

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT ANNUAL MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2018, AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Seán Lynch, Mayor

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Butler, Collins, Costelloe, Crowley, Daly, Gilligan, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Leddin, Loftus, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Hanlon, Pond, Prendiville, Secas and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Physical Development (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. J. Clune), Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. S. Carroll).

The outgoing Mayor, Councillor Lynch welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting to elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick. He said it had been a great honour to serve as Mayor and he had very much enjoyed the year which had been busy and challenging. He had endeavoured at all times to promote the city to the best of his ability. He thanked the Members for their support and participation at Meetings and noted the importance of the many presentations given at the Meetings and the opportunity it afforded the Council to promote the city. He thanked the Officials for their support during the year and particularly thanked staff for their work during difficult weather events. He thanked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Vivienne Crowley for her support throughout the year and also thanked Councillor Marian Hurley, Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick. He also thanked the media for their assistance. In conclusion, he wished the very best of luck to the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor, assuring them of his full support.

The Members congratulated Councillor Lynch on his year as Mayor and paid tribute to the excellent manner in which he had carried out his duties as Mayor. Members noted the many Mayoral Receptions and Coffee Mornings he had held for various Groups and Charities.

1. To elect a Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick to hold Office until the next Annual Meeting or until a successor has been elected

The outgoing Mayor invited nominations for the Office of Mayor for the coming year.

Proposed by Councillor Hourigan;
Seconded by Councillor Collins.

"That Councillor Daniel Butler be appointed Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick to hold office until the next Annual Meeting or until a successor has been appointed".

Proposed by CmhIr. Ó Ceallaigh;
Seconded by Councillor McCreesh.

"That Councillor John Costelloe be appointed Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick to hold office until the next Annual Meeting or until a successor has been appointed".

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Councillor Butler

Councillors Butler, Collins, Crowley, Daly, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Lynch, O’Dea, O’Hanlon, Pond and Sheahan (12)

For Councillor Costelloe

Councillors Costelloe, Gilligan, Leddin, Loftus, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh and Secas (7)

Abstain

Councillor Prendiville

The outgoing Mayor declared Councillor Daniel Butler elected as Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick and congratulated him on his election.

On taking the Chair, the incoming Mayor, Councillor Butler gave the following address :

“Colleagues, friends, family,

Today I stand before you an incredibly proud man. I won’t lie I was nervous in the lead up to this because of the huge honour this is and for someone who has been involved in politics in a very practical way since I was a young boy I understand this to be a privilege few experience. Also nervous of this speech of course and know what to say or sometimes more importantly what not to say. This should tell you that I am taking this seriously and how much it means to me and so it tells you I will do my very best.

Before I move on I want to acknowledge the great work of my predecessor Sean Lynch who really made this role his own. The many people you deservedly honoured over the course of your term I think reflected how much you value ordinary citizens achieving extraordinary things for their communities. I intend on carrying that forward into my time in this role. Your fairness and empathy has been a huge asset and I think as you reflect you stand proud of all you achieved. Well done and thank you!

So what is my vision for my time as metro mayor? My ambition and desire for this city know no bounds. This place has been my family’s home for many generations and so like the Shannon runs through the city Limerick flows through my veins. I have watched it struggle through large and many challenges and often hang its head in shame at some of the happenings in our city. I have been angered by how it has been portrayed by national media often to deflect from the more alarming challenges the capital faced. I have been part of the highs and lows in sport whether supporting Garryowen in great AIL days with the Richard Wallaces and Philip Danahers and Keith Woods to Munster Rugby and the passion and pride that brings. To the great hurling days taking us all the way to Croke Park and that painful loss to Offaly still clear in my mind. Like sport we as a city have had our triumphs and our losses but never do we take a step back from any challenge. That bare souled strength and honesty of who we are is one we have begun to embrace and must continue to.

Our city centre will soon see renewal in the forms of Project Opera and the O’Connell Street Pedestrianisation. We are city in transition, changing for the better and hopefully learning from the mistakes of the past. In a time of change there is always pain and that is assured in the years ahead but we must not take one step back because this will be our single biggest shot of a

generation. We hear of multiple jobs announcement both here and in the region that now exposed the secret that Limerick is an untapped resource that is continuing to deliver. We are truly open for business. We produce some of Europe's most talented young people through our 3rd level institutions who work creatively and directly with international business. We have the commercial property and room for expansion for business to locate here at some of the most competitive prices in western Europe. We offer housing at incredible value and an incredible community to live, grow and enjoy. You can enjoy a city lifestyle but be surfing a wave within an hour. You walk out the door of work in this city and within 10 minutes be fishing, kayaking, boating, jogging or walking on or around one of Europe's finest rivers. This is a city with the attitude of a village.

There are however challenges and I want us to be honest to them. We are still seeing high levels of long term unemployment and unemployment amongst young people. We still have a relatively poor socio economic status as a city. People are still homeless here. People are still struggling with rent here even though we have relatively low rental prices. We still see criminality active in our city damaging and sometimes destroying lives. We see drug use and many struggling to cope with the stresses of life. These are the challenges we face. These are the challenges we must address. These are our people, our neighbours and our friends. What we experience is not unique to our city anywhere in Europe but the measures to address them must be unique to who we are. We must not take a step back in true Limerick style. But we must never let our troubles defines us. We must never let the challenges we face be all of who we are. We must never let others define us by our shortcomings. We must acknowledge we have our struggles but so too our victories and our strengths, use them as the foundation to move forward as a society of success in sport, business, culture and most importantly as a community.

Today I stand before you your Metro Mayor Elect but tomorrow we move on as a democratic unit to meet the challenges and greet the successes. I will strive to be a voice for all no matter their creed, culture or political views to be a voice of equality. As Mayor I will focus on these 5 things that I hope will complement the work of the Mayor of the City and County. Firstly I will actively work with the executive to develop a clear strategy to support our city centre to be a place to do business and to socialise and shop in. It is time we stopped talking and started creating a meaningful and implementable vision for our city centre to see it alive with people once again. Secondly, I want to focus on connecting our young people to the idea of politics and active citizenship and I will be doing that in various ways but a key tool will be my plan to introduce a competition for young people called Mayor for a Day. This will give some young people who produce the best ideas of how to make our community better a chance to be Mayor for a Day and experience some of what we do. Thirdly, my focus has always been and continues to be to support positive mental health in the citizens of this city. I will hope to continue to challenge the stigma of mental ill health and to move this conversation on in a meaningful way and hope to announce some initiatives in the coming months. Fourthly, I intend on honouring members of the community who have contributed and continue to contribute to their community without a single thank you expected. Those who are in the background will now be brought to the foreground and given the recognition they deserve. Finally, I want to honour small business owners who often may only employ 3 or 4 staff but in that make huge contribution to Limerick's economy. I want to offer them the chance to be recognised, to work with them to help them access supports for growth through the Council. Our focus too often is the multinationals and we welcome them but we must not forget the small business owner who are a key fabric of our society often the one who sponsors the local GAA club or gives a prize to the parent's association. They give a lot and I want to give something back to them in small way. I will be working with some key partners to make this happen very soon. I want to ask you my colleagues to help me achieve these goals so this can be an achievement together for the sake of our electorate.

Thank you to all those who honoured me with their vote but in particular I want to thank some Councillors who vote in these elections for the last time Michael Hourigan in his 20th year and John Gilligan in his 27th year. Public service is a difficult and often thankless job so to be able to have such great careers in it says a lot about these men. So today I want to publicly thank you for your long and committed service and hope that this final year together will be one you enjoy.

I would like to also acknowledge those who stood against me today in ensuring that this democratic process was robustly performed and I am certain your time too will come. I certainly never thought when I was elected 4 years ago that in my first term I would have this honour so I'm sure it is possible for you too. I want to acknowledge the support of my Fine Gael colleagues who have been of huge support over the years for proposing me. I also have to thank people of Limerick City West for electing me 4 years ago and putting their trust in me that has now allowed me to experience this opportunity.

Finally, I want to take this very unique and public opportunity my family and friends and supporters many of whom are here today. I want to thank my team of supporters who advocate for me daily, deliver the leaflets, knock on the doors and generally give me their time and energy because they simply believe in me. Many of you can relate to that. These people are so vital in politics and we need more of them. Thank you so much, I really can't express how much I value your help and belief. I want to thank my extended family and friends who ensure I don't lose the run of myself who never let me forget where I come from and who I am. I want to remember my late father Richard Butler who's shoulders I stand on. We didn't always agree politically or on many other things but we always respected each other and we always laughed. I know he is looking down on me today and still disagreeing with me and having a laugh at my expense. I think it is something very special that he was Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council and today his son has become Mayor of Limerick Metropolitan Area. I want to thank my greatest campaigner, advocate and supporter here today who is of course my mother Bernadette. She is one incredible woman and she has been an incredible mother who always puts herself last. She has helped me so much as a Councillor and I would be lost without her. Thanks Mum for everything, if I could get away with giving you a mayoral reception I would! My sister is here today with my brother in law Sean and my god-daughter Isabella too and I want to thank them so much for being there for me. It is particularly great to have sister who values you so much and can be such a source of strength. Then of course my 2 children who are here today. Layla who is 8 who is such a beautiful girl inside and out, has great manners, is very good in school and is the best big sister anyone could have. I always remember when she was 4 during the locals saying there's my danny there's my danny every time we passed my poster. Funny the first couple of days!! She is a great supporter and has all the votes secured from her friends in 2nd class in St Nessans Mungret. Jacob who is 2 going on 22 is a ball of energy and has been an absolute blessing to us. We have him down to make the Munster squad already at this stage because he is a big lad. Well when I say we I mean I do!! I love them both so much and when I have a tough day a hug from those guys brings me right back down to earth. They also motivate me to makes this city a better place for them to grow up in. Finally, I want to thank my beautiful wife and yes I know I am punching above my weight but everyone deserves a bit of luck every now and then and I am certainly lucky to have Tania at my side. No history in politics at all which is useful on a few levels because if she had she would have never had allowed me to run in the elections. But also as a source of advice as a councillor. She listens and gives it to me between the eyes and is rarely wrong as all good husbands learn. I just want to thank you love for coming on this journey with me and sacrificing time with me and with family and friends to support me to do this. I love you very much and cannot thank you enough for being by my side in what has been a very tough 4 or 5 years. To all of you as a collective this is your achievement as much as mine and I share it with you all.

Thank you for listening and indulging me and apologies for the length but let me conclude briefly by promising you all my door is always open and I will work with you all to do what is right for this city no matter what political party you are aligned to or whether we agree or not I will always listen”.

Members congratulated Councillor Butler on his election as Mayor and wished him and his family the very best for the coming year.

2. To elect a Deputy Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick to hold Office until the next Annual Meeting or until a successor has been elected

The Mayor invited nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Hurley;
Seconded by Councillor O’Hanlon.

“That Councillor Elenora Hogan be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick to hold office until the next Annual Meeting or until a successor is appointed”.

Proposed by Cmhrl. Ó Ceallaigh;
Seconded by Councillor Costelloe.

“That Councillor Malachy McCreesh be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick to hold office until the next Annual Meeting or until a successor is appointed”.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Councillor Hogan

Councillors Butler, Collins, Crowley, Daly, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Lynch, O’Dea, O’Hanlon, Pond and Sheahan (12)

For Councillor McCreesh

Councillors Costelloe, Gilligan, Leddin, Loftus, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh and Secas (7)

Abstain

Councillor Prendiville

The Mayor declared Councillor Elenora Hogan elected as Deputy Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick.

Members paid tribute to the outgoing Deputy Mayor Councillor Crowley and congratulated Councillor Hogan on her election as Deputy Mayor and wished her well for the coming year.

Councillor Hogan thanked the Members for electing her and stated that she looked forward to working with the new Mayor and helping him in any way possible and also to assist in promoting the city over the coming year.

