable are setting up branches across the UK.

Consumers and businesses on both sides of the Irish Sea benefit from this flow not just of goods and services, but of people, culture and ideas.

I recognise the challenges around the Northern Ireland protocol.

It is my sincere wish that a resolution is reached soon and that the UK and EU have the most constructive relationship possible - there are so many other areas where we can and must work together, and where Ireland is a crucial partner.

As you have said before: *"History has shown us, time and time again, that it is partnership which is the solution"*.

Ireland's commitment to open markets is very clear and very strong - another example of how the two countries are economically like-minded.

But the UK and Ireland are not just like-minded, we are like-hearted.

The ties of culture, family and friendship are as warm as ever.

My own story as a Dubliner who is now Lord Mayor of London is just one example among many.

And I will continue to use my mayoralty to celebrate and support the bonds between us.

I wish you every success for the rest of your visit to the United Kingdom, and for your journey to the United States to celebrate St Patrick's Day there.

I understand this is part of a programme of visits by more than thirty Irish government ministers who are travelling to nations all around the world – so we are very glad you chose London.

When I was in Dublin last week, I had the pleasure of visiting the Aviva stadium.

Like you and Mary, Amanda and I are looking forward to cheering on Ireland at Twickenham tomorrow – and hopefully continuing the celebrations at the London St Patrick's Day parade on Sunday.

We hope you enjoy the rest of your visit, and that it will help reaffirm the friendship between Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Thank you.

Go raibh maith agat.