**Special Meeting at Dunmore GAA Training Centre held on 28th May, 2015 at 7.00p.m.**

**Chair:**  Cllr. P. Millea

**Councillors:** M.H. Cavanagh, M. Shortall, T. Breathnach, M. McCarthy, A. McGuinness, P. Fitzpatrick, P. Dunphy, F. Doherty, P. Cleere, D. Kennedy, P. McKee, G. Frisby, J. Malone, J. Brennan and M. Doran.

**Officials:** J. Mulholland, P. O’ Neill, M. Prendiville, S. Walton, B. Tyrrell, K. Hanley, C. Cooney and A.M. Walsh.

**Apologies:** Cllrs. M. O’ Neill, M. Noonan, B. Gardner, P. O’ Neill, M. Doyle and K. Funchion.

Mr. Brian Tyrrell welcomed the members and invited guests to the official dedication of lands at Dunmore GAA Training Centre to Kilkenny County GAA Board.

Cllr. P. Millea addressed the meeting as follows:

Kilkenny County Council operated a landfill here at Dunmore in the period between 1989 and 2010. The landfill provided a valuable service to the residents and businesses of County Kilkenny

The Councils total landholding at Dunmore extends to 41 acres, 20 acres of which has been land filled, 18 acres of which acted as a service area and/or buffer zone to the landfill and 3 acres of which is dedicated to the Civic Amenity Centre.

By 2010 Kilkenny GAA County Board had long since been seeking lands to develop a state of the art training facility for the long term development of Gaelic Games in County Kilkenny.

The County Board’s vision was to provide facilities complementary to Nowlan Park.

Over the years various sites had been examined but were ruled out, mostly on the basis of excessive financial exposure and/or unsuitability for the nature of the development required.

Following the cessation of land filling operations at Dunmore in January 2010, Kilkenny County Council invited members of Kilkenny County Board to visit Dunmore Landfill and specifically the area at the site that heretofore had acted as service areas to the landfill.

At that meeting the County Board agreed to draft some preliminary design proposals to see if there was potential for a training centre. The preliminary design indicated that the provision of two pitches and associated dressing rooms and car parking was possible on the site.

At the November 2010 monthly meeting of Kilkenny County Council, the Elected Members agreed, in principle, to the advancement of proposals whereby lands at Dunmore, previously dedicated to land filling operations, would be leased to Kilkenny County Board, subject to the necessary consents being in place to facilitate the proposed development.

Following the consent of Elected Members in November 2010 a number of key issues needed to be addressed by Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny County Board. Kilkenny County Council needed to continue to liaise closely with the local community regarding the proposals for the use of the lands. Kilkenny County Board had to design the proposed development and seek planning permission in addition to securing a realistic funding programme for the proposed development.

The local community were hugely supportive of the proposals and warmly welcomed the proposed transformation of the lands from landfill operations to sports use.

On 3rd November, 2011 Kilkenny County Council secured the Waste Licence Technical Amendment releasing the lands from the requirements of the waste licence. On 11th April, 2012 Kilkenny County Board secured planning permission for the proposed development, and at the April 2012 Monthly Meeting of Kilkenny County Council the Elected members unanimously agreed to provide Kilkenny County Board with a 100 year lease, €1 per annum, for 12 acres of land at Dunmore.

Construction Works commenced at the site in mid 2013 and the Kilkenny Senior Hurling Panel were the first to use Dunmore Kilkenny GAA Training Centre on the 12th January, 2015.

As members can see the Training Centre includes a fully floodlit Croke Park sized sand-based pitch with a second, sand based pitch, of similar size together with dressing rooms, covered viewing area and car parking.

This initiative is testament to the vision and ability of the type of great G.A.A. people from Kilkenny who represent one of the greatest community building initiatives anywhere in the world.

It is a privilege for us as elected representatives to be associated with what has become a world brand – “Kilkenny Hurling”.

If people think I am going too far then they might recall recent media comparisons made between the Kilkenny hurlers and the All Blacks or between Brian Cody and Alex Ferguson or that Ned Quinn has no equal in the GAA world.

And so it is a privilege to be associated with an initiative which will allow hurling to develop in a facility which is built to foster excellence and to help to secure the future of our ancient national game for future generations.

These future generations will no doubt be inspired by both the state of the art surroundings and also by the deeds of some of our former hurling heroes. I am delighted that we have J.J. Delaney, Brian Hogan, David Herity, Aidan Fogarty and Tommy Walsh here with us tonight.

I am aware that Henry Shefflin couldn’t be here with us tonight due to a prior commitment.

We have invited our former players here to acknowledge their contribution to the broader civic life of County Kilkenny. They and their colleagues have served Kilkenny well. We are all proud Kilkenny people here and we appreciate being given a chance to express that pride and there is possibly no stronger expression of being from Kilkenny than on the day of an All Ireland Hurling Sunday just before throw in, and just after the final whistle when our lads have come out on top.

The pride felt on these occasions has filtered out to find expressions in areas like Tidy Towns, Tourism town awards and that sense of civic pride which keeps our standards high and in turn makes Kilkenny the most attractive place to live, and the envy of many. These players are in fact standard bearers for the County, our job is to follow their lead.

Mention of the word pride and I think of Tommy Walsh, from my own proud parish of Tullaroan.

I hope I will be forgiven for making special mention of Tommy, but I can’t let the opportunity pass without telling Tommy that his deeds on the hurling field have brought even more fame to his parish, and that in time to come his name will forever be remembered in his native Tullaroan, and his native place will be forever grateful.

So, in conclusion, members, I wish to formally propose that Kilkenny County Council dedicates 12 acres of land at the Dunmore Training Centre, to Kilkenny GAA Board.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Millea, Seconded by Cllr. M.H. Cavanagh and agreed:- “That Kilkenny County Council dedicate 12 acres of land at Dunmore to Kilkenny County GAA Board for 100 years”.

Mr. Ned Quinn was asked to respond on behalf of Kilkenny County GAA Board. Mr. Quinn stated that it was a privilege for him to formally respond on behalf of Kilkenny County GAA Board and welcomed all to the Dunmore Training Centre.

He acknowledged the vote of confidence made on the County Board in the development of state of the art Training Facility for all hurlers in Kilkenny. He acknowledged that Dunmore is a top class training facility for all hurlers in Kilkenny. He acknowledged that this facility has been provided due to the hard work and dedication of a lot of people.

In 2010, the Dunmore site was selected as the most suitable site following a review of a number of sites.

He thanked the following:-

Mr J. Crockett and Kilkenny County Council and S. Walton for their professionalism and advice.

Mr. Pat Henderson for his hands on support during the development.

The local residents for their tremendous support.

All sub-contractors for their excellent work.

Barry Hickey for his work on ensuring the works are fully funded.

He acknowledged Croke Park, Leinster Council and Minister Ring for the grants received. The works are fully funded and there is no debt on the completed facility.

He acknowledged the support of the Primary Schools Board for the electronic scoreboard. He advised the meeting that the Senior Hurlers commenced training in this facility in January 2015. All hurling teams have used the training facility since then and it is being used 5 nights every week.

Cllr. P. Millea thanked Mr. Quinn for his contribution.

At this stage Cllr. P. Millea made a presentation of a scroll to recently retired hurlers, Brian Hogan, J.J. Delaney, David Herity, Aidan Fogarty and Tommy Walsh as a token of appreciation of the County Kilkenny community to the contribution that hurling has made to the social and cultural fabric of County Kilkenny.

Meeting then concluded.