

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 9TH JUNE, 2017 AT 3.00 P.M.

Chair: Matt Doran

CLRs: M. H. Cavanagh, M. Shortall, J. Brennan, J. Malone, M. McCarthy, E. Aylward, T. Breathnach, P. Dunphy, F. Doherty, B. Gardner, S. Tyrrell, D. Kennedy, M. Doyle, P. Millea, P. Cleere, D. Fitzgerald, M. O' Neill, P. McKee and P. Fitzpatrick, M. Noonan

Officials: Colette Byrne, Tim Butler, Martin Prendiville, Simon Walton, Brian Tyrrell & Anne Maria Walsh

Apologies: CLRs. P. O'Neill, A. McGuinness & G. Frisby
Mary Mulholland

CLr. M. Doran opened the Annual Meeting and welcomed all to the meeting. CLr. Doran addressed the meeting as follows:

A chairde go leir,

Cead mile failte go dti cruinniú bliantúil Comhairle Chontae Cill Chainnigh.

Ba mhór an onóir dom a bheith Cathaoirleach i rith an bliain seo caite. Bhí mé an-bhródúil as a ionadaíocht a dhéanamh leat ar go leor de na n-imeachtaí ar fud an chontae agus las muigh den chontae.

Gabhaim buíochas leat, go gach comhairleoir, do Colette príomhfheidmeannach, an fhoireann agus munitir Cill Chainnigh.

Fellow Councillors, Chief Executive, staff members and friends.

As Cathaoirleach I was fortunate and honoured during the year to have been invited to numerous events too many to mention throughout Kilkenny. I was very impressed and inspired by the generosity of local community activists, resilience of communities and ability to do a lot with a little including grant assistance from the local authority. I welcome the re-introduction of the Village & Renewal scheme & Clar programme. This funding is an added boost to towns and communities to improve their areas. We must continue to support our local communities and rural development. I will continue to advocate on issues such as broadband, rural crime, transport and local tourism for these communities.

Each year bring challenges and difficult decisions to be made by members and the executive. You the members have embraced these challenges over the year and will continue to do so for the social and economic benefit of our County. We must continue to preserve our County boundary and embrace the challenge of co-operating with our neighbouring counties for the growth of Waterford City and the South East region.

Despite difficult challenges and decisions, we have achieved the completion of the new central access bridge. This project will greatly enhance the development of the City, connecting communities and has opened up many beautiful views of our historic buildings. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to officially open the new Saint Francis Bridge and I look forward to the economic and social benefits that this will deliver for Kilkenny.

Kilkenny is attractive and open to all forms of business and with the development of the Abbey Quarter, Belview Port and other locations it is hoped that we will attract a number of businesses that will create much needed employment in our County. Investment in our County is an investment for our young people and also a statement that Kilkenny is a progressive place for businesses to thrive. We have been successful in been approved for funding under LIAHF to

provide much needed infrastructure to facilitate the development of housing and schools in the western environs. As we are all well aware the delivery of houses remains challenging and we must utilise all possible solutions to deliver additional units to resolve the housing shortage in our County and to provide additional houses for newer communities.

Tourism continues to be one of our main economic drivers. During the year I launched the Tourism Strategy "One Kilkenny". It was encouraging to see the latest figure released for visitors to Kilkenny Castle. The total number of visitors in 2016 was 384,918, a significant increase on visitors in 2015. It was a pleasure to participate in the opening of our newest attraction - the Medieval Mile Museum. Last night in Dublin the Medieval Mile Museum won the National Conservation Award for a public building.

We must strive to continue to develop the medieval mile and other significant attractions throughout the County. We as members will continue to seek and support the Executive in securing funding to deliver further projects to enhance our County.

Festivals and events continue to grow in Kilkenny and to attract many visitors. I welcome the new Christmas initiative by Kilkenny County Council for "Yulefest". I wish this festival every success in the future and I know that it will become a major attraction in the programme of festivals for the year.

The position of first citizen affords many opportunities to welcome visitors to Kilkenny from near and far. For example I welcomed a group of international travel writers who hosted their annual conference in Kilkenny and these travel writers between them have a readership of approx 100million people. This is a wonderful opportunity to market Kilkenny. In addition to this I recently welcomed a European Agricultural conference to our City and this brought many business people from abroad to discuss and develop technological solutions for agriculture.

Disappointments are a part of life and it was regrettably that our bid for the Capital of Culture was unsuccessful. However we can learn from this and create new working relationships with other counties and develop regional strategies such as the Creative and Cultural Strategy.

My own particular interest is sport. Kilkenny has been represented by individuals, clubs and county teams at many sporting events both locally and national. Some achieved success at national level. I congratulate all those who take an active role in sports and to those who foster and encourage healthy activities for our young people. It is the participation in sports that makes a difference for all those involved whether they are winning or losing.

It was a unique and historic opportunity for me, and the Council to welcome Prince Charles and Duchess of Cornwall to our County. I wish to thank our own staff who worked so hard to have the City and County looking it best and in particular to our Parks Department for the beautiful floral arrangements. In preparing for this visit the Council worked in partnership with the Gardai, Defence Forces, OPW and other agencies in making the visit a success. We will continue to work in partnership with all agencies for the betterment of our City and County.

It would be remiss of me not to remember family members of Councillors and staff who passed away during the year and also those who died following road accidents or in tragic circumstances. Our support, thoughts and prayers are with their families and loved ones.

I hope that during my term as Cathaoirleach I have represented you well at home and abroad and that I have delivered on the trust you placed in me when you elected me as Cathaoirleach in June 2016. I promised you in June 2016 that I would give full opportunity to each member to contribute to each meeting and I hope that I stuck to that promise and that I was fair. I know that we will continue to work together in the future to achieve the many ambitious projects in planning.

Finally I want to pay special tribute to my wife Caroline, my daughters Rachel & Aimee and my granddaughter Leanna for their unfailing support and help during the past year.

In conclusion I thank you, the elected members, the Chief Executive and all the staff for your support, co-operation and advice given during the year which I thoroughly enjoyed. I wish my successor every good wish for the year ahead.

Mile buiochas do gach duine.

Tributes were paid to Cllr. Doran by Cllr. M.H. Cavanagh, D. Kennedy, M. Noonan, M. Shortall, P. McKee, M. O'Neill and P. Millea. Members paid tribute to Cllr. Doran on his year as Cathaoirleach for his courtesy, integrity, fairness and efficiency in dealing with all members. He represented us and Kilkenny at many functions and was available at all times to communities and organisations.

Ms. C. Byrne, Chief Executive acknowledged the professionalism of Cllr. Doran in carrying out his duties and stated it was a pleasure to work with Cllr. Doran. She also acknowledged the role of Cllr. Doran's family and Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick for their support during the year.

Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick stated that it was an honour to be Leas Cathaoirleach and an honour to work with Cllr. Doran during the year.

1. **Election of Cathaoirleach**

Cllr. M. H. Cavanagh proposed Cllr. D. Fitzpatrick as Cathaoirleach for the coming year. She referred to Cllr. Fitzgerald's career in politics following his election to Kilkenny Borough Council in 2009. He was co-opted to Kilkenny County Council in 2012 following the resignation of Betty Manning.

Cllr. J. Malone seconded the proposal of Cllr. Fitzgerald as Cathaoirleach. Cllr. Malone spoke about Cllr. Fitzgerald's term as Mayor of Kilkenny and it was a privilege to work with him.

Cllr. Doran asked for any other proposals.

Cllr. David Kennedy proposed Cllr. Breda Gardner as Cathaoirleach for the coming year. Cllr. M. Noonan seconded the proposal of Cllr. B. Gardner. Cllr. M. O'Neill stated that she would be supporting Cllr. Gardner in the interest of equality of women in the Chair.

A vote was taken on the second proposal that Cllr. B. Gardner be Cathaoirleach:

For..... 5 Cllrs. B. Gardner, D. Kennedy, S. Tyrrell, M. Noonan, M. O'Neill

Against..... 13 Cllrs. J. Brennan, MH Cavanagh, P. Fitzpatrick, M. McCarthy, P. Millea, M. Doyle, M. Doran, D. Fitzgerald, J. Malone, P. McKee, E. Aylward, F. Doherty, P. Dunphy

Abstaining.... 2 Cllrs. M. Shortall, T. Breathnach

The proposal was defeated.

A vote was taken on the first proposal that Cllr. David Fitzgerald be Cathaoirleach:

For..... 13 Cllrs. J. Brennan, MH Cavanagh, P. Fitzpatrick, M. McCarthy, P. Millea, M. Doyle, M. Doran, D. Fitzgerald, J. Malone, P. McKee, E. Aylward, F. Doherty, P. Dunphy

Against..... 5 Cllrs. B. Gardner, D. Kennedy, S. Tyrrell, M. Noonan, M. O'Neill

Abstaining.... 2 Cllrs. M. Shortall, T. Breathnach

Cllr. Doran declared Cllr. D. Fitzgerald to be elected as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council and invited him to take the Chair and Chain of Office.

Cllr. D. Fitzgerald addressed the Council as follows:

The annual election of a new Cathaoirleach provides an opportunity for the entire Council, Elected Members, Executive and staff to pause and take stock of what has been achieved in the past year and to set out new goals for the future. It is a fact that we have now passed the half way point in our five year term as Councillors. During the first three challenging years, we have worked to implement many of the decisions made by the previous Borough and County Councils.

St. Francis Bridge and the Central Access Scheme are complete. The former Smithwicks' Brewery has been taken into public ownership. The Medieval Mile Museum is open. Our County land boundary is secure.

But there are new challenges remaining. South Kilkenny must continue to be administered by Kilkenny County Council. We must deliver on our promise to build the Northern Ring Road bridge. In doing so, we can take HGV's out of the northern side of the City. This northern bridge can become the starting point for the design of a new national road and economic corridor for North Kilkenny serving Freshford, Tullaroan and Urlingford to connect the entire County to the M8 Motorway. By designing and planning this new route now, this Council can, in time, deliver a northern motorway gateway in to our entire County.

The Abbey Quarter must become the beating heart of a new economic, educational, social and creative hub. The Tholsel, our City Hall is in need of essential repairs and upgrades but in so doing, it must not be allowed lose its unique historic character. On our library, I have repeatedly said over many years, that the Carnegie Library should be reused as a library, extended and integrated in to the new Butler Gallery Campus at Evans Home. The former Meubles site should become Kilkenny County Councils new housing office with all Council services located and delivered on the County Hall Campus in John Street.

On climate change, we must review our renewable energy strategy and face the challenges of refitting our homes and all buildings to higher standards of insulation and lower energy usage. We must work with the agricultural sector to deliver a waste management strategy that protects farm families, their jobs and pre-empts the greenhouse gas challenges of the Paris climate agreement.

On transport, have we even considered how electric cars will change transport and parking in our City and County in the coming years? In a few months' time, Kilkenny will launch a new integrated City bus service funded by the National Transportation Authority. How will we ensure that this new bus service is a success? How can we support our rural communities by protecting our rural bus services?

Within the next 10 years have we considered the potential of high speed rail line? If our citizens could be in Dublin in 40 or 50 minutes from Kilkenny or Thomastown what benefits will that bring? Our students could commute to College on a daily basis. Workers could travel from Dublin to their new workplaces in Kilkenny in an enlarged Kilkenny based financial services sector post Brexit.

Our Tourism Sector has the potential to grow beyond the City across the entire county. As a Council, in the year ahead, we should map a North South Greenway route that connects Castlecomer and its Discovery Park to Kilkenny City and on to Thomastown, Woodstock and Graignamanagh to link to the new greenway routes under construction from Rosslare Port into Glenmore, Slieverue, Ferrybank, Waterford and Dungarvan.

Perhaps we can re-use some of the Old Ballyragget and Castlecomer railway branch lines infrastructure while respecting those farming this land? Maybe we can build cycling and pedestrian connections to Kells Priory and the high crosses of Ahenny or the round towers in Johnstown and in doing so spread the economic potential of tourism to our rural areas?

There are many opportunities, many challenges and many goals to set.

But in the next year, the biggest challenge facing this Council is housing. As of today, this Local Authority has over 2,130 applicants on our housing list. We have a women's refuge at bursting point and no private or public rental property to match the demand. Central Government has provided €6.4 billion euro nationally to build homes. As the lead housing agency, our County Council must ensure that we are ready, willing and able to draw down these funds to build the next generation of social housing throughout Kilkenny.

In order to face the housing challenge, I propose that this year be designated The Year of The Home across the County to support those whose homes are under threat, to deliver a new supply of social housing and to identify how we can deliver new homes for workers coming to new jobs throughout our County.

To achieve this goal, I propose that we, as Councillors, in conjunction with the Executive, immediately establish a cross party New Homes Task Force. This task force will be charged with identifying suitable new home projects to progress by the Council itself or in conjunction with housing associations or through the Part V process to ensure that we deliver at least 100 new homes each year for the next 5 years.

In 2017 in Kilkenny, no child should have to put on their school uniform in a hotel bedroom. No single man or woman should find themselves living in emergency accommodation as a long term housing solution. No family should be left homeless.

For me, the year ahead is not about getting my photo taken or cutting ribbons. The next year must be about taking important long term decisions and setting out a roadmap for the future of Kilkenny.

On this occasion, I am reminded of the late great Kilkenny Historian, Professor John Bradley's words on that night in 2009 when he launched his book on the King James Charter that granted Kilkenny City status over 400 years ago. On that night, he reminded the audience that within the text of this ancient charter there is declaration that although Kilkenny may never be the richest or most powerful, Kilkenny must aspire to become the model against which all others are measured. We must become the benchmark for other counties to follow. As a Council, we must provide leadership to all our people to protect them today and plan to ensure their future prosperity and happiness.

With your help and as a team working together, this is my goal in the year ahead.

Go raibh mile maith agat go leir.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. D. Fitzgerald was congratulated by Cllrs. M.H. Cavanagh, B. Gardner, P. Millea, T. Breathnach, M. O'Neill, M. Noonan, D. Kennedy and P. McKee. Members offered their support throughout the year and wished him well. Members welcomed Cllr. Fitzgerald's family and stated that it is a proud day for the family and wished all of them well for the forthcoming year.

Cllr. B. Gardner thanked her proposer and seconder for their kind words and look forward to working with the new Cathaoirleach on his proposed Cross Party Task Force.

2. **Election of Leas Cathaoirleach**

Cllr. M. H. Cavanagh proposed Cllr. P. Dunphy as Leas Cathaoirleach. She said that Cllr. Dunphy has an established career as a local representative and is Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy John Paul Phelan.

Cllr. F. Doherty seconded the proposal of Cllr. P. Dunphy as Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. Fitzgerald called for any further proposals.

Cllr. B. Gardner proposed Cllr. M. Noonan as Leas Cathaoirleach and this was seconded by Cllr. S. Tyrrell.

A vote was taken on the second proposal that Cllr. M. Noonan be Leas Cathaoirleach:

For..... 5 Cllrs. B. Gardner, D. Kennedy, S. Tyrrell, M. Noonan, M. O'Neill

Against..... 14 Cllrs. J. Brennan, MH Cavanagh, P. Fitzpatrick, M. McCarthy, P. Millea, P. Cleere, M. Doyle, M. Doran, D. Fitzgerald, J. Malone, P. McKee, E. Aylward, F. Doherty, P. Dunphy

Abstaining.... 2 Cllrs. M. Shortall, T. Breathnach

The proposal was defeated.

A vote was taken on the first proposal that Cllr. P. Dunphy be Leas Cathaoirleach:

For..... 14 Cllrs. J. Brennan, MH Cavanagh, P. Fitzpatrick, M. McCarthy, P. Millea, P. Cleere, M. Doyle, M. Doran, D. Fitzgerald, J. Malone, P. McKee, E. Aylward, F. Doherty, P. Dunphy

Against..... 5 Cllrs. B. Gardner, D. Kennedy, S. Tyrrell, M. Noonan, M. O'Neill

Abstaining.... 2 Cllrs. M. Shortall, T. Breathnach

Cllr. D. Fitzgerald declared Cllr. P. Dunphy to be elected as Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. P. Dunphy thanked his proposer and seconder and also thanked Cllr. Noonan for putting his name forward for Leas Cathaoirleach. He congratulated Cllr. Fitzgerald on his election as Cathaoirleach and thanked Cllrs. Doran and Fitzpatrick for their work during the last year.

Cllr. M. Noonan congratulated Cllr. Dunphy on his election as Leas Cathaoirleach. He thanked his proposer and seconder.

Cllr. P. Cleere, B. Gardner, T. Breathnach, D. Kennedy, M. O'Neill and D. Fitzgerald congratulated Cllr. Dunphy and wished him well in his new role.

3. **Dates for Ordinary Meetings**

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick seconded by Cllr. M. H. Cavanagh and agreed:

"That the dates for the Ordinary Meetings of Kilkenny County Council will be as follows:

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| ▪ 19 th June, 2017 | ▪ 15 th January, 2018 |
| ▪ 17 th July, 2017 | ▪ 19 th February, 2018 |
| ▪ 18 th September, 2017 | ▪ 19 th March, 2018 |
| ▪ 16 th October, 2017 | ▪ 16 th April, 2018 |
| ▪ 20 th November, 2017 | ▪ 21 st May, 2018 |
| ▪ 18 th December, 2017 | |

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____