

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT ANNUAL MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON FRIDAY, 26TH JUNE, 2015, AT 3.00 P.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor K. Sheahan, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Browne, Butler, Byrne, Clifford, Collins (J), Collins (M), Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Galvin, Gleeson, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, Loftus, Lynch, McCreesh, McMahon, Mitchell, Neville, O'Brien, Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Prendiville, Quinlivan, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Sheehy, Teefy.

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Leddin.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Director, Economic Development and Planning (Mr. P. Daly), A/Director, Travel and Transportation (Mr. T. Fitzgerald), Head of Finance, Motor Tax and ICT (Mr. T. Gilligan), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. T. Knox).

The outgoing Mayor, Councillor Sheahan (K), opened the Meeting by welcoming the invited guests to the Council Chamber. He said it had been a great privilege and honour to serve as First Citizen of Limerick for the past 12 months.

He requested that a *Reflection* circulated by him prior to the Meeting be read into the Minutes. On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor Ryan, '*A Reflection on my Year as First Citizen of Limerick and the first Mayor of the new Local Authority – Limerick City and County Council*' was read into the Minutes as follows:

"I was deeply honoured to become the First Citizen of Limerick on 6 June 2014. I was acutely aware at the beginning of my term of office that, as First Citizen, you are only ever borrowing the Chain of Office, there is always somebody going to wear it after you so I wore it with immense pride and honour throughout my term.

The Deputy Mayor and my fellow Councillors were always available and an excellent support to me. There were times when circumstances demanded that I ask other Members of the Council to deputise for me and 90% of the time they obliged. For this I am extremely grateful and I thank those other Councillors sincerely.

I enjoyed immensely attending many events throughout my Mayoralty.

The most important was certainly the granting of the Freedom of Limerick to Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland. He and his wife, Sabina, were most appreciative of the honour and everyone who attended the event in the Milk Market and indeed, those who weren't present, were most generous with their compliments about the recognition granted to the President from his birthplace.

Limerick people participated in many successful sporting events throughout the year and their achievements were warmly recognised by the Mayor's Office.

One of the most memorable events was the welcoming home of Limerick man Andy Lee, the current WBO Middleweight World Champion, who was given a rapturous reception by his home city on his return from Las Vegas. I also very much enjoyed meeting the many young successful athletes who visited me at the Council buildings in both Merchant's Quay and Dooradoyle and I had the honour of hosting receptions to recognise their achievements, something I know that they all very much appreciated.

For the first time in the history of the state, Limerick City and County Council bestowed a Civic Reception on An Garda Síochána in acknowledgement of their success in tackling crime in Limerick. Their efforts have contributed to Limerick now gaining the reputation that it so rightly deserves as a progressive and energetic city and not the unfair epithet that it had in the past been tarnished with. I was delighted to host a special reception for retiring Detective Superintendent Jim Browne who for many years led Limerick's fight against crime.

Of the many Civic Receptions that were hosted throughout the year, one of the most successful was for the Religious Orders and Congregations in the Diocese of Limerick in recognition of their unselfish contribution to health, education and social services in our communities.

The annual Charity Mayor's Ball was a huge success and apart from having an excellent and most enjoyable night, much needed monies were raised for three very important charities - Pieta House; Cystic Fibrosis and the Aisling Return to Ireland project which provides a service to assist retired Irish emigrants in London to re-settle in Ireland.

I made five overseas visits during the year which I believe all reaped benefits for Limerick.

One was to the UK to meet with the wonderful staff of the Aisling Project who I subsequently was able to support through the funds raised at the Mayor's Ball and I hope will particularly benefit those returning emigrants from London to Limerick.

My second trip abroad was to Santa Clara in the heart of Silicon Valley, California, where I attended an international conference of Sister Cities and Limerick City and County Council cemented its sister city relationship with Santa Clara. Limerick has extremely strong economic links with this area and I was honoured to be invited to speak at both Santa Clara and San Jose Rotary Clubs and to forge continuing links with Limerick. As Mayor, I have also formed a committee to advise Council on the relationship we should have going forward with the Sister Cities Committee, on which I have now included Limerick as a member since my visit to Santa Clara and San Jose, California.

My third visit abroad was to Germany where Limerick County Council had in previous years a very successful twinning relationship with Hohenlohe. I arranged to officially recognise our new local government arrangements in Limerick while in Hohenlohe. Now Limerick City and County Council can look forward to a continuing relationship with our German sister city.

My fourth trip on behalf of the people of Limerick was to Calais in France to consider possible partnerships around the area of lace production as Calais is as famous for its lace as Limerick is. It was a pleasure to reciprocate the visit of the city's Deputy Mayor who was in Limerick last December to launch the Limerick Museum and Archives exhibition on the history of the Limerick Lace Industry. I am confident of fostering future co-operation around the two cities shared lace heritage. I had a very worthwhile meeting with the Mayor of Calais, Madame Bouchart, who is also a member of the French Parliament and she has assured me of her full support in Limerick's quest to be the European Capital of Culture 2020.

It is imperative that the tradition of Limerick Lace be maintained and I believe that this needs to be protected by our Council so that this beautiful handcraft does not die out in future generations.

Finally, my fifth Mayoral visit was to Boston where I met with the Irish American Mayor, Marty Walsh, and his team.

During discussions, I initiated the process of exploring a twinning arrangement between Limerick and Boston and I look forward to this process being finalised over the coming months. I also availed of the opportunity while in Massachusetts to visit the headquarters of Analog Devices which employs over 1000 people at its state-of-the-art Limerick facility. I particularly wanted to express my appreciation to its management for the continued presence, growth and expansion of the multi-million euro Limerick plant which I know was appreciated. It was also an interesting experience while in Boston to participate in an event at the Consulate General of Ireland with representatives from the University of Limerick, at an international education event which is worth €4m to UL every year so it's a hugely important area for the University which wants to grow and develop its international student numbers.

I have very strong views that we should cultivate and foster our links in various parts of the world and spread the message that our Council is now empowered to lead economic, social and community development locally.

Limerick is now a key location to do business with multinational companies employing over 14,000 staff alone in this region with particular emphasis on the ICT, Life Sciences, Engineering and Business Services sectors.

Our Chief Executive, Conn Murray, along with the Economic Development Department, Limerick Chamber, the IDA and the Limerick Economic Forum are making Limerick an ideal location to attract further foreign direct investment. Already seven major FDI investments have been announced in recent times.

Mr. Murray's recent presentation to Councillors and to Limerick Chamber on the progress of our Limerick 2030 plan is a source of encouragement to all. It is plain to see that our city and county is in receipt of excellent leadership.

When I took up office on the 6 June 2014, the City of Culture project was already half way through its term. I remember getting a tour of the huge Culture Factory in Castletroy which has since been bought by the Council and is set to become a multi-million euro film production facility generating an entire new industry for the Mid-West. More than 3000 events took place throughout the year and any of the 250,000 people who witnessed the spectacle that was the Royal DeLuxe Giant Granny will never forget the experience. The recent Grant Thornton economic report showing that the City of Culture generated €44m for the local economy was incredible news while the legacy of the year continues to reap benefits.

I wish the team behind the Limerick 2020 bid to become European Capital of Culture every success and I have no doubt that Limerick will be right up there for consideration once the judging period comes around.

The preparations for the centenary commemoration of the 1916 Rising are under way and I formed an advisory committee to the Council to prepare for this major event. I have ensured that it is inclusive of all and my intention is that everybody's point of view in relation to Easter Week 1916 will be included in our deliberations. We are continuing to work with Damien Brady, who is the Council's representative on the Government Body preparing for Easter 2016.

To my fellow 39 Councillors who honoured me by allowing me become First Citizen of the first Limerick City and County Council and thus calling me the Mayor of Limerick City and County - may I say a very sincere thank you and I hope that I reached your expectations during the year.

There are many challenges going forward for all of us. We should face these challenges with a united front in the best interests of all the people of Limerick.

We are one year into the reform programme for Limerick City and County Council and a lot of good work has been done over the year to promote our City and County. A significant responsibility lies on the Mayor and all Elected Members to give clear and definite leadership on our vision for Limerick as we move forward. There is still a lot of hard work to be done but we will move ahead in the confidence that, one year on, we are heading in the right direction.

I have experienced wonderful support throughout my year of office. I am very grateful to the Chief Executive and his Management Team for their help throughout the year and I have to give special mention to Eugene Griffin, Christy O'Connor and Tina Knox as well as all the Council staff with whom I had dealings. Finally, I could not have done a fraction of my work without Laura Ryan, Communications Officer, and a special thank you to my PA Marianne O'Reilly.

It was a privilege to serve as your Mayor."

In conclusion, the Mayor referred to the Council's achievement in being awarded Local Authority of the Year 2014 at the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. He highlighted this as a wonderful accolade during Limerick City and County Council's first year in existence. He said he was delighted to accept the presentation on behalf of the Council at the Awards Ceremony in Dublin.

1. Election of Mayor of the City and County of Limerick

The outgoing Mayor invited nominations for the Office of Mayor of the City and County of Limerick for the coming year.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
Seconded by Councillor Scanlan;

"That, Councillor Liam Galvin be appointed Mayor of the City and County of Limerick to hold office to the next Annual Meeting or until his successor is appointed."

Proposed by Councillor Quinlivan;
Seconded by Councillor Sheehy;

"That, Councillor Séamus Browne be appointed Mayor of the City and County of Limerick to hold office to the next Annual Meeting or until his successor is appointed."

Proposed by Councillor Prendiville;
Seconded by Councillor Keller;

"That, Councillor John Loftus be appointed Mayor of the City and County of Limerick to hold office to the next Annual Meeting or until his successor is appointed."

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Councillor Galvin

Councillors Butler, Byrne, Clifford, Collins (J), Collins (M), Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Galvin, Gleeson, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Lynch, Mitchell, Neville, O'Brien, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Teefy. (28)

For Councillor Browne

Councillors Browne, McCreesh, McMahon, Ó Ceallaigh, Quinlivan, Sheehy. (6)

For Councillor Loftus

Councillors Keller, Loftus, Prendiville. (3)

The outgoing Mayor declared Councillor Galvin elected as Mayor of the City and County of Limerick and congratulated him on his election.

On taking the Chair, the incoming Mayor, Councillor Galvin, welcomed all present to the Council Chamber. He said it was with a deep sense of pride that he stood before the Council to accept the wonderful honour which had been bestowed on him. He said that becoming Mayor of one's City and County was, without doubt, the highest accolade attainable by a local Councillor. He felt immensely privileged to have been afforded this honour and wished to sincerely thank all those who had made this day possible.

First and foremost, he wished to acknowledge the help and support of his parents, Jimmy and Betty. His upbringing had played a huge role in the direction his life had taken. He and his siblings had been raised to be courteous and respectful and had been taught to treat everybody equally and with fairness. This sense of social justice had stayed with him throughout his life and ultimately inspired him to enter political life. Theirs was a politicised household and, as many of those present were aware, his father had been politically active for decades and this day was an extremely proud day for him.

Secondly, he wanted to say a huge thank you to his wife Caitríona, his brother and sisters, for all their encouragement, support, love and friendship over the years. Each of them had supported him in different ways throughout his life and he wished to publicly thank them for that support. He gave a special mention to his wife saying that, as everybody was well aware, the role of a Public Representative was not

confined to 9 to 5, Monday to Friday. To be an effective Councillor, one had to be available and flexible. This required sacrifices on behalf of Councillors and on behalf of their partners. Family events were missed, planned trips and social occasions were cancelled at a moment's notice and early mornings, long days and late nights were the rule rather than the exception. To his wife, Caitríona, for her patience and understanding, he wished to sincerely thank her.

He went on to say that every Councillor needed a fit team around him or her at election time and, without overstating it, he had a fantastic team. To each and every one of them, he said *Céad Míle Buíochas*, and he hoped each of them would enjoy the day and share in his sense of personal satisfaction.

Next, he wished to extend his sincere appreciation to all those who elected him and whom he represented on Limerick City and County Council. He had been a local Councillor for just over 11 years now and had endeavoured to work as hard as possible on behalf of the people. He intended to continue this ethos of hard work in his new role and sincerely hoped to be a Mayor of whom the people of Limerick City and County were proud.

He said it would be remiss of him not to mention his fellow Councillors. To his Proposer and Secunder, he extended his thanks, as he did to all current and past Councillors with whom he served and had served.

The incoming Mayor stated that 2014 saw a sea-change in local politics in Limerick with the amalgamation of Limerick City and County Councils. Whilst Councillors had a considerable road yet to travel, with their hard work and the backing of a supportive Executive, they had most certainly come a long way. For their co-operation, courtesy, help and friendship, he wished to thank them.

He said that last, but certainly not least, he wished to thank the Fine Gael Party at National, Local and Branch level for their constant and consistent support throughout his political career. He had been privileged to have been afforded a high level of co-operation over the years. To all involved at each level of the Party, and especially those at home in the Abbeyfeale Branch, he extended a big *Thank You*.

While his election was obviously a huge honour for him, it was also a tremendous honour for the town and parish of Abbeyfeale and surrounding parishes of Athea, Mountcollins, Tournafulla and Templeglantine. He was extremely proud of where he came from and he now fervently hoped that his home place would be equally proud of him in his role as Mayor.

He had referred earlier to his upbringing at home in Ballaugh, mentioning the values which were instilled in his siblings and himself. Today, and over the course of the next year, he wished to focus on one of those values which was at the core of what a just, fair society should strive towards – and that value was RESPECT. He considered that if a culture of mutual respect and understanding, at home, in schools, in workplaces and in our communities, could be cultivated, a society would be developed which, in this historic year, would reflect the words of the 1916 Proclamation - “*cherishes all children of the nation equally.*” It was his intention to have *RESPECT* as the central plank of his tenure as Mayor.

He went on to say that in commemorating the centenary of the events of 1916, events which had shaped the nation, it was vital to respect the view and opinions of all. He looked forward to those celebrations and intended to do his utmost to make them as meaningful and respectful as possible, as befitting to a City and County which contributed so much to those events.

Councillor Galvin said there were many sectors of society which could at times be shown more respect and this was something which he wished to focus on as Mayor of this City and County - the elderly, the infirm, the disadvantaged, those with special needs, those for whom the country was not their native home, those on the margins through poverty, unemployment, crime, mental health issues, or for any other reason. He hoped that while he was in office, he would be able to reach out to some of these groups, listen to them and help to improve their lot.

It was also his intention to lead by example in the Chamber and so ensure that a respectful atmosphere permeated meetings and interaction amongst Members. By extension, it was his ambition that throughout his tenure, the general public would feel that they were valued and respected by Council Members. This, in his opinion, was vital for the effective management of the City and County. A range of different opinions in the Chamber was healthy and lively but respectful debate was paramount to ensuring that matters were thoroughly discussed before decisions were taken.

Finally, the incoming Mayor said that he did not wish to detain people any longer and therefore he would sum up by assuring all present of his absolute commitment to the role of Mayor. His door would always be open and his phone always on!! He concluded with the following:

Mar fhocal scoir, míle buíochas arís -
do gach duine a thug cabhair dom -
le linn mo shaol políóichta go dtí seo.
Táim ag tnúth go mór le mo dhícheall a dhéanamh -
i rith na bliana seo chugainn -
ar son Cathair agus Chontae Luimnigh.

2. Election of Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick

The Mayor invited nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick for the coming year.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
Seconded by Councillor O'Donnell;

“That, Councillor Gerald Mitchell be appointed Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick to hold office to the next Annual Meeting or until his successor is appointed.”

Proposed by Councillor Browne;
Seconded by Councillor McMahon;

“That, Councillor Lisa Marie Sheehy be appointed Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick to hold office to the next Annual Meeting or until her successor is appointed.”

Proposed by Councillor Loftus;
Seconded by Councillor Prendiville;

“That, Councillor Keller be appointed Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick to hold office to the next Annual Meeting or until his successor is appointed.”

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Councillor Mitchell

Councillors Butler, Byrne, Clifford, Collins (J), Collins (M), Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Galvin, Gleeson, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Lynch, Mitchell, Neville, O'Brien, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Teefy. (28)

For Councillor Sheehy

Councillors Browne, McCreesh, McMahon, Ó Ceallaigh, Quinlivan, Sheehy. (6)

For Councillor Keller

Councillors Keller, Loftus, Prendiville. (3)

The Mayor declared Councillor Mitchell elected as Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick and congratulated him on his election.

The incoming Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mitchell, said it was his great honour to be elected Deputy Mayor and he was thankful to his Council colleagues for giving him this opportunity.

First and foremost, he wanted to congratulate Mayor Galvin, who he knew would represent the Council and the people of Limerick very well over the next 12 months. He looked forward to supporting the Mayor in whatever way he could during the coming year.

He wanted to acknowledge his extended family and friends who had gathered for the occasion and thank them for their support in the time he had been privileged to be a Member of the Council.

Today, on his election as Deputy Mayor, he wanted to remember the members of his own family who had served as Council Members before him. They included his great-granduncle, Thomas B Mitchell, who was Limerick County Council's first Chairman in 1899. His great-grandfather, Edward Mitchell, also served on the Council. His grandfather later served as a Councillor, as did his cousin, Thomas Mitchell. These men were Public Representatives during a period of great social, economic and political change in Ireland that ultimately resulted in the formation of the Irish State. What compelled them to dedicate their lives to public service was no different to his own reasons for seeking a Council seat the previous year. Though committed to running his auctioneering business in Hospital, he had felt compelled by the social and economic situation in the country to contest the election in the Cappamore-Kilmallock Electoral Area.

He went on to say that he was committed to delivering real positive results for the people who had invested their faith in him. While he may be an auctioneer by profession, he was utterly opposed to auction politics of any kind. The people who elected Councillors depended on them to represent their best interests for the benefit of all of Limerick. He was committed to public service and not self service.

In conclusion, he said that he was proud to be a Member of the Council and to stand with the Members, his colleagues, as representatives of communities the length and breadth of Limerick. With the support of the Council Executive, it was up to Councillors to deliver for the citizens of Limerick. In his role as Deputy Mayor, he looked forward to playing his part in this process.

3. Appointment of Members to the Limerick Market Trustees

Circulated, list of representatives on the Limerick Market Trustees appointed at the Inaugural Annual Meeting of the Council held on 6th June, 2014.

The Meetings Administrator stated that under the Markets Act, 1852 (as amended), Limerick City and County Council was entitled to nominate the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, and the Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick, together with a further 16 Members of the Council, as Trustees. Under the Act, the Council was required to make these nominations annually. The Grouping system applied if so desired.

Councillor Sheahan (J) proposed that, in addition to the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick (Councillor Galvin) and the Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick (Councillor O'Dea), the following Members be appointed to the Limerick Market Trustees - Councillors Leddin, McCreesh, Browne, Loftus, Crowley, Lynch, Collins (J), Collins (M), O'Hanlon, Clifford, Byrne, O'Donnell, Mitchell, Hourigan, Hurley, Sheahan (M).

This was seconded by Councillor Collins (M) and agreed.

The Members welcomed the guests who were present in the Council Chamber. They congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their election and assured them of their full support. They wished them well in the year ahead and expressed confidence in their ability to carry out the duties of Mayor and Deputy Mayor with great honour and distinction. Tributes were also paid to the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Sheahan (K), and outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Crowley. Members praised them for the manner in which they had performed their role and stated that they had been excellent ambassadors for Limerick.

The Chief Executive firstly congratulated Councillor Galvin and Councillor Mitchell on their elevation to the Office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick respectively. He stated that it was an onerous position, a responsible position and that it carried with it the challenge of delivering political leadership for and on behalf of the people of Limerick.

He wished to compliment the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Sheahan (K), on what had been a very successful year. He said that it was never easy being the first in something new and that that position had proved no less challenging. Councillor Sheahan (K) had himself identified the many highlights of a long year – a year of learning for the new organisation. The Chief Executive said he had found him to be

most supportive of himself and the staff in rolling out many programmes. As Mayor, Councillor Sheahan (K) had overseen the successful conclusion of the Year of Culture and the beginning of the Council's bid for Limerick 2020 European Capital of Culture. The Mayor had seen the growth of interest in Limerick as a genuine location for investment and the delivery of real jobs. He had welcomed the President and initiated the new role of Honorary Freemen. He had also welcomed foreign dignitaries to Ireland and initiated an important cultural and economic link with Boston and Santa Clara.

In addition, the Mayor had overseen the launch of Limerick Age-Friendly Strategy. The Chief Executive added that it had been a productive and positive year.

He also extended his appreciation to the outgoing Deputy Mayor of the City and County, Councillor Joe Crowley.

He congratulated Councillor Jerry O'Dea, Councillor Bill O'Donnell, Councillor Michael Collins and Councillor Richard O'Donoghue on their appointment as Mayor and Cathaoirligh of their respective Metropolitan and Municipal Districts.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Mayor

Date:
