

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF CORK CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON FRIDAY, 21st JUNE 2024

- PRESENT** An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir K. McCarthy in the chair and subsequently an tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boyle in the chair.
- NORTH EAST** Comhairleoirí K. O’Flynn, J. Maher, J. Kavanagh, M. McDonnell, T. Tynan, O. Moran.
- NORTH WEST** Comhairleoirí T. Fitzgerald, D. Boylan, J. Sheehan, M. Gould, K. Collins.
- SOUTH EAST** Comhairleoirí T. Shannon, M.R. Desmond, D. Cahill, H. Kamegni, P. Horgan.
- SOUTH CENTRAL** Comhairleoirí S. O’Callaghan, S. Martin, P. Rice, F. Kerins, P. Dineen.
- SOUTH WEST** Comhairleoirí F. Dennehy, G. Kelleher, C. Kelleher, J. Lynch, L. Harmon, T. Coleman, A. Deasy.
- ALSO PRESENT** Ms. A. Doherty, Chief Executive.
Mr. B. Geaney, Assistant Chief Executive.
Mr. P. Moynihan, Director of Services, Corporate Affairs & International Relations.
Mr. D. Joyce, Director of Services, Roads & Environment Operations.
Ms. M. Gallagher, Head of Legal Affairs.
Ms. R. Loughrey, Director of Services, Community, Culture & Placemaking.
Ms. N. Stewart, Administrative Officer, Corporate Affairs & International Relations.
Ms. V. Keating, Staff Officer, Corporate Affairs & International Relations.

An tArdmhéara recited the opening prayer.

1. **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

An Chomhairle unanimously agreed to suspend standing orders to allow media cameras into the Council Chamber for the handover of the Lord Mayor’s chain, and to allow the meeting to be streamed and recorded.

An Chomhairle further unanimously agreed to defer Agenda items 4 – 50 to the next meeting of An Chomhairle of 24th June 2024.

2. **AN tARDMHÉARA’S ADDRESS**

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir K. McCarthy addressed the meeting as follows:-

Dear colleagues, dear Chief Executive,

As outgoing Lord Mayor of Cork, a very warm welcome to the historic 1936 Council Chamber. A very warm welcome to those who have been re-elected and to those who this is your first time being an elected member of Cork City Council.

We also remember those who retired and those who didn't make it back through the recent gruelling local elections. And of course, one of the core parts of our AGM is to appoint our Council chair or the Lord Mayor. And it will fall to me very shortly to take names of candidates interested in becoming Lord Mayor of Cork for the following year and to pass this eighteenth century chain of history to its next guardian so to speak. I have but three very short reflections before we proceed.

Firstly, dear colleagues let us rejoice that the democratic process is very much alive in Cork. My dear colleagues you have not only walked 1000s of kilometres in your quest or pilgrimage to take one of the 31 seats. You have gone to suburbia and into the inner city, and knocked on 1,000s of doors. You have sacrificed your personal lives in a quest to be in the service of the people of Cork in local government. It is also important to reflect on that pilgrimage that the process is not as easy as just walking and knocking on doors. You must have belief in your message. It is a leap of faith. You have been tested. You had to be fit physically and more importantly emotionally. You met people who befriended you straight away. You met people who closed the door in your face. You met people who had their own message.

You met people who are happy, who are sad, who are very angry, who shout in your face, who don't want to talk, who are struggling in life, who seek a listener, who seek a chance, who are soaring in life, who buried a loved one, an hour before you called, a mother who just put their child to sleep, people who will ask you in for tea. You encountered opinionated people and people who have no opinion, people who are the salt of the earth, people who are guardian angels, people who you perhaps wept for in your private moments, people who you laughed with, people who invited you into their house to chat about this and that. You have met survivors. You have met people who have given up on life. You met people who are lighthouses. Plus many more. You are a pilgrim of sorts.

All of the conversations, debates and empathy with 1,000s of constituents or citizens and that personal connection piece makes Irish democracy one that is very important. You have not only rang doorbells and physically pressed the flesh so to speak but deep dived down into citizen life listening to their concerns and now being able through your election as an elected member to bring these concerns into the historic Council Chamber here and to the wider City Hall. We should never take democracy for granted especially in the world we live in today and that in some parts of the world there is no democracy. A sincere thanks to all those who voted two weeks ago.

We as local politicians saw another part of the democratic process close up when it comes to counting the votes on ballot papers. The solid count process we have in Ireland and what we have witnessed in Cork is one to be heralded, be proud of and one where great credit is due to the Office of Corporate Affairs and the Office of Franchise in Cork. And so my first message this evening is a nod on the importance of the canvass pilgrimage of sorts, the democratic process and one of thanks to you, our Council staff and especially to the citizens of our historic city who came out to support our recent local election and its democratic processes.

My second message to you concerns my year as Lord Mayor. Fifty-two weeks ago, the elected Council of the last Council term entrusted me with leadership of the Council. That has been a really deep honour and it is one thing writing about Cork history, it is another being a part of it. Indeed, it is very difficult to sum up my experiences in a few sentences.

Looking at the diary since the last Cork City Council AGM in late June last year I have been engaged with over 1,600 events. On average there have been about 30-40 events a week depending on the season.

The days have been long and the diary has been very demanding but to get to explore Cork and many of its stories has been very fulfilling. One day can feel like three days when there are so many diary events to juggle!

One hour one could be at a presentation of cheques, or the presentation of certs, and the next you journey on and could be praising someone for their sporting achievement or helping open a new business, meeting an ambassador or giving a talk at one of Cork's 118 schools or giving a tour of the Lord Mayor's Office to various community groups.

All of these events look forward and build a sense of identity for Cork's future. Some events have been varied ranging from a one person engagement to thousands of people. And of course, many of you popped up in the story boards as well to offer support.

However, across all of the events the common denominator has always been Cork. There are thousands of people in Cork engaged in not only its life and its story but enhancing its life and story. Every hour of everyday someone is doing something great for Cork and its communities.

Much of it goes without being seen but the office of Lord Mayor's gets to what I call "deep dive" down into many stories and moments. In our city such stories matter or indeed such moments need to be cherished.

The sense of togetherness, stories and moments in Cork I have promoted and spoken at length about all year. In particular I have harnessed the city's coat of arms as a message – the two towers and the ship in between and the Latin inscription – *Statio Bene Fida Carinis* – or translated "a safe harbour for ships". Whereas the element of shipping has almost moved from the city's quays, the inscription could also be re-interpreted as a connection to people – that the city is also a safe harbour for people and community life. This is its greatest story and one the City needs to mind, keep vibrant, and for all of us in this historic and innovative city to keep working on.

But during this second message of the importance of stories and togetherness it also falls to me to sincerely thank the Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Colette Finn for her expertise, support, positiveness and I would like to wish her well for the future, the Lady Mayoress Marcelline for her patience, support and love, and for her charity work, singing and dancing and all round community building with different groups, and to my parents, and siblings and wider family members for their support and love.

A sincere thanks to Finbarr Archer, Nicola O’Sullivan, Rose Fahy and Caroline Martin in the Lord Mayor’s office as well as the team in Corporate Affairs ably led by Paul Moynihan with support by Alma Murnane and Nuala Stewart – without such a team the office would not run effectively as it does but it is filled with people – a team – that really cares about the role of the office in our city and all the nuances attached to such a role and also a sincere thanks to you Chief Executive Anne [Doherty], for your friendship, partnership, curation of activities, story board creation, support and advice over the past year. And I am very conscious that this is your last AGM, so many thanks for all your work.

My dear friends, let me conclude with my third message and if I am going to go down as the singing Lord Mayor let me end my Mayoralty where I started with a verse by Rogers and Hammerstein, which in its own way became a different kind of anthem during the year,
Oh, what a beautiful morning,
oh, what a beautiful day,
I got a beautiful feeling everything’s going Cork’s way,
eh, Oh what a beautiful Day.
Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

3. **ELECTED MEMBERS ADDRESS**

Comhairleoirí T. Shannon, D. Cahill, D. Boyle, F. Kerins, K.O’ Flynn, T. Tynan, and J. Maher addressed the meeting on behalf of their respective groups.

4. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S ADDRESS**

The Chief Executive, Ann Doherty addressed the meeting.

5. **ELECTION OF AN tARDMHÉARA**

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir K. McCarthy requested nominations for the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir O. Moran and seconded by Comhairleoir S. Martin, Comhairleoir D. Boyle was nominated for the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir J. Lynch and seconded by Comhairleoir K. Collins, Comhairleoir F. Kerins was nominated for the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

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

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR D. BOYLE

Comhairleoirí J. Maher, J. Kavanagh, M. McDonnell, O. Moran, T. Fitzgerald, D. Boylan, J. Sheehan, T. Shannon, K. McCarthy, M.R. Desmond, D. Cahill, H. Kamegni, P. Horgan, S. O’Callaghan, S. Martin, P. Rice, D. Boyle, F. Dennehy, G. Kelleher, C. Kelleher, L. Harmon, T. Coleman. (22)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR F. KERINS

Comhairleoirí K. O'Flynn, T. Tynan, M. Gould, K. Collins, F. Kerins, P. Dineen, J. Lynch. (7)

ABSTAIN: Comhairleoir A. Deasy. (1)

As those voting for Comhairleoir D. Boyle were greater than those voting for Comhairleoir F. Kerins, An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir K. McCarthy declared Comhairleoir D. Boyle elected to the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

6. **AN tARDMHÉARA'S ADDRESS**

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boyle addressed An Chomhairle as follows:-

Comhairleoirí, Príomhoifigeach, Foireann catharach, Daoine uaisle agus cairde go leir.

Is mór an anóir domsa an ról seo a glacadh. 33 years ago I first came into this chamber honoured to be representing the people of this city, but also apprehensive of what was expected of me. I share those feelings again this evening.

The Council to which I was first elected operated under a different name; job titles of officials and councillors also differed. I was Green in every sense of the word, new and inexperienced on a Council which then also contained several TDs and Senators. The Council, then as now, showed differing opinions within the city. Several of the councillors represented political parties that now no longer exist. But they did exist and their contributions were important and vital in how our city has progressed.

Debate and argument have been healthy. Considering and being presented with differing visions has helped define what potential our city can have. What the Council, then and now, share among all councillors, is that the intent among all to create a city that is a better place to be, and a better place to live.

We are a city acutely aware of having a special culture and history that informs us of who we are and leads us to defining for ourselves a positive and enthusiastic future. We see ourselves as a healthy city, a learning city, a city of welcomes. In reality we are a Leading City, a city unafraid to do things differently or to learn from where things have been done differently.

Cork is an international city, very much a European city, influenced by a World outside, reacting against expectations that we should limit what we can be.

For over 50 years this city has adopted a planned led approach to reaching the potential of what that is. From the LUTS plan of the 1970s, through CASP, to the Cork Metropolitan Area Transportation Strategy of recent years, this has been a city that has dreamed of what can be, while seeking resources to realise the bringing that about.

It has only been in recent years that we have been able to put in place the more integrated proposals of these plans. A balanced city that relies less on car dependence,

that can offer more for those who can walk, cycle or take public transport. We have only started the process that signals that change. The coming years will see the wider, and necessary, infrastructure being put in place – Bus Connects, a connected cycle network, enhanced suburban rail, and ultimately a light rail system interconnected with each other.

The most affecting moment for me in the recent local election campaign was when I met a wheelchair user in Greenmount. A fiercely independent person, she described a one kilometer journey for her, every meter of which represented an unnecessary obstacle. Recently a renewal programme has started for our City Centre. This ambition needs to extend across the entire city.

The same is true of our building stock. There are too many vacant and neglected buildings in our city, buildings that have potential to house people, to give new life to communities, to provide customers for businesses particularly in the city centre.

Poet Colm Scully, in his poem ‘What News, Centurion’ describes the built fabric of the city in both loving ways, and in ways that remind us how we can be doing things better.

*Only the mossy green pavements and the tired slabs
The gullies wandering into iron grates whose imprints solemnly betray their age
Cast in Bristol or in Harrowgate
Only the uncouth housing on narrow streets
The shambled skylines with hint of grey
The topsy turvy rooves and gable ends
Crawling up hills in ever varying lines
Even the new and clean edifice confounds the eye
The glass constructs in blue metal frames
Tarpaulin green copper domes and plates vie with exotic timbers in paneled walls
None of them know their place amid the red and white sand and limestone structures
of the past*

The potential outlined in the Green and Blue Infrastructure chapter of our City Development Plan must be realised. The Tree Strategy agreed with the last Council can help us do this. We need more open space. We more Green space. The more we can provide the more this city can breathe.

One of the great strengths of our city has been the commitment of those to provide vital social services voluntarily. However, we have come to expect too much from too few for too long. So many of have given of their time in ways that lessen their enjoyment of life. We need to give greater support to those who have supported the needs of this city so readily. We need to encourage others to take up the slack. We need to bring about a new generation of volunteers to make this city tick more fairly and better.

When I began my public service, my motivation was to work towards achieving a better and safer World for my daughter and her generation. Now that ambition is also for my grandchildren and theirs. I am glad of the support of my wider family tonight. My daughter, her husband, and their children. My sisters and their families. My parent’s siblings and their families. My parents cannot be with me tonight. They have

gone to eternal reward, but I will always have the memory of the jig we danced together in our house, when we learned I would become a member of this Council 33 years ago. Is í an uauillmhian atá agam ná an Cathar bródúil seo a leiriú. Cathar atá ag dul chun tosaigh sna laethanta atá le teacht.

Corcaigh bródúil. Corcaigh níos fearr. Corcaigh nua, agus lean ar aghaidh, Corcaigh abú.

Go raith maith agaibh go leir.

7. **ELECTED MEMBERS ADDRESS**

Comhairleoirí S. O' Callaghan, T. Fitzgerald, J. Maher, J. Lynch, P. Dineen, K. O' Flynn and P. Rice addressed the meeting on behalf of their respective groups.

8. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ADDRESS**

The Chief Executive, Ann Doherty addressed the meeting.

9. **ELECTION OF LEAS ARDMHÉARA**

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boyle requested nominations for the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir O. Moran and seconded by Comhairleoir P. Horgan, Comhairleoir H. Kamegni was nominated for the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir M. Gould proposed and seconded by Comhairleoir F. Kerins, Comhairleoir K. Collins was nominated for the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

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

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR H. KAMEGNI

Comhairleoirí J. Maher, J. Kavanagh, M. McDonnell, O. Moran, T. Fitzgerald, D. Boylan, J. Sheehan, T. Shannon, K. McCarthy, M.R. Desmond, D. Cahill, H. Kamegni, P. Horgan, S. O'Callaghan, S. Martin, P. Rice, D. Boyle, F. Dennehy, G. Kelleher, C. Kelleher, L. Harmon, T. Coleman, A. Deasy. (23)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR K. COLLINS

Comhairleoirí K. O'Flynn, T. Tynan, M. Gould, K. Collins, F. Kerins, P. Dineen, J. Lynch. (7)

ABSTAIN: (0)

As those voting for Comhairleoir H. Kamegni were greater than those voting for Comhairleoir K. Collins, An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boyle declared Comhairleoir H. Kamegni elected to the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

An Leas Ardmhéara, Comhairleoir H. Kamegni addressed the meeting.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

An tArdmhéara advised An Chomhairle that in the year ahead his daughter Saoirse will assist him in carrying out his duties.

An Chomhairle unanimously approved the deferral of all business of the Ordinary Meeting of June 24th to the following Ordinary Meeting of July 8th, except nomination of members to committees, boards, and bodies.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**ARDMHÉARA
CATHAOIRLEACH**