

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CHRUINNITHE BHLIANTÚIL A  
TIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE DÉ HAOINE, 21  
MEITHEAMH 2024 AG 3.00 I.N.**



**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER ON FRIDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025 AT 3.00 P.M.**

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**Chair:** Michael McCarthy

**Cllrs:** Tomás Breathnach, John Brennan, Jenny Catt Slattery, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Brian Cleere, John Coonan, Deirdre Cullen, Michael Delaney, Stephanie Doheny, Fidelis Doherty, Maria Dollard, Michael Doyle, Patrick Dunphy, David Fitzgerald, Pat Fitzpatrick, Ger Frisby, Joe Lyons, Joe Malone, Andrew McGuinness, Eugene McGuinness & Maurice Shortall.

**Officials:** Lar Power, Tim Butler, Martin Prendiville, Fiona Deegan, Ian Gardner, Denis Malone & Margo Hayes

**Apologies:** Cllrs. Joe Sheridan, Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin & Ms. Mary Mulholland

Cllr. Michael McCarthy welcomed all the Members to the Council Chamber. He also welcomed members of the public.

Cllr. Michael McCarthy addressed the Council as follows:

*Elected Members, Colleagues, Chief Executive, Management and staff of Kilkenny County Council.*

*It is with a sense of deep gratitude that I stand before you today to welcome you here to our AGM and for the opportunity to address you one final time in my capacity as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council.*

*I wish to thank my fellow Councillors for placing their trust in me over the past twelve months. I would like to thank each one of you for your support and cooperation over the last year. We may not always have agreed, but our debates were guided by the one thing we all share and that is a fierce love and commitment for this county.*

*To my wife Patti, family and friends, thank you for your patience and support during the many long evenings and early mornings. Public service doesn't just ask of the officeholder, but also of those who stand beside them.*

*To the Chief Executive and the entire team at County Hall – your professionalism, and service to the people of Kilkenny are what make this council function with such strength.*

*This past year has been one of remarkable progress, and shared endeavour. 2024 and 2025 have seen Kilkenny County Council make great strides in service delivery while continuing to address key challenges in proactive and innovative ways. This progress has been achieved through constructive partnership between all stakeholders including staff, Councillors, Community Groups and Businesses.*

*Some of the achievements that I am most proud of over the last year include the following:*

- *In October 2024, the Mayfair Library hit an exciting milestone with over 100,000 visitors entering the doors since its opening in April.*
- *Other key Infrastructure delivery for Co Kilkenny included the N24 Tower Road and the Southeast Greenway.*
- *Kilkenny County Council continue to facilitate Enterprise development and Employment opportunities through initiatives such as the Urlingford Remote Working Hub and the innovative Night-time Economy Plan*

- *Housing provision remained a top priority in which considerable progress was made in 2024 with the launch of developments at Crokers Hill, College Park Crescent, The Rise, Castleoaks and Cluain Glassan Affordable Homes.*
- *Important heritage and Conservation initiatives were undertaken including the Callan Heritage Trail and the formation of the Kilkenny Heritage Forum*
- *Climate Action and Environmental issues continue to be at the forefront of the national conversation. Kilkenny were proactive in launching our Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The plan sets out 99 actions which are planned or ongoing to protect and foster the natural beauty and environmental wealth of the County while 22 communities were facilitated to undertake Climate Action Projects across the county.*

*From Castlecomer to Callan, Inistioge to Graiguenamanagh, Mooncoin to Ferrybank I've had the privilege of meeting people who remind us every day of what makes Kilkenny people extraordinary.*

*The passion of our community groups, the dedication of our council staff, and the drive of every Council Member in this chamber have made this term not just fulfilling, but truly unforgettable.*

*However, across all the events the common denominator has always been Kilkenny, whether that journey took in New York or Penvenan in France.*

*As I pass the chain of office to my successor, I do so with confidence in the road ahead. This council is well positioned to meet the challenges of our time with courage, and with the community at its centre.*

*Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir. It has been the honour of a lifetime.*

Cllr. Andrew McGuinness on behalf of the Fianna Fail group thanked and commended Cllr. Michael McCarthy for a tremendous year noting that he had carried out his duties in a fair manner and with decorum and professionalism.

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh on behalf of the Fianna Gael Elected Members thanked Cllr. Michael McCarthy for being calm, effective, efficient and fair.

Cllr. Thomas Breahnach on behalf of the Technical Group noted that Cllr. Michael McCarthy had represented the Council excellently and hoped that he had derived enjoyment during the year.

Mr. Lar Power, Chief Executive thanked Cllr. Michael McCarthy and his wife Patti for their commitment on behalf of the Executive and Management Team. He presented Cllr. McCarthy with a photo book showing some highlights over the year.

### **Mír/Item 1: Toghadh an Chathaoirligh - Election of Cathaoirleach**

Cllr. Michael Doyle proposed Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh as Cathaoirleach for the coming year. He referred to Cllr. Cavanagh saying that her credentials were second to none with a record almost impossible to surpass, he noted her passion for education, farming and rural development describing her as strong, straight talking and fair.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy seconded the proposal of Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh as Cathaoirleach. Cllr. Dunphy referred to Cllr. Cavanagh as dedicated, hardworking and principled with strong political instincts.

Cllr. Michael McCarthy asked for any other proposals. As there were no other proposals Cllr. Michael McCarthy declared Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh to be elected as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council and invited her to take the Chair and Chain of Office.

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh addressed the Council as follows:

*I wish to thank my proposer Cllr. Michael Doyle and my seconder Cllr. Pat Dunphy for your kind words as well as extending my sincere thanks to all of my fellow County Councillors for honouring me here today. It's extra special to keep the chain in North Kilkenny for another year.*

*I can say with some confidence that after 51 years, the members of this Council and the people of Kilkenny are getting a known quantity this year. My goal is to bring the same dedication, cooperation and ambition to the role this year as I have in my previous three terms as Chairperson.*

*Members:*

*I have worked with most of you for many years and new Councillors more recently. We have established positive and productive working relationships, and I am determined that this will continue.*

*This cooperation is what will ensure that we deliver the best outcomes we can for the people of our county.*

*It is not an easy time to be in public life, with many challenges, demands and pressures. As Councillors, we have to be available 24/7 and we are in a sometimes hostile environment. The role and powers of Councillors in the governance of the country is often misunderstood and the limitations of our roles can sometimes lead to frustration for our constituents. We navigate these challenges to the best of our abilities but it is sometimes very difficult for us as Members and for our families.*

*This being said, I still believe that public service, especially at local level, is both a privilege and a vocation. The humble satisfaction of helping our fellow citizens solve problems and exercise their rights - Making decisions that are in the interests of our County - and of representing and exercising our democratic mandates, makes it all worthwhile.*

*I want to pay tribute to the Council officials who support us in our work. We are indeed very lucky to have such dedicated public servants here in Kilkenny. I am very grateful to all of the officials for their courtesy, professionalism and kindness over all the years. And I am relying on it now and into the future!*

*It's no news to anyone in this room that people all over Ireland and, indeed, all over the world, have such positive things to say about Kilkenny and what a wonderful place it is to visit. Throughout our county we have vibrant streets, dynamic businesses, wonderful restaurants and bars, world class museums and historical sites, beautiful parks, trees, flowers and clean lakes and rivers - this set up does not come about by accident. The love we all feel towards our home county and the work we put in to make it the best place to live in Ireland, contributes to Kilkenny's successes. That goes for those inside and outside the Chamber.*

*Finally, I want to thank my family and friends. My husband Eddie is such a stalwart support by my side, that he is often mistaken for a Councillor himself. Indeed, he is as dedicated to public service as an Elected Member, and I couldn't have served in public life for the last five decades without his love, support and resilience. And of course I am delighted he is here today.*

*My children have grown up sharing me with my constituents and now my grandchildren do the same. I am delighted that they are all here today: My daughter Sarah who has come from Miami, my daughter Anne Marie and her husband Frank, my son Brian and his wife Mary, and my grandchildren: Olivia, Aoibhín, Edward, Andrew, John and Tess. I am delighted to be joined by my brother Dan and my niece Meg who I think you all know. Welcome to extended family and friends from Dungarvan, Gowran, Kilmuckridge, Johnstown, Kilmanagh and Inistiogue/ Florida.*

*It is a very special day for my loved ones and for me personally. The sense of honour and responsibility that the Office of Chair bestows never dims. I am so lucky to have been blessed with good health to stay in Local Government for so long. My fellow Councillors from all sides of the House and the Council staff have been my second family throughout all my adult life and I really appreciate the support I have received during the last 51 years.*

*I am delighted to take the Chair for the fourth time. And I want to sincerely thank you all for sharing this day with me.*

*Gura raibh mile smith agaibh go leir*



Cllr. Andrew McGuinness congratulated Cllr. Cavanagh stating that he was the third generation of his family to have voted for her noting that she was the longest serving female Elected Member nationally.

Cllr. Tomás Breathnach congratulated Cllr. Cavanagh mentioning her ability, work rate and judgment. He assured her of the cooperation of the Technical Group during her term.

Cllr. Michael McCarthy stated that he was delighted for Cllr. Cavanagh and her husband Eddie, and he noted that during her previous terms her manner in the Chamber was excellent.

Cllr. Joe Malone congratulated the new Cathaoirleach who he described as a great friend. He thanked Cllr. Michael Delaney who had served as Leas Cathaoirleach for 6 months as well as Cllr. Peter Cleere who had served as Leas Cathaoirleach for the previous 6 months.

Cllr. David Fitzgerald welcomed Cllr. John Brennan back to the Chamber, he observed the historical significance of the moment stating that Cllr. Cavanagh was the longest serving woman in any political role since the formation of the state saying that this signifies her resilience and her sense of duty and service.

Mr. Lar Power, Chief Executive congratulated Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh wishing her the very best and noting that 51 year term as an Elected Member was no mean feat.

## **Mír/Item 2: Toghadh an Leas-Chathaoirligh - Election of Leas Cathaoirleach**

Cllr. David Fitzgerald proposed Cllr. Fidelis Doherty as Leas Cathaoirleach. He referred to her years of service as a Councillor having been elected 4 times and as a tireless worker, grandmother and a steady pair of hands.

Cllr. Joe Lyons seconded the proposal of Cllr. Fidelis Doherty as Leas Cathaoirleach. She referred to the importance of this role as a support to the Cathaoirleach describing her as a leader and someone we all look up to, he noted that he first came across Cllr. Doherty as a Rural Affairs Correspondence on local radio.

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh called for any other proposals. As there were no other proposals Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh declared Cllr. Fidelis Doherty to be elected as Leas Cathaoirleach. Cllr. Cavanagh invited Cllr. Fidelis Doherty to come forward and take her Chain of Office. Cllr. Fidelis Doherty thanked her proposer and seconder and said it was an honour to be Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllrs. John Coonan, Eugene McGuinness, John Brennan, Maria Dollard, Joe Lyons, Deirdre Cullen, Jenny Catt Slattery and Pat Dunphy congratulated Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh and Cllr. Fidelis Doherty on their election as Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach and offered the support of all Members for the coming year. Cllr. Fidelis Doherty offered her support to Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh and stated that she will be available to support her during the year.

Mr. Lar Power, Chief Executive congratulated Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh on her election as Cathaoirleach. He wished her well in her role as First Citizen of Kilkenny. The Executive and staff look forward to working with her and the Council as we work through these challenging times and progress the many projects you referred to in your address. He assured her of the support of all staff and hoped that she will have an enjoyable year.

Mr. Lar Power congratulated Cllr. Fidelis Doherty as Leas Cathaoirleach and wished her well.

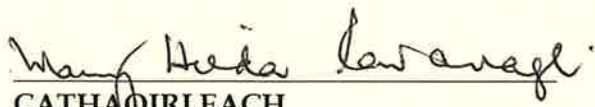
**Mír/Item 3: Dátaí do Ghnáthchruinnithe - Dates for Ordinary Meetings**

It was proposed by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and agreed:

*"That Kilkenny County Council hereby approves the following dates for Plenary Meetings of Kilkenny County Council for the period June 2025 to May 2026:*

July 2025.....	21 <sup>st</sup> July, 2025
<b>August 2025.....</b>	<b>No Meeting</b>
September 2025.....	15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2025
October 2025:.....	20 <sup>th</sup> October, 2025
November 2025:.....	17 <sup>th</sup> November, 2025
December 2025:.....	15 <sup>th</sup> December, 2025
January 2026:.....	19 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026
February 2026.....	16 <sup>th</sup> February, 2026
March 2026:.....	16 <sup>th</sup> March, 2026
April 2026:.....	20 <sup>th</sup> April, 2026
May 2026:.....	18 <sup>th</sup> May, 2026

That concluded the business of the meeting.

  
CATHAoirleach

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DATE

