

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 3rd June, 2016 at 4.00p.m.

Chair: Cllr. M. H. Cavanagh

Cllrs: M. Shortall, J. Brennan, P. Millea, P. Fitzpatrick, M. Doyle, M. Doran, M. Noonan, J. Malone, M. McCarthy, A. McGuinness, T. Breathnach, P. Cleere, P. Dunphy, M. O' Neill, G. Frisby, F. Doherty, B. Gardner, D. Kennedy, P. McKee, D. Fitzgerald, S. Tyrrell, P. O' Neill.

Officials: C. Byrne, M. Melia, M. Mulholland, S. Walton, M. Prendiville, M. Delahunty, B. Tyrrell and A.M Walsh.

Apologies: Cllr. E. Aylward

Cllr. Cavanagh opened the Annual General Meeting and addressed the meeting as follows:-
“Before I take nominations I’d like to say a few words as the sun sets on my term as Cathaoirleach. It has been a wonderful 12 months. And, after 42 years as a member of this Council, my third term as Cathaoirleach has undoubtedly been my favourite - so far

This was my first time as Cathaoirleach under the new administrative structures that make the Cathaoirleach the first citizen of the city and the county so I got to know the people of our City very well for the first time. Councillor Malone and I worked very well together throughout the year and I wish to thank him most sincerely for the respect he showed me at all time and for his support and help.

I am delighted that my term coincided with an important centenary year where we marked many milestones associated with the turbulent period leading to Irish independence. The Council’s partnership with so many communities and groups in reflecting on the lives and times of the revolutionary generation was richly rewarding. Likewise, I was very happy to support commemorations of the native sons of Kilkenny who lost their lives in the First World War. I believe it is important that we remember and reflect on our complex history and respect and give space to different traditions, and I believe this has been done to very good effect here during this *Decade of Centenaries*.

The various commemorations during my tenure as Cathaoirleach often involved the Army, in particular, where our national flag was raised and I would like to thank the Army personnel for their participation in these ceremonies – they always brought a dignity and formality to proceedings that was entirely appropriate.

I would also like to thank the Defence Forces for the work they undertook in schools and elsewhere in educating us all on the symbolism and value of our flag with its message of reconciliation.

I'd like to pay tribute to outgoing Mayor of Kilkenny Municipal Council, Joe Malone, himself an ex-serviceman, for enhancing the links between the Council and the Barracks during his tenure as Mayor. The time was right as the Army has made great strides in opening up the Barracks to the people of Kilkenny and I had the privilege of attending several events there as well as celebrating the achievements of Kilkenny's own high ranking officers - deputy chief-of-staff of the Defence Forces, Major General Kieran Brennan and Brigadier General Philip Brennan, General Officer Commanding 1 Brigade, and, Brigadier General, Joe Mulligan who may have been born in Waterford, but was considered a Kilkenny man when he was Officer Commanding of the 3rd Infantry Battalion based here in the city. The professionalism, dedication and sense of public service that characterises the Army have been inspirational.

This is a fantastic city and it has been a pleasure to see Kilkenny work its charm on newcomers and regular visitors alike during festivals including *Savour Kilkenny*, *the Kilkenny Arts Festival*, *the Kilkenny Roots Festival*, and, of course, Heritage week. We have always recognised that our historical heritage is a huge draw and the Medieval Mile is soon to receive a significant new feature, when St. Mary's Church opens as the *Medieval Mile Museum*, showcasing the city's many treasures. I clambered up 8 ladders to place the cross on top of the church's east apex earlier this year and, I can confirm that it is a lot easier to climb up than to climb down.....but those of you who've worked with me for a long time know that I'm no fan of climb downs, or indeed, of backing down.

Visiting schools and further education centres and meetings students and parents, usually at the very happy time of graduation was, as ever, a real pleasure which I enjoy as a parent myself and as a teacher. Likewise, it was an honour to thank, on behalf of the people of Kilkenny, the many volunteers who contribute so much to civic and community life in our county including The Lions Club, Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, the People of the Year and so many more.

Road safety is a matter of particular importance to me and I was pleased to officiate at two important projects, one in the deep south, when the €1.75m Mooncoin Traffic Management and Pavement Rehabilitation Scheme was completed, and one in the far north when the Ballynaslee Road Realignment project was officially opened.

Of course as politicians we are the public face of the Council but a lot of dedicated officials behind the scene are carrying out very important work for the citizens of our county and helping elected representatives to discharge their duties.

I'd like to say a particular thanks to Chief Executive Colette, to Simon, Martin, Maria, Mary, Kevin, Anne Marie and all the staff including the support staff. My sincere thanks also to the patient and understanding Brian Tyrrell and to Catherine Cooney and the staff at City Hall – again mainly courtesy of Mayor Malone I visited City Hall on numerous occasions. My thanks also to my family, in particular, to my husband Eddie.

My public role as Cathaoirleach began and finished by joyful events of a hurling nature, naturally enough in this great county. Early in my tenure, I had the pleasure of welcoming the victorious senior team home after yet another All Ireland triumph – I say “yet another” – but we value each and every one of the 36 All Ireland victories. That pride in our team is well captured in the fantastic new monument that I had the pleasure of unveiling, along with Mayor Malone, just a week ago. This new statute, a great addition to our cityscape, embodies the drive to succeed and the teamwork that characterises Kilkenny. As I said then, the qualities represented by Kilkenny's hurling teams are qualities that every Kilkenny man and woman should seek to emulate. I thank the sculptor Barry Wrafter for finishing just in time to allow me to complete my term on a high note.

And finally my heartfelt and sincere thanks to my Leas Cathaoirleach Fidelis for taking the Chair at short notice and filling in for me at various functions. The answer to every request was “No problem”. My heartfelt and sincere thanks to you the elected members for your support especially last March and thank you for your patience and understanding. I know we did not always agree on all issues but that's shows a healthy democracy. We were elected to do our best for our City and County and we will continue to work together to make Kilkenny an even better place in which to work and live. Gura maith agaibh go leir”.

Tributes were paid to Cllr. Cavanagh by Cllr. P. Millea, M. Noonan, D. Kennedy, P. McKee, J. Brennan, B. Gardner, M. Shortall, J. Malone and M. O' Neill.

Members paid tribute to Cllr. Cavanagh on her year as Cathaoirleach, for her efficiency and fairness in dealing with all members at meetings, her attendance at many functions and wonderful speeches despite her personal bereavement during the year.

Ms. C. Byrne Chief Executive thanked Cllr. Cavanagh for her exceptional year representing the City and County. She referred to some of the highlights of the year especially the 2016 Celebrations. She personally thanked the Cathaoirleach for the welcome she gave when she started in Kilkenny and for all the assistance given since her arrival.

1. Election of Cathaoirleach

Cllr. P. Cleere proposed Cllr. M. Doran as Cathaoirleach for the forthcoming year. He referred to Cllr. Doran's 14 years as an elected member, his co-option in 2002 and his re-election in 2004, 2009 and 2014. He spoke about the qualities that Cllr. Doran has - such as hard working, shrewd, reliable, honourable, being a leader, inspiring and generous with time.

Cllr. M. McCarthy seconded the proposal of Cllr. M. Doran as Cathaoirleach.

As there were no further proposals for the position of Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cavanagh declared Cllr. M. Doran to be elected as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council and invited him to take the Chair and Chain of Office.

Cllr. Doran took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Cllr. M. Doran addressed the Council as follows:-

"Fellow Councillors, Chief executive, staff members, friends.

Before I get to my own statement I would like to echo the many tributes paid to Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh on what has been a very successful term as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council. I understand that she has set a very high standard for me, but I intend to do all I can to ensure that the next twelve months are productive and fruitful.

Firstly I wish to thank the members for putting your trust in me to carry out the onerous role of Cathaoirleach for the next twelve months. And on this special day I would like to both welcome and thank members of my family and supporters for their presence here today to share in this occasion and to remind them of my grateful appreciation of their ongoing support, without which I probably wouldn't be able to carry out my duties to Kilkenny County Council.

I am looking forward with confidence to the year ahead. But I am conscious that for our meetings to be efficient and effective, I will need the support of my fellow members. I am determined to chair our monthly meetings fairly but firmly. We are all bound by the democratic mandate which we received from our electorate, and we are also bound by a code of conduct in this chamber in relation to the standard of contribution and debate. Our meetings are governed by our self adopted standing orders, and I am asking all members to adhere to the standards which we set for ourselves. I intend to ensure that every member is given full opportunity to contribute to each meeting, and I intend to get through each monthly agenda as efficiently as possible.

I am conscious that we have set ambitious targets for developments in all of our service areas and I don't intend to speak about all of the projects which are covered in various policy documents.

However, there are a number of policy areas in which I wish to see progress. Housing and homelessness are areas which are both long term issues but where short term positive interventions will help the those in the greatest need, and restore public confidence that we can provide the type of services which County Councils are, in my opinion, best placed to provide.

In terms of planning and development, the Abbey Quarter provides both a significant challenge and opportunity for Kilkenny. Of course a development of such importance will not be without its worries and concerns.

However I am also certain that this chamber will be capable of making informed decisions for the good of Kilkenny City and County, and I believe that the decisions taken to date on the Abbey Quarter site are correct and will be seen to be for the greater good.

What we need to do now is to continue making steady progress, with confidence that in an economy which is improving that we have a proposition the envy of any place in Ireland, and we should not be afraid to talk up the Abbey Quarter as being of national importance.

People should also remember that investment in this site is an investment in the future job prospects for our young people and a statement of intent that Kilkenny is a progressive place in which business can thrive.

Kilkenny's reputation is positive and is the result of good decision making by this and previous Council's, and it is up to this Council to preserve, and enhance that reputation.

One of our recent decisions in developing our position regionally is the Three Sisters bid for the European Capital of culture 2020. With our neighbours Wexford and Waterford we have out together a strong bid. One of my immediate tasks on July 13th and 14th July is to co present the Three Sisters bid to the Capital of culture Jury.

Another area of particular interest to me is the real difficulties facing our rural towns. As the local representative of a number of such towns and villages I will take every opportunity as Cathaoirleach to press for a better deal for rural development. I will advocate on their behalf and will insist that issues such as broadband, rural crime, safety in the home, transport and local tourism issues are all kept on the Council agenda. Initiatives such as the provision of OPW guides at Kells Priory are a welcome initiative and are a real way of supporting local business. Other initiatives such as at Castlecomer Discovery Park are evidence of the fact that where a community gets actively involved in such projects that they can have a real influence their own future.

I look forward to the year ahead".

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Doran was congratulated by Cllrs. G. Frisby, J. Malone, M. Noonan, D. Kennedy, T. Breathnach, P. McKee, M. O' Neill, B. Gardner and M. H. Cavanagh.

Members offered their support throughout the year and wished him well. Members looked forward to working with him. Members welcomed Cllr. Doran's family and stated that it is a proud day for the family and wished them all the best for the year.

2. Election of Leas Cathaoirleach

Cllr. A. McGuinness proposed Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick as Leas Cathaoirleach. He said that Cllr. Fitzpatrick is hardworking and works full time as a local representative and stands up for what is right.

Cllr. J. Malone seconded the proposal of Cllr. Fitzpatrick as Leas Cathaoirleach.

As there were no other proposals for position of Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. Doran declared Cllr. Fitzpatrick to be elected as Leas Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council.

Cllr. Fitzpatrick thanked Cllr. A. McGuinness and J. Malone for proposing and seconding him and address the Council as follows:-

"I'm honoured to be elected Leas-Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council for the coming 12 months. I look forward to doing my best over the coming year to progress the interests of our County and our City. As someone who doesn't come from a political dynasty I see it as an achievement for myself, my family and my supporters. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of my mother and my daughter Orla here today.

I want to thank my colleagues within the Fianna Fail Group; in particular I'd like to thank Cllr McGuinness – my proposer – and Cllr Malone – my seconder.

I would like to congratulate Cllr Doran on his election as Cathaoirleach. His has big shoes to fill following Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh who brought a great deal of experience to the table – that experience has served this Council well over the last 12 months and I'd would like to thank Mary Hilda and indeed, thank her husband Eddie, for their work over the past 12 months. It is also important to acknowledge the contribution of Cllr Fidelis Doherty during these past 12 months. Thank you Fidelis.

Colleagues - forgive me if what I'm about to say seems obvious – But I believe it is a very important point to emphasis due to the fact that we are here to once again set out our objectives for the next twelve months – colleagues, we must never forget that we are elected by the people and we are here to serve the people. We are always bound to the

common good and entrusted to exercise our powers, all be they few and far between nowadays, in the public interests.

Over the coming year I will be working on three main areas with Cllr Doran – those are tourism, economic development and agriculture.

Tourism – By supporting existing tourist attractions such as the Castlecomer Discovery Park which is a shining light of what rural Kilkenny has to offer and assisting with the development of new and exciting projects such as Irelands Medieval Mile and the restoration of St Mary Church. Also, as a rural Councillor I will be doing my best to ensure the benefits of Kilkenny’s thriving tourism sector are felt in our rural towns and villages.

Economic Development – With the expanding role of Local Government in the area of economic development it is crucial that we work through the local enterprise office and the Local Community Development Committee, in conjunction with Kilkenny Leader Partnership and other stakeholders such as the ETB, to ensure our people have the best training and educational opportunities and the necessary enterprise and business supports available. We are in a position to provide the necessary tools to those who want to start a business and want to better themselves through education. We must set ambitious targets in the area of economic development and we must meet them.

Agriculture – The agricultural sector is changing and it’s important that Kilkenny positions itself to benefit from that change. The concept of a Food Tech summit, the development of an artisan food hub and a centre of excellence facilitating the development of smart agriculture – these are the ideas and concepts that will ensure Kilkenny and the South East will become international leaders in modern agriculture. Over the next 12 months we must do all we can to support the development of these ideas and concepts – turning plans into action and reality.

Let the coming year be one of action and progress!

Finally, can I thank all the staff across the organisation here at Kilkenny County Council for their continuing work on behalf of the people of Kilkenny. It will be an honour to serve as Leas-Cathaoirleach and I very much look forward to your support over the next 12 months.

Thank you”.

Ms. C. Byrne, Chief Executive on behalf of the Executive and staff congratulated both Cllr. Doran and Cllr. Fitzpatrick on their election and offered the full support of the Executive and staff. The Executive will work in partnership with the Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach for the betterment of Kilkenny.

3. Fix Dates for Ordinary Meetings of Kilkenny County Council.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. McKee, seconded by Cllr. G. Frisby and agreed: - "That the dates for the ordinary meetings of Kilkenny County Council will be as follows:-

Dates for Ordinary Meetings of Kilkenny County Council June 2016- June 2017.

20th June, 2016
18th July, 2016
19th September, 2016
17th October, 2016
21st November, 2016
19th December, 2016
16th January, 2017
20th February, 2017
20th March, 2017
17th April, 2017
15th May, 2017
19th June, 2017

Meeting then concluded.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE