

Annual Meeting held on 29th June, 2012 at 3.00p.m. in the Council Chamber, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny.

In the Chair: Cllr. P. Cuddihy

Also Present: Cllrs. M. Fitzpatrick, M. O' Brien, T. Prendergast, D. Fitzpatrick, J. Brennan, B. Ireland, M. H. Cavanagh, C. Connery, A. McGuinness, J. Coonan, C. Long, S. Treacy, M. Noonan, P. Crowley, T. Maher, F. Doherty, A.M. Irish, P. Dunphy, T. Breathnach, E. Aylward, M. Doran.

Apologies: Cllr. J. Galway

In attendance: J. Crockett, J. Mulholland, P. O' Neill and A.M Walsh.

Outgoing Chairman: - Paul Cuddihy

The outgoing Chairman thanked all the elected members, especially the party whips, for their co-operation, assistance and advice that they had given him over the course of the year.

He thanked all the staff of the council in all areas of employment for their diligence, courtesy and professionalism, at a time of great challenge when the future of local government is being planned at cabinet level. He singled out the staff of the Environmental Section for their huge commitment and professionalism, especially Bernadette Moloney for her work in Tidy Towns and Green Flag Schools.

He congratulated all of the staff who worked beyond what might be expected of them and noted that there were a number of national award winners employed by the council.

In the course of the year the Chairman had:

- Attended a number of openings of water and wastewater schemes- the Castlewarren group water scheme and Belview Port.
The Belview Port Water Supply scheme sees a 35 million euro investment by the IDA and KCC, for industrial jobs.
- Had a role in developing plans for two new libraries in county Kilkenny, at Ferrybank and Kilkenny City.
- Welcomed a Chinese trade delegation to Kilkenny and signed a memorandum of mutual understanding in Kilkenny Castle.
- Hosted an investment dinner in Kilkenny in July in Mount Juliet.
- Initiated a County Tidy Towns and Villages awards scheme, presenting 35 groups with thousands of flowering bulbs.
- Initiated a business awards scheme for County Kilkenny -known as the Against the Wind Awards Scheme.
- Attended the Saint Patrick's Day Parades in Graiguenamanagh and Goresbridge.
- Reinstated the Best of the Fringe Awards scheme in support of the Kilkenny Arts Festival.

- Promoted rural tourism when he unveiled a plaque in Jenkinstown to Denys Corbett-Wilson on the centenary of his flight in 1912- the first successful flight across the Irish Sea and hosted a visiting delegation from Wales to celebrate the flight.
- Collected two National Awards where Kilkenny Co. Council were winners in Water Services and Water Safety.
- Visited and spoke at many Green Flag School Celebrations, including Gowran, Gaelscoil Cill Chainnaigh, the Model School Kilkenny, Coon National School, and Urlingford National School.
- Commemorated the role of the Wild Geese in Kilkenny's and Ireland's history, unveiling a plaque in Danganmore, near Dunnamaggin to John Ryan and his brothers James and Edmund Ryan who served in the continental armies in 18th c.
- Attended the opening of Mill Family Resource Centre in Urlingford.
- Read a lesson at a Harvest Thanksgiving Service in Piltown.
- Opened a number of Art Exhibitions throughout the County.
- Attended the Piltown Show in the south of the county.
- Presented a Special Award to Tony Hayes for his outstanding work in the upkeep of Newpark Fen.
- Presented Special Awards to the daughters of former chairmen of Kilkenny County Council, George Dooley and Sean Gibbons, who were the first chairmen of Kilkenny County Council under Dail Eireann during the War of Independence, the Irish Civil War and foundation of the Irish Free State from 1920- 1925.
- Was the host of the launch of the Connect Ireland jobs initiative for chairs, mayors and management teams of all local authorities in Ireland.
- As Chairman assisted Kilkenny County Council in bringing the Dunmore Community Project to a conclusion.
- Signed the lease of lands to the Kilkenny County Board of the GAA at Dunmore as a training facility for hurling.
- Presented Water Safety Awards in Graiguenamanagh, where he had taught swimming for over 20 years.
- As Chairman he co-signed an agreement for the purchase of lands at Saint Francis Abbey Brewery from Diageo PLC. This would allow for major investment in the future of Kilkenny in a unique land bank at a central location.
- The Chairman thanked Simon Walton and his team for beginning a new project connecting walkways and cycle routes between Kilkenny and Abbeyleix, a project that will also assist in boosting rural tourism and health promotion.
- The Chairman also said it was an honour to open the boardwalk section of the River Nore Linear Park and urged members to never forget how important an asset the river is in our city and county- 'always look to the river as we haven't harnessed all its potential' he concluded.

The Chairman thanked the Mayor of the City of Kilkenny, with whom he had worked very well throughout the year.

He spoke of the differences between the Office of Mayor and Chairman of the County Council - they were similar but not the same. The office of Chair of the County Council was an important one often meeting groups quietly around the county, well out of the eye of the media, but very important to the people in these communities.

The Chairman apologized for not being able to attend every single function he was invited to and sent his best wishes and gratitude to the many voluntary organizations and groups working throughout the county.

The Chairman felt that as we are now in the decade of remembering our past from the foundation of the Labour Party, The Lockout, the First World War, the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War; it was important to remember all our past and all our history, not just the parts we are familiar and comfortable with.

He praised local historian and archivist John Kirwan and others in their work on uncovering the story of those Kilkenny people who had fought in the First World War - these are our people too and we must remember them in a respectful way as for too long they had been airbrushed out of Irish history as they hadn't fitted in with a political narrative.

He hoped that the Council will erect suitable memorials to these people as part of remembering all those who were involved -it was important to commemorate those who fought in wars, while not being triumphalist about war.

Reflecting on the past is important but so is planning for the future - much had been planned in this year.

He paid tribute to all who had assisted and advised him over the year, thanking the County Manager, Mr Joe Crockett and his management team for their courtesy and co-operation.

He thanked Minister Phil Hogan, Minister for the Environment, Communities and Local Government who assisted development in Kilkenny when and where it was appropriate.

The Chairman said that the 12 months in office allow you to 'plant acorns where later oak trees may grow'.

He paid tribute to those who went before him and wished his successor every happiness in the office.

Election of Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach

Item No. 1. Election of Cathaoirleach

Cllr. Marie Fitzpatrick was proposed by Cllr. M. O' Brien, Seconded by Cllr. M. Shortall.

As there was no other proposal for the position of Cathaoirleach and no abstentions. Cllr. M. Fitzpatrick was unanimously elected Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council for the coming year.

Cllr. M. Fitzpatrick took the chair and addressed the meeting as follows:

“County Manager, Colleagues, members of Kilkenny County Council, Deputy Ann Phelan, Members of the media, members of the general public including friends, family and work colleagues.

I have to be honest and say that never in my wildest dreams could I have envisaged my political life would be so fulfilled by reaching this office as Chairperson of local government throughout Kilkenny.

I am so proud, as someone who became a councillor at what many would consider to be a later stage in life, to have reached the stage when colleagues from all parties would support me in this office.

My entry into local government was a natural extension of my earlier interest in working within my community. It was a progression from education, voluntary and community activity here in the city that I entered politics.

I realised that to get to public resources necessary for a community you simply had to be at the heart of decision making in Kilkenny local authorities.

I want to thank and acknowledge the help and assistance I received from Seamus Pattison, my good friend the late Joe Cody. They were at the centre of my entry into the Councils. I also want to thank colleagues from all parties who gave me help and advice along the way.

I am also humbled by the realisation that for the next twelve months my public interest will be shared with people from Urlingford to Glenmore and from Callan across the county to Gaignamanagh.

No doubt, my terms as Mayor of our great City continue to be remembered as significant milestones. My public interest teeth were honed in the Thostal where I had the privilege of meeting so many people from home and abroad.

I am looking forward now to the challenge of responding to the many issues of concern at this time in our country's economic difficulties. But I am comforted by the fact that I am surrounded with so many positive people, elected, management, and staff in this Council.

I have been reminded that today is also an important day for my family. We have come a long way together. It was often a struggle – but we survived. I would also like to acknowledge my three grandchildren Joe, Declan and Emma.

At this point, I would like to thank my Labour Party colleagues in this Council for their support. I am comforted by being a part of a small but talented bunch of people, all of whom have demonstrated leadership qualities.

Also, can I thank those from Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and the Greens who supported me today. This act of exercising democracy in action is a source of pleasure because I value my relationship with Councillors from all parties.

I know too that in Mr. Crockett, we have one of the top County Managers in the Country. His knowledge, skill and energy is a great source of encouragement to all of us in his successful efforts to put Kilkenny at the forefront of social, economic and community development.

In anticipation of today's result the County Manager, has already briefed me about some of the challenges we will all have to face together in the next year. I am aware that in Kilkenny we have a good reputation of working together in the best interests of those who depend on us.

I am excited at the prospect of building on the work of my predecessor Paul Cuddihy. I am immensely proud of the friendship we have developed over the past number of years. I thank you for all you did in the past year as our leader.

My Chairmanship of this Council will be marked by a solid commitment to build on what we have developed, to seek out new opportunities on behalf of those we serve, to keep the team spirit of this Council to achieve our goals, and most of all to project a progressive image of Kilkenny and of its people.

Go Raibh Milé Maith Agib Go Léir.

Item No. 2 Election of Leas Cathaoirleach

Cllr. M. Shortall was proposed by Cllr. M. O' Brien, Seconded by Cllr. J. Breathnach.

As there was no other proposal for the position of Leas Cathaoirleach and there were no abstentions. Cllr. M. Shortall was unanimously elected Leas Cathaoirleach Kilkenny County Council for the coming year.

Cllr. M. Shortall thanked his proposer and seconder for the proposal to elect him as Leas Cathaoirleach. He congratulated Cllr. Fitzpatrick and stated that he will assist her whenever he is required.

All members were associated with good wishes to both. Cllr. Fitzpatrick and Cllr. Shortall and wished them well for the coming year.

Mr. Crockett on behalf of the staff congratulated both Councillors and offered them any assistance throughout the coming year.

Item No. 3. To fix Schedule of Ordinary Meetings of the Council.

The following resolution was adopted on the proposal of Cllr. P. Cuddihy, Seconded by Cllr. T. Maher. It was resolved that in addition to the Annual Meetings, Budget Meetings and any additional meetings as may be required by law or by an order of the court and special meetings as may be decided that the Council fix the following schedule of ordinary meetings of the Council for the coming year.

18th July, 2011
19th September, 2011
17th October, 2011
21st November, 2011
19th December, 2011
16th January, 2012
20th February, 2012
19th March, 2012
16th April, 2012
21st May, 2012
18th June, 2012

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Cathaoirleach