

CEANTAR BARDASACH CHATHAIR CHILL CHAINNIGH
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF KILKENNY CITY

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON
FRIDAY, 11th JUNE, 2021, AT 4.00. pm**

Present/ I Láthair:-

Councillors/Comhairleoirí: Cllr. Martin Brett, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Joe Malone, Cllr. David Fitzgerald, Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Maria Dollard

Apologies: None

Also Present: Mr. Tim Butler, Director of Services, Mr. Ian Gardner, Senior Engineer, Ms. Anne Maria Walsh, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. Teresa Mahon, Staff Officer.

Cllr. John Coonan opened and addressed the meeting as follows

“ Before we commence the election of mayor today I want to thank you my colleagues for giving me the honour and privilege of being made Mayor of Kilkenny City for the past year.

2020/21 will best be remembered for the impact of covid-19 pandemic that has been touched every city across the world, Kilkenny city is no different. To all those of bereaved are lost loved ones are thoughts and prayers are with you.

To all Frontline workers, community volunteers whose selfless work and support health protection and lifesaving roles and who responded to the needs of the public throughout the pandemic, I want to offer our sincerest appreciation.

2021 will also be remembered for the response of Communities and public bodies in this time of need. From local authority point of view the response from the community helpline, transport for patients to appointments, staff assisting our colleagues and health services to name but a few.

Other assistance provided to the public and businesses within the city such as the one-way system to facilitate social distancing on our streets and extension of time for pedestrianization of Kieran Street which continues to be extended, outdoor seating, Saturday markets, online vouchers through the local Enterprise office to assist businesses having an online presence and business support grants to mention but a few.

In the face of the covid pandemic much progress and success has been achieved.

Our civic festivals St Patrick's Day, Yulefest and Octoberfest we're all hugely successful. The new butler gallery, has opened its doors, the new skateboard park and Riverside Garden opened to the public with a tremendous response of positivity from young and old.

Kilkenny City was presented with the eyeball for the fifth time this year and we were referred to by the judges as the perennial table toppers.

I want to also extend my congratulations to Cartoon Saloon for the global success and accolades with the latest animation of wolfwalkers which has won over 50 Awards and nominated for a Golden Globe.

Sporting success also come by way of our senior camogie team, the captain Lucinda Gahan bringing home the All Ireland O Duffy cup.

URDF and active travel funding received for Kilkenny city will enable many significant schemes to be undertaken including the city traffic management plan, the city centre liveability project ,city mobility works and upgrades including Ormonde St, Kieran Street, St Mary's Lane and Barrack Lane.

Approved URDF funding for the lighting up medieval mile buildings including the Tholsel, Rothe house, Canice's cathedral, the Courthouse and John's Bridge.

Together with local funding for the provision of resurfacing works through the local roads budget on John Street, parliament street, Irishtown, James's Street and Parnell Street.

Progress continues to be made including the aforementioned skatepark, Riverside Garden The Brew house, Horse Barrack Lane and the Courtyard to the rear of the court house will be completed by years end. Planning permission to go ahead at the development and design will be complete before years end.

New urban street plan permission granted and design / development complete by the end of this year. The new state-of-the-art library has gone out to tender and expected to commence in early autumn.

After several meetings and a significant body of work the county and city development plan is expected to be completed by early Autumn.

Celebration of two important events in the celebration of the Friary Street Ambush, local volunteers Tom Hennessy and Michael Darmody and an Innocent civilian Thomas Dullord lost their lives. The unveiling of the memorial to Thomas Woodgate, the youngest Irish soldier killed in WWI. Memorials such as this add significantly to the telling of important story stories of Kilkenny City and County.

Housing s is a HUGELY important topic in Kilkenny, which I am delighted to have seen significant progress in the past 12 months. Recent projects included 40 housing units at Callan Road, 28 houses completed on Nuncio rd. and 22 apartments at the last stage of development. 18 near completion at Park Nua on Castlecomer road, Walkin street 27 apartments completed and inhabited. Hebron Rd 58 at an advanced stage of

completion. That a total of 193 units that have I believe and will provide essential housing to the Citizens in Kilkenny City.

This together the infrastructural development at Bregagh Valley in the western environs which will bring access to 3000 new homes, 2 secondary schools and a Primary School.

Significant progression in the refurbishment / restoration at St Kenny's Well with the completion of the review of the development plan commissioned by the heritage office.

The agreed plan for the 17-acre biodiversity and amenity / recreation park at Dunmore is undoubtedly an exciting and welcome offering to Kilkenny city and county.

Even in times of a pandemic, with most businesses closed, I decided to write to individuals for support for the annual Mayors Christmas Fundraiser. I made the decision to give the proceeds to two organisations and let them distribute funds to those who most needed it. Alone and the Lions Club were the two registered charities whom I felt were best positioned to help those less fortunate. The response was astonishing, we raised over 23,500 euro and a significant part of the fund raising was in no small way due the support from the public and in particular a local business owner Mr Fran Grincell who ran a 12-night kickathon in Dean Street. .

Before I finish I think the successes we have achieved in such drastic times are down to partnership, community and a concerted effort to work together for the greater good of Kilkenny City and its citizens.

I have been proud to have been Mayor of Kilkenny City and play my part in our recovery but also, I'm just as proud of the work all of you as public representatives have done with our colleges in the city taskforce, chamber of commerce, Kilkenny local authority, gardai, and the general public, I truly believe this is the key to a successful City as we are all stronger when we work together.

I want to thank the press and radio for the generous and support to keep the public informed and safe in times of great difficulty.

Thank you to Cathaoirleach of KCC Andrew McGuinness for his partnership and a job well done.

I would like to thank my colleagues for your continued support to me over the last 12-months, the executive and all in City Hall for your support and help."

Tributes were paid to Cllr. John Coonan by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. David Fitzgerald, Cllr Eugene McGuinness and Cllr Maria Dollard on his year as Mayor. It was a difficult year but he carried out his role with skill, kindness, expertise and dignity.

Mr. Tim Butler on his own behalf and on behalf of the staff thanked Cllr. Coonan for his professionalism and support during such a difficult year. Mr. Butler presented Cllr. Coonan with a book of photographs and a portrait of his family on his election day as a reminder of his time in office.

Summons of Meeting:

Notice dated 4th June, 2021, was read, convening the Statutory Meeting of the Municipal District of Kilkenny City for this date, for the purpose of electing a Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Municipal City for the ensuing year.

Adoption of Procedure:

It was

Proposed by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness

Seconded by Cllr. Martin Brett

And Agreed:

“That the procedure laid out under Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2001 be adhered to for the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor”.

Item No. 1. Election of Mayor:

Proposed by: Cllr. Joe Malone

Seconded by: Cllr. Martin Brett

And unanimously resolved:

“That Cllr. Andrew McGuinness be elected to fill the Office of Mayor for the ensuing year.”

Cllr. Andrew McGuinness took the chain of office. All Members congratulated the Mayor on his election and the outgoing Mayor, Cllr. John Coonan, on his hard work and commitment during his mayoralty.

Mr. Tim Butler, Director of Service, on behalf of the Executive and all the staff, congratulated Cllr. McGuinness.

Cllr. Andrew McGuinness address the Municipal District as follows:

“I want to start by thanking my proposer and seconder for their kind words and my fellow elected members for putting their trust in me to carry out the task of Mayor for the coming year.

That is something I will not take for granted and I want to assure all of the members that I will be a fair Chairman and I will carry out my duties as Mayor with the same respect for the office that was held by every Mayor before me.

It’s a huge personal honor for me because of the history the position shares with my family. Following my Father, Grandfather and Great Grand Uncle in continuing such a wonderful tradition is something I’m very proud of.

The office of Mayor is something that I have looked on with the greatest respect since I was a child. I will never forget the pride that my late Grandfather Mick McGuinness took in wearing the Mayors chain, so much so that it was difficult to take it from him.

He was Mayor 7 times. I was at every Mayoral election that I was old enough to attend. I've seen my Grandfather and my Father elected Mayor and I was here for the election of Margaret Tynan, Kieran Crotty, Seamus Pattison, Tommy Delaney, John Bolger, and others long before I ever decided to get into politics. Now I'm fortunate enough to have voted in 18 Mayoral elections and I've been elected in two.

It's a huge personal achievement for me and I'm delighted to have my partner, children, and parents here to share it.

The position of Mayor holds a special place in the hearts and minds of so many in this city. It's not about the person that wears the chain, it's the people you represent and the deep history that goes along with it. While we need to modernise and progress as a council, we also need to protect that history and the traditions that have been upheld by generations of elected representatives that have shaped Kilkenny City from this very building. Some of the traditional aspects that have formed part of Mayoral elections in the past are not part of today's proceedings as Covid continues to have an impact on how we go about our business. It's disappointing that we don't have the sword and mace on display, but I thank the members for continuing the tradition of wearing our ceremonial robes for the occasion.

Some people may find these traditions to be archaic and maybe not as relevant today as they were to previous Borough Councils and Corporations. However, I believe that we have a duty, as elected members to this council, to preserve the civic traditions and values that have been upheld by members and respected by the people of Kilkenny for generations. It is part of our heritage and history and goes hand in hand with the preservation of our City status.

Over the last 15 months we have all made great sacrifices professionally and within our own families. We watched with great sadness as families lost loved ones, businesses shut their doors and people lost their jobs. We entered a period of uncertainty that we have never witnessed before.

But, with all of that, emerged an unbelievable strength within every community that has given hope and a sense of determination to not only fight our way out of this crisis but to come out of it better and stronger. As I have said before, there is a newfound determination to improve, to progress and to do better. There's a new fire in the bellies of our communities and you can see it within our business community as they reopen and welcome us back through their doors.

There is a greater appreciation for what we have and a desire to build on it. As we emerge from one of the most difficult periods of our time, you can sense the excitement as we get closer to normality. It's a new chapter for all of us and I believe this will be a year of positivity, as we all reacquaint ourselves with our normal lives and all of the things, we have missed out on over the last year.

Unfortunately, some people missed out on a lot more than others and it is our duty to do all we can to support them. Our local musicians for example, have been left behind in terms of proper Government supports, yet they continue to entertain us all from their own homes.

I want to take this opportunity to once again call on Minister Catherine Martin to provide proper supports for working musicians who don't sell tickets or have albums in the charts, but who entertain us in our local pubs, at our weddings and celebrations and who are only a phone call away when they are needed to perform for a local charity or worthy cause.

They have been forgotten about and left without a clear plan. Many of them are my friends and I know they are suffering from mental health issues as a result of dealing with such uncertainty. Those working musicians were not given a road map or a proper grant scheme that facilitated them and Minister Martin needs to address this urgently. Our publicans, who are only just starting to reopen, have endured the most difficult period in their existence and they too were left in limbo for far too long. They deserve great credit as they recently responded like a call to arms when Smithwicks announced that they would close the Smithwicks Experience.

They have gone above and beyond to prevent this from happening and now it seems there is light at the end of the tunnel. I want to commend Anthony Morrisson and the Vintners for their efforts and as Mayor, I will stand with them in that campaign. Our young people have missed out on so much in terms of their social lives and their education, they too need our support. Mental Health is quickly emerging as the next big challenge after Covid and we need to be mindful of that and support our young people, in any way we can.

The pandemic has also brought out the best in people. So many individuals and groups within our local communities have done extraordinary things to make such a difficult time a little easier for our elderly and most vulnerable.

During my term as Chairman of Kilkenny County Council I have seen firsthand the great deeds that have been carried out by exceptional people throughout our communities. It is my intention to acknowledge that good work over the next 12 months and to let those people know that their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

As soon as restrictions are lifted, I will open the doors of this building and welcome individuals, community groups, sports organisations, charities and so on, because I firmly believe that this building, where so many decisions that have shaped this city were made, belongs to the people of this City and should be open to each and every one of them to share the deep history that is attached to it. We may even see some of our local musicians perform in the chamber. I want the office of Mayor to be accessible to everyone.

As I previously stated, I believe this will be a year of positivity and it has already started – this week we formally opened our new Skate Park and Riverside Garden, the start of an exciting new chapter for the development of Kilkenny City and a taste of great things yet to come as we gradually open the Abbey Quarter.

Our vaccine programme locally hit a milestone with over 35,000 vaccines now delivered in Kilkenny and the level of Covid related hospitalisations is at its lowest level

in over 9 months. Kilkenny has done particularly well in terms of keeping our covid cases at one of the lowest levels in the country and the people of both City and County deserve great credit for that. We can finally see the light at the end of a very dark tunnel. I'm looking forward with optimism to the challenges that lie ahead, and I will do my utmost to carry out my duties as Mayor with professionalism, diligence, and a duty of care to the people of Kilkenny City.

I want to mention the late Denis Byrne who looked after City Hall so well. He worked alongside my father, grandfather and myself when I was Mayor in 2014. He is sadly missed and I always think of him when I come into City Hall.

I want to thank my parents, brothers and sister for all of the work they put into helping me along the way. I want to say a particular thank you to my Dad for his guidance and support and for instilling in me a great pride and respect for this city and its people.

To my partner Carol I am so grateful for your patience and support and for ensuring our children Jack and Phoebe don't miss any opportunities due to the fact that I'm away from home so much.

The support of my family and friends at election time and throughout my political life is something I will be forever grateful for and I would not be here without their help. Lastly, I want to thank the people of Kilkenny City for electing me and placing their trust in me to represent them. As your Mayor, I will not let you down and my door here in City Hall will always be open. “

Item No. 2: Election of Deputy Mayor

Proposed by: Cllr. David Fitzgerald
Seconded by: Cllr. Joe Malone

And unanimously resolved

“That Cllr. Martin Brett be elected to fill the Office of Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year.

All members congratulated Cllr. Martin Brett on his election.

Cllr. Martin Brett thanked everyone for their support and accepted the chain of office. He congratulated Cllr. Andrew McGuinness on his election as Mayor offered his full support to him for the coming year.

Mr. Butler, congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and on behalf of the Executive. He is looking forward to working together over the next 12 months .

Item No. 3: Fix Date of Meetings

Proposed by: Cllr. John Coonan
Seconded by: Cllr. Martin Brett
And agreed by all.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
MAYOR

Date: _____