

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2017, at 2.30 P.M.**

**PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:**

Councillor S. Keary, Mayor.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Browne, Butler, Collins (J), Costelloe, Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Galvin, Gilligan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keller, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, McCreesh, McMahon, Mitchell, O'Brien, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Pond, Prendiville, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehy, Teefy, Teskey.

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

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Director, Service Operations and Business Improvement (Mr. G. Daly), Director, Regional Development (Ms. C. Curley), A/Director, Support Services – Finance, Corporate, Human Resources and ICT (Mr. S. Coughlan), A/Director, Economic Development (Mr. B. Kennedy), A/Director, Social Development (Ms. C. Kirby), City and County Librarian (Mr. D. Brady), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. T. Knox).

The Mayor stated that the Special Meeting had been convened to discuss the issue as set out in Requisition received on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2017, and signed by a number of Members as follows:

“As Cathaoirleach of Adare-Rathkeale, I and my fellow Councillors are calling for a Special Meeting of Limerick City and County Council to discuss our disappointment that despite a recommendation from Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphries, who visited Knockfierna Hill, Ballingarry, Co. Limerick, and at the time advised “that Knockfierna Heritage Site would be an ideal location for the Commemoration but any application would have to be supported by the Local Authority,” – this was not brought to the attention of the Local Councillors by the Local Authority, as instructed by the Minister. This National Famine Commemoration event will now be held in Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary.”

Signed: Councillors R. O'Donoghue, E. Ryan, K. Sheahan, G. Mitchell, J. Scanlan, A. Teskey, M. Collins, C. McMahon.

Councillor O'Donoghue addressed the Meeting by stating that he was very disappointed that the opportunity to host the National Famine Commemoration at the Knocknafierna Hill site had been missed. He added that the matter should have been driven by the Council but that it had never come before the District or Full Council for consideration. He acknowledged the sterling work which had been done by the volunteers/historical society.

A number of Members echoed the sentiments expressed by Councillor O'Donoghue and also acknowledged the tremendous work that had been carried out by the historical society.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (K), seconded by Councillor Ryan, it was agreed to prepare a proposal regarding the possibility of hosting the event at Knocknafierna Hill, Ballingarry, in 2018.

In response, The City and County Librarian outlined the background to The National Famine Commemoration which was first established to commemorate the Great Irish Famine with an annual National Famine Memorial Day. He stated that the annual National Commemoration rotated between the four provinces of Ireland and he noted that the 2017 location (Tipperary), and 2018 location (not yet announced), had already been designated.

He then went on to outline the sequence of correspondence in relation to representations made by Minister Patrick O'Donovan on behalf of Knockfierna Heritage Society following the visit by Minister Humphreys to Knockfierna on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015, as follows:

- Correspondence from Deputy O'Donovan's Office to the Chief Executive dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2015, requesting support from the Council to the hosting of the National Famine Commemoration in Ballingarry, Limerick.
- Correspondence from the Community Department of Limerick City and County Council to Deputy O'Donovan's Office dated 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, stating that the Council would be pleased to work with the Knockfierna Heritage Society to support and host the Commemoration.
- Correspondence from Deputy O'Donovan's Office to Limerick City and County Council dated 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, confirming that the planned event for Munster was for 2017 and not 2016.
- Correspondence from Deputy O'Donovan's Office to Limerick City and County Council dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015, requesting a meeting with Council Officials and Knockfierna Heritage Society in relation to the 2017 National Famine Commemoration. It was pointed out that this meeting had not taken place.

The County and City Librarian then outlined the structures established to facilitate the Year of Commemoration 2016 at political and administrative level. He explained the application process to host the National Famine Commemoration. He stated that, in general, the application to host the event would come from a local community group. He added that a local community group had the option of submitting an application directly to the Department without reference to the Local City/County Council or, alternatively, could request the Council to commit its support when the application was being submitted to the Department.

It was stated that no formal application to host the 2017 National Famine Commemoration in Ballingarry had been made by the Knockfierna Heritage Society either directly to the Department or to Limerick City and County Council. Therefore, neither the Department nor the City and County Council were in a position to give consideration to advance a formal application which they had not received.

He noted that Limerick City and County Council had confirmed in writing, in response to representations made by Deputy O'Donovan, that the Council would be pleased to work with Knockfierna Heritage Society to secure and host the 2017 National Famine Commemoration. Therefore, the opportunity was there for the Knockfierna Heritage Society to submit an application to the Department and state that they had support from the Council.

He concluded that from 2019 onwards, Knockfierna Heritage Society had the opportunity to submit an application to the Department and that Limerick City and Council would be supportive of any such application.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

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**Mayor**

Date:

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