

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Kilkenny County Council held on Friday 25th of June, 2010.

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Michael O' Brien.

Present: Cllrs. M. H. Cavanagh, M. Shortall, J. Brennan, C. Connery, M. Fitzpatrick, M. Brett, P. Cuddihy, M. Noonan, W. Ireland, T. Maher, P. Crowley, P. O' Neill, A. Phelan, F. Doherty, A.M. Irish, T. Breathnach, P. Dunphy, P. Millea, A. McGuinness, J. Coonan, M. Doran, S. Treacy and E. Aylward.

Apologies: Cllrs. B. Manning and C. Long.

Also Present: J. Crockett, County Manager, P. O' Neill, J. McCormack and J. Mulholland Directors of Services and A. Waldron Meetings Administrator.

Before the formal commencement of the meeting, the outgoing Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael O' Brien addressed the meeting outlining the various achievements, challenges and events which he had experienced during his year as Cathaoirleach. Amongst the main points outlined by Cllr. O' Brien were the following:-

- He thanked all members for their co-operation during his time as chair. He particularly thanked the newly elected members who had made such an impact during their first year in the Council.
- He noted the loss of staff within the organisation.
- He emphasised the need of delivery of an improved water system.
- He highlighted the formulation of the Economic Development Strategy.
- He noted the lack of employment opportunities in scheduled towns.
- Amongst the highlights during the past 12 months was the opening of sections of the M9 and the Waterford by Pass and the acquisition of St. Mary's.
- He noted the continuing success of the Green Flags Programme.
- He further noted the continuing success of the Watershed Sports Complex.
- As Cathaoirleach he expressed his thanks to all those committee groups who had engaged in a spirit of volunteerism particularly those involved in various tidy towns and resident committees around the county.
- He noted in particular the combined effort between statutory authorities and volunteers which responded so well during the period of severe weather. He thanked the media for their pro active role during that time.
- He noted some of the presentations and major events which had taken place during his time as Cathaoirleach
 - The success of Kilkenny Senior Hurling and Camogie teams and Ballyhale Shamrocks club.
 - Gowran Golf Club to whom a presentation was made during the year
 - John Bryan's success in becoming President of the IFA which was marked by an event in the Chamber.
 - The success of Darren O' Neill whose home coming event in Paulstown he had attended.

In conclusion the outgoing Cathaoirleach thanked his Leas Cathaoirleach for the year Cllr. Pat Dunphy, the outgoing Mayor of Kilkenny Borough Council, Cllr. Malcolm Noonan and all members of Kilkenny County Council and the management and staff of Kilkenny County Council for their co-operation during his time as Cathaoirleach.

Members from all sides of the Chamber congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach on his year in office and thanked him for the hard work which he had done on behalf of Kilkenny County Council during his term. On behalf of the management and staff of Kilkenny County Council, the County Manager Joe Crockett joined with the comments made by members, in particular noting Cllr. O' Brien's ability to deal with some of the difficult and complex issues which had presented themselves to the Council during this most challenging year.

Contributions Cllrs. M. H. Cavanagh, M. Doran, A. Phelan and M. Noonan.

Item 1. Election of Cathaoirleach Kilkenny County Council

At this juncture the outgoing Cathaoirleach Cllr. M. O' Brien sought nominations for the position of Cathaoirleach.

Proposed by Cllr. M.H. Cavanagh, Seconded by Cllr. J. Brennan "That Cllr. Catherine Connery be elected as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council".

Proposed by Cllr. A. McGuinness, Seconded by Cllr. S. Treacy "That Cllr. Pat Millea be elected as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council".

Following the two nominations Cllr. O' Brien asked members whether any further nominations were being made. As there were no further nominations the Cathaoirleach requested that a vote take place between the two candidates nominated, Cllr. Catherine Connery and Cllr. Pat Millea.

The vote was as follows:-

Voting in favour of Cllr. Catherine Connery:- Cllrs. M. H. Cavanagh, M. Shortall, J. Brennan, C. Connery, M. Fitzpatrick, M. Brett, P. Cuddihy, M. Noonan, W. Ireland, T. Maher, P. Crowley, P. O' Neill, A. Phelan, M. O' Brien, F. Doherty, A.M. Irish, T. Breathnach and P. Dunphy.

Total 18

Voting in favour of Cllr. Pat Millea: - Cllrs. P. Millea, A. McGuinness, J. Coonan, M. Doran, S. Treacy and E. Aylward.

Total 6

Cllrs. B. Manning and C. Long were paired.

As a result of this vote Cllr. C. Connery was deemed to be elected as Cathaoirleach for the forthcoming year.

At this juncture Cllr. Connery took up the chair.

Before proceeding to the next item of the meeting, the incoming Cathaoirleach addressed the meeting as follows:-

“A chomhairleoiri, a sheanadoir, a Bhainisteoir an Chontae agus a fhoireann, an Preas, mo chlann agus mo chairde uile.

Ar dtus ba mhaith liom mo bhuiochas mor a chur in iul diobhse na baill, as an onoir mor sea a bhronnadh orm -an deis a thabhairt dom bheith mar Chathaoirleach de Chomhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh.

This is a special privilege for me, my family, my friends and for my home parish of Conahy and North Kilkenny. I believe I am the first Conahy person and only the fourth woman in the history of Kilkenny County Council to be Cathaoirleach. The late Cllr. Margaret Tynan, Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh and Cllr Teresa Mullen were the ~able women to lead the way,

To Cllr, Cavanagh, thank you for proposing me and for your kind words, Thanks also to Cllr, John Brennan for seconding that proposal, and to Cllr, Michael O'Brien for his kind advice to me, I compliment him for guiding and leading us through, arguably, the most difficult year in this Council's history. Commiserations to Cllr. Millea. Congratulations to my colleague Cllr, Martin Brett on his election as mayor of Kilkenny City, I look forward to working closely with Martin over the next 12 months,

The challenges of the last couple of years remain with us; I will do my utmost to ensure that this Council is in a strong position to meet those challenges -the biggest of which is the reduction in funding by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government. The finances of this Council are undoubtedly in a difficult situation.

I have identified priority areas within our remit -job creation, services (especially roads, water and sewage), and the provision of housing for the citizens of Kilkenny.

In 1999, on entering this chamber for the first time, I brought with me a novices usual degree of naiveté regarding the political process. I also brought enthusiasm, optimism, an appetite for hard work and service, and hopefulness for the great improvements I was going to affect in local people's lives my naiveté wasn't long disappearing, but I am still enthusiastic about the future of Kilkenny as a progressive and creative hub for Ireland. I am optimistic we can emerge from these economically tough times -stronger, from having learned some hard lessons. I am still full of hope that we can continue to contribute to improving the lives of people in this county -people we mustn't forget that are not just numbers on a register but are our family, friends, neighbours and colleagues, from all walks of life -who are struggling at this time. I intend to continue work hard for all the people of this great county.

As local councillors, we are the front line of the political process. We listen to the people, to their angst and de “pair for our country’s failings for the lack of connection between the people those elected represent them and their frustrations at the situation we find ourselves in, as a nation, as a society, as people.

I realise that unfortunately, I won't have the clout of a Merkel, Sarkozy or even an Obama as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, (and I certainly don't claim to have all the answers) but I do want to contribute to the process of rebuilding trust and confidence at a local level.

As Cathaoirleach, I will be following the advice of Carnegie "Less attention to what people say -and more attention to what people do". With that in mind, I want to focus on positive actions and getting things done that need to be done. As the late U.S. President Harry Truman once said-"You can accomplish anything in life provided you don't mind who gets the credit".

I believe we have to pull together in partnership, to get things done, particularly for those that are most vulnerable.

I do passionately believe in the imagination of the Irish people and Kilkenny people in particular, to address the serious issues, unemployment being a major one that faces us today. The live register figures have reached 7,500 -an increase of almost 5,000 in three years.

Our jobs in live define us, so there is an urgency there.

As a Council, we must lead the campaign, and provide the environment to attract new industry and businesses to the county, a process we have in fairness we have already begun. We must ensure that costs are kept low. We have to continue our policy of zero increase in commercial rates.

It is said all politics are local; it is also true that all economies are local. I urge all to support our local businesses, shops, suppliers, festivals, our local producers and farmers so that we may build our economy in our immediate locality. Let us go from strength to strength locally and in time build towards the wider economy if we can get more of us to spend locally we can begin to rebuild the economy, slowly but surely. The economic issue is a serious one and not going to be solved easily. But I do think Kilkenny has many obvious advantages. We are seen as a tourist haven and a hive of activity for creative and imaginative entrepreneurs and supportive of inventive business concepts.

As local politicians, we have to be enthusiastic and optimistic leaders within our local communities. We need to get people believing in themselves again. We need to lead the drive back towards prosperity. We, above all else, need to play our part in getting the people of Kilkenny back to work.

We have to grasp the opportunities and drive on to a better day. We can be positive or negative, but it's worth noting, particularly in tough times it doesn't cost a penny more to be positive.

On that note, I want to thank in a special way my husband Donal, my children; Ciaran, Fiona, Eimear, Daire, Sinead and Aine for their love and continued support. I know they are very supportive of me and my political endeavours -most of the time! You may be surprised to learn that this event has an international flavour! My son Ciaran and daughter Aine who I'll be speaking to live on Skype at Ciaran's home in Indiana, USA.

Also, want to thank two very people in my life, David and Caoimhe, my grandchildren. Caoimhe is here today as you can here making her own speech! David is waiting in Indiana, USA to see my new jewellery on Skype TV; my thanks extend to my daughter-in-law Ann, and my two sons-in-law: Mark and Brian, all of whom form part of my support team. A special welcome for my sister Mary and my two brothers Eamonn and Jimmy.

Ba mhaith liom críochnu anois ag ra ce chomh bhfuil is ata me as bheith tofa mar phríomh shaoranach an chomhairle seo.larraim ar mo chomh chomhairleoiri tacu liom agus comhoibriu liom i pbairtineareacht I.e. Bainsteoir an chontae agus a fhoireann sa bhliain atá romhainn. “

Congratulations were offered to the incoming year from members from all sides of the chamber. The County Manager on behalf of the management and staff added his congratulations and expressed his wish to work closely with Cllr. Connery in her year in office.

Contributions Cllrs. P. Millea, A. Phelan and M. H. Cavanagh.

Item 2. Election of Leas Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council.

At this juncture the Cathaoirleach sought nominations for Leas Cathaoirleach. It was Proposed by Cllr. M. O' Brien, Seconded by Cllr. M. Shortall "That Cllr. Ann Phelan be elected as Leas Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council".

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Coonan, Seconded by Cllr. E. Aylward "That Cllr. M. Doran be elected as Leas Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council".

At this juncture the Cathaoirleach asked if there were any further nominations for the position. As there were no further nominations the matter proceeded to a vote which took place as follows:-

Voting in favour of Cllr. Ann Phelan:- Cllrs. M. H. Cavanagh, M. Shortall, J. Brennan, C. Connery, M. Fitzpatrick, P. Cuddihy, M. Noonan, W. Ireland, T. Maher, P. Crowley, P. O' Neill, A. Phelan, M. O' Brien, F. Doherty, A.M. Irish, T. Breathnach and P. Dunphy.

Total 16

Voting in favour of Cllr. Pat Millea: - Cllrs. P. Millea, A. McGuinness, J. Coonan, M. Doran, S. Treacy and E. Aylward, P. Crowley,

Total 7

Cllr. M. Brett was absent at the time of the vote.

Cllrs. B. Manning and C. Long were paired.

As a result of this vote Cllr. A. Phelan was deemed to be elected as Leas Cathaoirleach for the forthcoming year

Cllr. Phelan expressed her delight at being elected to this position and stated her wish to work closely with Cllr. Connery in her role as Cathaoirleach. She commiserated with the defeated candidate for this position Cllr. M. Doran.

Contributions Cllrs. M. Doran, M. O' Brien and M. H. Cavanagh.

Item 3. Schedule of Meetings July 2010- June 2011

The schedule of meetings as circulated was agreed.

This concluded the formal proceedings of the meeting. The Cathaoirleach invited Councillors, staff members, members of the press and members of the public who were present to an informal event in Harry's bar.

The meeting concluded at 4.45p.m.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE