

Contest will be a tale of two cities

7:50am Tuesday 7th June 2011

By David Paine

PREPARE yourselves for the next Battle of Worcester – but this one will be fought on the playing field instead of the battlefield.

Plans are being drawn up to launch a competition between the Faithful City and Worcester in Massachusetts, USA, as two men on either side of the pond attempt to reignite the passion in the relationship between the two cities.

Lord Faulkner and international business attorney William O'Brien want to forge better links between businesses and schools – but they have warned people that it will be up to them to make the opportunities work for them.

During a four-day visit to Worcester, Mr O'Brien said: "It's been a rather sedate, sleepy, slumbering relationship up until now but Lord Faulkner came over last summer with the goal of enhancing that."

The pair have since been dreaming up ideas of how to get the two cities, which are officially twinned, to really take an interest in one another – with the hope that in turn, it will create business and cultural opportunities for both economies.

The latest big idea is a competition between the two cities that could see the likes of Worcester Rowing Club and [Worcester Wolves](#) basketball team, among other clubs, play their American counterparts. Mr O'Brien said: "I have dubbed it the Lord Faulkner Cup because it sounds good.

"Our rowing club already comes over to compete at Henley and the Worcester Wanderers have just got back from a tour of Worcester, MA, so why not put a little competition together and see who has got the best teams?

"It doesn't just have to be sport – it could be the debating society or chess club – and at the end of all the matches, the winning city gets to keep the cup for, say, two years."

While the universities are already exchanging students, both Mr O'Brien and Lord Faulkner are keen to get more school pupils to broaden their horizons.

A harder link to forge, though, is between businesses but talks are set to take place between the two chambers of commerce to see what can be done.

Mr O'Brien said that while he had enjoyed his brief stay and felt a real appreciation for the Faithful City's history, he thought more people needed to be creative in the way they did business.

"I think both Worcesters have lost that spirit of conquering the world and getting out there and trading," he said.

"We both seem to be focussed on ourselves and our own problems and we need to branch out and become a little more entrepreneurial and exploratory, and that's our goal."

© Copyright 2001-2011 Newsquest Media Group

<http://www.worcesternews.co.uk>