

## Ambassador of Latvia receives Welcome to Cashel

His Excellency Ambassador Peteris Elferts received a warm welcome to Cashel on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> of May. A reception was held in his honour in Cashel Palace Hotel with several town and county councillors, members of Cashel Town Council and Cashel Community in attendance. Ambassador Elferts took time from his busy schedule to meet members of Cashel and in particular Cashel Representatives to the European Charter of Rural Communities. He wished to discuss Cashel's role in representing Ireland to the European Charter. Ambassador Elferts and Counsellor Renars Danelsons (also of the Embassy of Latvia) met with Mayor Eddie Bennett, Dr. Niall Gregory (Communications Officer to the European Charter of Rural Communities), and Shaun Leahy (one of the members of the European Charter and Cashel delegate to Poland next month). In the meeting it was explained that the purpose of the European Charter is a bi-partite approach to understanding and celebrating the cultural diversities of the EU countries, as well as developing joint socio-economic programmes with the EU-wide representative towns for implementation via Brussels.



Counsellor Maribel Wood and Ambassador Peteris Elferts

At the reception, Dr. Niall Gregory welcomed Ambassador Elferts and Counsellor Danelsons to Cashel on their first visit to County Tipperary. He thanked them for the use of their national flag on the recent European Flag Day, held in Cashel. Dr. Gregory commented that the embassies of Eastern Europe were overwhelming in their support and assistance on the day and Latvia was foremost amongst them. In his acknowledgments of the immense work of the members of Cashel community in preparing for Cashel's hosting of the European Charter Annual Conference in June 2011, Dr. Gregory stated that Kandava in Latvia would host it in 2012. He extended Cashel's assistance to Kandava from its own experiences preparing for next year. The annual conference is quite expensive to operate and it is hoped that financial and sponsoring assistance will be forthcoming to meet the necessary costs of the event.



Ambassador Peteris Elferts, Mayor Eddie Bennett and Dr. Niall Gregory

Mayor Eddie Bennett, welcomed Ambassador Elferts and Counsellor Danelsons. Mayor Bennett also acknowledged Councillors Maribel Wood, PJ Quinlan, Michael Browne and Cartherine McLoughlin. Also present were members of the eleven strong Cashel Delegation that will represent Ireland to the European Charter in Strzyzow (Poland) next month. Mayor Bennett welcomed members of the Latvian community in Cashel. He said that he new a lot of them personally and was honoured to consider them amongst his friends. In Mayor Bennett's acknowledgement to the Ambassador to he stated that he was delighted to consider that the Latvians living in Cashel, are Latvia's ambassadors to Cashel and County Tipperary. Mayor Eddie Bennett, along with some Latvian children, presented the Ambassador with a gift of Rossa Pottery, from Cashel.



Latvian children and Mayor Eddie Bennett present Rossa Pottery gift to Ambassador Peteris Elferts

Ambassador Peteris Elferts addressed the reception, which was on his return leg to Dublin from and Business Community reception held in Cork. He stated that he has not being long at his post as ambassador to Ireland, having presented his credentials to President Mary McAleese last September. During his time in Ireland he has not had much opportunity to leave Dublin and visit elsewhere in Ireland. The ambassador has relished his time in cork and Cashel, stating that he 'relishes the quieter and more enjoyable pace of life' that visiting outside Dublin brings with it. Ambassador Elferts was particularly pleased to receive a welcome to Cashel by its Latvians and looks forward to returning for the 2011 Annual Conference, if not before then.

June 2011 will see Cashel becoming the Gateway to Europe, with delegates attending over a period of several days from all European Union countries. The events will include traditional cultural as well as more contemporary entertainments. Cashel with its internationally iconic St. Patrick's Rock will ensure Irish Heritage forms and integral and exemplary part of the occasion. While there will be a fantastic range of activities, not just for the delegates, but also members of the public with Festival events, there is will be a more serious business element, with a conference on *Participation on Democracy and Rural Economy*. In the meantime preparations are underway for the Cashel Delegation representing Ireland in Poland next month.



Ambassador Peteris Elferts, Counsellor Danelson, Mayor Eddie Bennett, Counsellors, members of Latvian Community in Cashel and delegates to the Charter meeting in Poland