

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF CORK CITY COUNCIL

HELD ON FRIDAY, 15th JUNE 2018

- PRESENT** An tArd-Mhéara, Comhairleoir T. Fitzgerald in the Chair
- NORTH EAST** Comhairleoirí S. Cunningham, T. Tynan, T. Brosnan, J. Kavanagh.
- NORTH CENTRAL** Comhairleoirí T. Gould, F. Ryan, K. O’Flynn, L. O’Donnell, J. Sheehan
- NORTH WEST** Comhairleoirí M. Nugent, K. Collins, M. O’Sullivan.
- SOUTH EAST** Comhairleoirí K. McCarthy, C. O’Leary, D. Cahill, L. McGonigle, N. O’Keeffe, S. O’Shea.
- SOUTH CENTRAL** Comhairleoirí M. Finn, F. Kerins, P. Dineen, T. O’Driscoll, S. Martin.
- SOUTH WEST** Comhairleoirí J. Buttimer, H. Cremin, M. Shields, F. Dennehy, P.J. Hourican, T. Moloney.
- ALSO PRESENT** Ms. A. Doherty, Chief Executive.
Mr. J. G. O’Riordan, Meetings Administrator.
Ms. U. Ramsell, Staff Officer, Corporate and External Affairs.
Mr. P. Moynihan, Director of Services, Corporate and External Affairs.
Mr. D. Joyce, A/Director of Services, Environment and Recreation.

An tArdmhéara recited the opening prayer.

1. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

On the proposal of Comhairleoir S. Martin, seconded by Comhairleoir F. Dennehy, An Chomhairle agreed to Suspend Standing Orders to allow media cameras in the Chamber for the handover of the Lord Mayor’s Chain.

An tArd-Mhéara T. Fitzgerald addressed the meeting.

2. ELECTION OF AN tARD-MHÉARA

An tArd-Mhéara T. Fitzgerald sought nominations for the office of Ard-Mhéara:

Comhairleoir P. Dineen proposed and Comhairleoir D. Cahill seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir M. Finn

As there were no other nominations, An tArd-Mhéara declared Comhairleoir M. Finn elected to the office of Ard-Mhéara.

An tArd-Mhéara Comhairleoir M. Finn then addressed An Chomhairle:

A Iar Ard-Mhéara Comhairleoir Mac Gearailt, iar admhearanna eile ón tearma seo agus roimhe sin, comh Comhairleoirí, a phríomhfheidmennach agus foireann Banistaoichta na

Cathrach, Seanadóir, baill na mean chumarsaide, mo chlann fhéin, mo chaired uilig agus iad ó thar lear, a dhaoine uaisle go léir.

Outgoing Lord Mayor Cllr. Fitzgerald, previous Lord Mayors from this term and indeed other previous office-holders, fellow Councillors, Chief Executive, Management and staff of the Council, Senator, those in the print and broadcast media, members of my family, friends, those who travelled from afar...

An rud is annamh, is iontach... what is seldom, is wonderful. Agus is mór an onor dom a bheith tofa mar Ard-Mhéara Chorcaí, an chéad Ard-mhéara neamhspleach – gan pháirtí – le breis is seachtú bliain ó Mícheál Ó Síocháin i Leith. It's a huge honour for me to be elected Lord Mayor of Cork, the first independent to hold the office since Michael Sheehan in 1945.

Teann sé go croí ionam bheith tofa don oifig ceann lena raibh an bheirt Ard-Mhéara a raibh clú agus cáil orthu ar fúd na tíre agus an domhan, Traolach MacSuibhine agus Tomás MacCurtain aitheanta. Bhí tionchar ar a rinne said ar fud an domhan agus an slabhra seo a caitheamh acu agus is féidir lion a rá ó shin i Leith, gur rith an smaoineamh ceanna le gach Ard-Mhéara a lean iad.

It's very humbling for me to wear this unique and iconic chain of office, now 231 years old, the very one worn by the two most famous Mayors in the world of their time, Terence MacSwiney and Tomás MacCurtain, whose lives and indeed deaths created waves across the globe and focused huge attention on Cork and the Irish struggle for independence. I think it is fair to say that every man and woman who has occupied this office since has followed in their footsteps.

Ba mhaith lion buíochas a gabhail do mo comh comhairleoirí a thug an phribléid mór dom anocht agus go hairithe na comhairleoirí a rinne an ceangailte nua sa Chomhairle seo in a bhfuillmid abalta post an tArd-Mhéara a athrú do gach grúpa. Is maith an stratéis é ag dul ar aghaidh don Chomhairle a leiríonn pobail difriúla eagsúla sa chathair. Deanfaidh mé mo dhícheall an phost cailiúil agus stairiúil seo bhaint amach go rathuil agus go mbeidh Corcaigh níos fear as tar éis mo thearma. Buíochas comh maith do na daoine i toghceantar Corcaigh Iar Theas a thug votáil dom ag an toghchain aituil deirineach ceithre bliain í shin agus mo cairde go léir a cabhraigh lion ag an am ... in easpa an tacaíocht iontach sin, ní bheadh mé in ann an onor more seo a ghlacadh.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for bestowing such an honour on me this evening, particularly those who signed up to a new arrangement that has facilitated the more extensive rotation of the office and the election of an independent Lord Mayor. Grateful thanks to the people of the Cork South Central Ward who voted for me at the locals in 2014 and who have ultimately put me here. Buíochas also to my great friends and family who helped me during the years, especially at election time – many of whom are in the chamber tonight, some of whom sadly are no longer with us but we remember them too – without all their support, I would not be standing here today as Ard-Mhéara Chorcaí.

Ag deireadh, ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas agus comhghairdeas a gabhail don Ard-Mhéara atá ag dul as oifig, Cllr. Tony Fitzgearld, as an obair iontach a rinne sé (i eineacht lena bhean chéile agus a clan) imbliana agus as an cabhair a thug sé dom i rith na seachtaine. Agus cinnte fresin do na hArd-Mhéara eile sa terma seo agus fresin do foireann

Comhairleoir Contae Chorcaí go léir acu a thug tacaíocht dom bheith ullamh. Míle buíochas dibh go léir.

I would like to congratulate and thank the outgoing Lord Mayor, Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald and his family for a great year in office and the excellent work he carried out in the role, sometimes in very challenging circumstances. I was delighted to deputise for him on a number of occasions during his year and appreciate the way he kept me in the loop in recent months. He has done a fantastic job, no pressure, culminating in the visit of the Royals yesterday. In this light, I thank also the other Lords mayor of this council term – as well as council staff – for their advice and support in preparing for tonight and the year ahead.

It is nearly 100 years on from the year of the three Lords Mayor, two of whom gave their lives in defence of this office, this chain, this city, this country. Although the nature of their struggle has changed considerably, all of us in this chamber who now follow in their wake continue to be guided by a moral compass and informed by a social conscience in dealing with the new issues of today.

I am also conscious that 73 years have lapsed since an Independent Councillor rose in this chamber to be voted in as Lord Mayor. Michael Sheehan... the last one to do so in 1945. We had our first Sinn Féin Lord Mayor in a century, also in this term, so these last few years of council have been historic for many reasons.

This office rose to international prominence following the death of MacCurtain and MacSwiney within months of each other, in 1920. But such a global reach was nothing new for Cork which at the time was a well-known merchant city of international trade, commerce and culture. A glance at the history of the butter market and trade to and from our port reveals as much. Turn the pages on, a century later and Cork continues to be a leader here in Ireland, in Europe and beyond in terms of education, IT, food, pharma, research and many other proficiencies. To borrow a sentiment used by President John F. Kennedy here in our Concert Hall 55 years ago, ‘Cork is still old Cork, but it has found a new mission’.

That new mission is shared by all Councillors in this Chamber, so I am not going to stand before you tonight and talk about what I can deliver for Cork, because it is not in my sole remit to do so. My priorities for the year ahead are shared by all other Councillors here and indeed the executive – whether it’s provision of more and better quality housing (the most pressing need of our time), better response times to housing maintenance, helping to combat anti-social behaviour, providing higher quality recreational options for the people of the city, increasing or prioritising funding for arts, sports, festivals, ensuring our roads and estates are safe and well managed and developing effective flood defences – these are things we are all working to achieve for those who put us here.

There are particular areas I am interested in, however, and I will use the year ahead to shine a brighter light on the work of the community and voluntary sector that glues together the fabric of this city. I will draw upon my visits to primary and secondary schools – very familiar territory to me having worked in the sector for nigh on 15 years – to promote the benefits and importance of hard work, friendships, volunteerism, activism, civic responsibility and engagement, and of having a positive life outlook.

I will encourage those from backgrounds influenced by disadvantage to step up and be counted as active members of this city. To this end, Cork needs to work even harder on being an inclusive place for all its citizens and as Lord Mayor I will endeavour to help stitch together and support all the various strands of community-building already in operation.

Cork is looking outward and forward with confidence...we are building on our past which is always close beneath our feet... we need to tread lightly on our history and ensure that progress continues to be a balancing act between our past and what has brought us to where we are to the future we envisage.

We are a city rising. 5000 jobs are in the making across several major capital developments already under construction with the promise of more to come. New hotels are springing up across town to meet the demand from a large increase of visitors; the transformative Docklands project is back on the agenda while new parks, in the Tramore Valley and Marina will be open by next year; a long-awaited flood defence system gets underway in Quarter Four this year while an even-longer awaited Event Centre is within touching distance. A €16m refurb of the Water Treatment Centre is planned...new bridges and motorway projects will renew our infrastructure...Companies are queuing up to come to Cork with incubation businesses of 200 that could easily become 2,000. With this in mind, we should be brave: we should look at developing a strategic corridor in the new western approaches to the city and develop a national Software and Science campus that will help attract and keep these new businesses... these are exciting times for Cork, these are changing times for Cork. We need to step out of our second-city speak and notch it up to first gear.

With change, of course, comes challenge, which Cork people have never shirked from or been afraid of. And while 5,000 plus new jobs are to be welcomed in an enlarged city, all of the developments mentioned are certain to pose difficulties also for Council and Government: where will all these people live? how will they be able to access the city from the new suburbs? what will happen to our cost of living? Managing change with one eye on the past and another on the future will represent a major challenge for a bigger Cork City but it is one I'm confident we are well positioned to tackle.

As referred to earlier, the foes we now face in this city have changed since the councils of 100 years ago and the 1920s, but the status and future of Cork city did come under a different sort of threat in more recent times. This was from modern day pressure groups and special interests, a new brigade in Dublin Castle, and the consequences could have been equally catastrophic for a city and its people were it not for the leadership of our most recent Lord Mayor and Council Management. They took on the baton and led the charge for the city during the boundary extension deliberations which have yielded new electoral wards published just yesterday and which will come into full force next year.

So I would like at this point to pay tribute to Cllr Shields, Cllr O'Leary, Cllr Cahill and Cllr Fitzgerald – the four Lord Mayors from this term - who along with the Chief Executive Ann Doherty, Council Management and other Cllrs...Sean Martin, Terry Shannon, Mick Nugent and John Buttimer as Party Leaders... spearheaded the City Council's response in the face of considerable opposition, to ensure the future of a bigger and better Cork will be founded on honest ambition and on principled pragmatism rather than economic machinations.

MacSwiney wrote in *Principles of Freedom* that, ‘from a good thing rightly pursued can follow no bad consequence’. He added, “We should not forget even in the thickest fight that the enemy of today and yesterday may be the genuine comrade of tomorrow.” Like those who have occupied this office in recent years, I will work alongside my fellow Councillors to guarantee that the status of this city will not be diminished or lose any of its lustre as Cork steps into a new dawn, bringing those who may have spoken out against the city along with us into the new Council next summer.

There will be a warm welcome for the people and communities of Ballincollig, Tower, Blarney, Glanmire, Lehenaghmore, Frankfield, Grange and all those who will join us in the city once the boundary extension is enacted. Many, but certainly not all, would have considered themselves in the city prior to then, such was their proximity to the old, outdated city/county lines. Much of the negative talk and hype around the city’s expansion was rooted in political expedience and self-preserving veneer. I can assure all those now about to come and live within the city that they will benefit from being part of the capital of the Munster region and I encourage them all to engage with the council, with individuals, groups and all those who are now your new neighbours and new friends to ensure a bigger Cork is a better Cork. I know that the benefits of being a part of the City will far outweigh the negative spin and that both the city and county can work hand in hand to ensure Cork – in its entirety - is the place in Ireland to live, work and visit. This office will continue to do everything it can to prepare for and promote this new synergy in the 12 months ahead.

But as the city grows outwards, we need to mind its centre and keep our home-grown businesses there alongside the global giants; we need people living in our city and well as working there, we need to influence a change in national government in how rates are arrived at, try to address the escalating rent levels in the centre, constantly review our parking regimes and how the city is accessed, while continuing to tackle dereliction that has been a blight on our town but from which a new city is now emerging.

We need to look after our traditional residential communities and not lumber them with large private apartment blocks, or student units, without a strong strategic hand guiding the future design of the city. Students help keep Cork young, and our colleges are invaluable to the city and county – UCC alone contributes over €2m to the city every day - but institutions like U.C.C. and C.I.T. must fit their expansion plans in with the overall plans for the city, not swamp them...A living city needs established residential communities at its core and I urge management and planners to remember this when it comes to planning the future of the city and protecting communities that have taken generations to develop and which distinguish Cork from everywhere else. I think both institutions should also take serious steps to develop a Third Level campus on the north side of the river to inspire access to education for all.

We also have to keep addressing the negatives and be positive in our approach to tackling the problems that we face: Cork, like this chain, has survived famine, wars, fires and floods principally because of the strength and endurance of its citizens and it’s that kind of resilience that will stand to us again as the city countenances and tackles new problems like housing shortage, homelessness, educational disadvantage. To that end, we need Central Government – and those we elect locally to govern nationally – to up its game and empower us as a local authority with the tools, and finances, necessary for this job.

It is now up to this new generation of Corkonians to follow the lead given by so many before us and work together to ensure Cork can realise all of its potential...a Healthy City, a Learning City, a Sanctuary City and a welcoming city for everyone. Cork must continue to work to be a safe haven for all of its people where food, shelter, education and opportunity are the preserve of all, not just the few.

The City is led by an excellent Chief Executive who showed great leadership, authority and most importantly integrity in the boundary extension process and in addressing some of the many obstacles facing Cork's growth. Our Councillors work hard with various sectors of education, business, statutory services and charity to help make things better. And when you add in a vibrant community and voluntary sector in Cork you get an idea of how effectively we can function together, operating in common cause, in the face of adversity or significant challenges...the time is now right for all of us to deliver for an enlarged Cork City and maybe take away some of the burdens faced by those voluntary and charitable organisations who have been holding up the flood for so long at the coalface. They are tired from it and can no longer be the sole deliverers of services to those less well off than others.

Mention of flood and it is important to recognise the huge need for defence measures to be put in place for Cork. How we do that has been a source of much debate and controversy...but there is a short-term need as well as the bigger picture and while a tidal barrier may well be the solution in the long term, we cannot allow flooding to be a determinant in the city for another 9 years and that is why the Part 8 development alone for Morrissons Island is so important. If we can limit flooding at the city's lowest point, as well as rejuvenate the public realm, it will be one step in our flood defence armoury...With global warming and rising sea levels, Cork will ultimately need a tidal barrier as well as the other measures being implemented, so government needs to plan for that now....and that's a message that needs to be taken to Government by our T.Ds.

The City Centre movement strategy prioritising public transport, and its implications for our main city thoroughfare which is walked on by 200,000 pedestrians daily, returns in August. The overall policy aim of improving public transport into a rapidly changing urban environment is a key goal but it must be done with an eye on the present as well as the future. The Council listened to the fears and concerns of traders in April when the priority measures were paused, but with the policy crucial in terms of the expansion of the city – increased employment to the tune of 5,000 jobs in next five years and traffic and pedestrian movements - we must grasp the nettle, promote the new proposals as the new way of doing things rather than approaching it from a negative standpoint. The Council must assist in addressing any negative fallout or hidden consequences the second time around.

In all of this, we must be careful not to over-stretch ourselves and we need also to retain what makes Cork such a unique offering. While at times we may envy Dublin and its light rail network and its capital feel, Cork has prospered precisely because it is a counterbalance to that and retains a quirky, small city buzz to it... we should not lose the charm and warmth of Cork just for modernisation and progress and we must ensure we keep the best things that make us what we are and make them even stronger.

I am honoured to be voted in as the first non-party Lord Mayor in generations, but I do so standing on the shoulders of many before me who did not get the chance, I think straight

away of Mairín Quill, Con O’Connell and others who worked hard for their constituencies and who would have relished the prospect of being Cork’s First Citizen. And while I am realist enough to know that it will depend on how the numbers fall at the next election, I hope that this D’Hondt process - borrowed from a Belgian lawyer of the 1870s and brought in, in 2014 – will continue to allow those from other than the historically main parties to be involved in the decision-making process. The old pact of a few has changed to a rotation of many and I think the result has made this Council a more diverse one, reflecting the equally diverse nature of the population of the city. Whether or not the system extends into the new Council following next year’s election remains to be seen and will be a matter for the voters first and the negotiators second but I believe the Council has been strengthened, not weakened, by its differences.

In speaking of previous councils, I would like to mention my father, also Mick Finn (some would say the real one), who served as a one-term member of this Council in the late 70s and early 80s – alongside Jim Corr who I also had the pleasure to work with up to his recent retirement...special mention must be given to Jim for helping to deliver the fantastic Nano Nagle Place which is already such an asset to the city; among my Dad’s highlights was being involved in the development of the ground-breaking L.U.T.S. plan which transformed Cork and which I think needs constant reinvention to cater for the expanded, modern city we have today.

In the words of Dublin footballer Philly McMahon in his brilliant book, *The Choice*, “life is not really about what you have, it’s what you do with what you have” and it’s fair to say that I have been elevated to this position today because of people – family, friends, colleagues - who have helped me to do things with what I had.

Thanks to my mother Marie, brothers Tim and Paul, sister Catherine for all their unwavering support and tolerance down the years; to Ann, Jo, Paul, Eoghan Rachel, Jack and Kate, Pamela and Kathy, family friends including the Harringtons, neighbours, aunts, uncles and cousins, huge thanks for all your help in getting to this point. I’m also blessed with great friends, work colleagues, teachers and school friends whose influence throughout the years has been immense, whether it’s my lifelong friends and teachers from Sullivans Quay (special mention to Bro Cusack whom Cllr Martin honoured with a Lord Mayors Award in 2005), Deerpark CBS, the Barrs, my time in college in UCC and DIT, my four years spent in Athlone, my three great years in Sydney, my former work colleagues in SCP who I toiled with for 10 years and the new gang at Cork E.T.B....you all have a played in role on this journey and I look forward to that continuing in the year and years ahead.

This is a city with huge and ever-growing ambition and the years ahead are rich with promise. We’re all in this together...and as the city moves on we should – to again quote our former Lord Mayor MacSuibhne – “be restless for noble and beautiful things...as it is how we work today will decide how we live tomorrow.”

To all our current citizens, those about to join us in the city and all those who visit or want to invest in Cork... we’re on the runway with a new trajectory plotted...come fly with us.

Míle buíochas díbh go léir... Corcaigh abú.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

On the proposal of Comhairleoir K. O'Flynn, seconded by Comhairleoir S. Martin, An Chomhairle agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue beyond 8 p.m.

3. **ELECTION OF LEAS ARDMHÉARA**

An tÁrd-Mhéara, Comhairleoir M. Finn sought nominations for the office of Leas Ard-Mhéara.

Comhairleoir H. Cremin proposed, and Comhairleoir F. Dennehy seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir T. Moloney.

Comhairleoir K. McCarthy proposed, and Comhairleoir T. Tynan seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir K. McCarthy.

A vote was called for where there appeared as follows:-

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR T. MOLONEY

FOR: Comhairleoirí J. Kavanagh, T. Gould, F. Ryan, K. O'Flynn, L. O'Donnell, J. Sheehan, M. Nugent, T. Fitzgerald, K. Collins, M. O'Sullivan, D. Cahill, L. McGonigle, N. O'Keeffe, S. O'Shea, M. Finn, F. Kerins, P. Dineen, T. O'Driscoll, J. Buttimer, H. Cremin, M. Shields, F. Dennehy, P.J. Hourican, T. Moloney. (24)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR K MCCARTHY

Comhairleoirí T. Tynan, T. Brosnan, C. O'Leary. (3)

As the number voting in favour of Comhairleoir T. Moloney exceeded those voting in favour of Comhairleoir K. McCarthy, An tÁrd-Mhéara Comhairleoir M. Finn declared Comhairleoir T. Moloney elected to the office of Leas Ard-Mhéara.

The Leas Ard-Mhéara then addressed the meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**ARD-MHÉARA
CATHAOIRLEACH**