

**COUNCILLORS REPORT ON CONFERENCE WHICH THEY ATTENDED**

**REQUIRED TO BE COMPLETED UNDER SECTION 142(5) (f) and (fa) OF THE  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001**

**Organiser of Conference** Celtic Conferences

**Name of Conference** FIRST TIME HOME BUYERS INCENTIVES

**Location of Conference** Carlingford Co. Louth.

**Date of Conference** 13<sup>th</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Summary of Conference Content**

The conference had three elements to it, the help to buy scheme which was introduced to help the prospective home owner with accumulating the required deposit by taxation measures, the Rebuilding Ireland loan which has fixed rates over a fixed period can be used to buy new / second hand home or to self build a new home, the Affordable Purchase Section dealt with first time purchasers and their eligibility to purchase newly constructed homes or apartments.

**Signature:** John Sheahan WLC

**Print Name:** John Sheahan WLC

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**Organiser of Conference Celtic Conferences**

**Name of Conference: The Finance Act**

**Location of Conference Carlingford**

**Date of Conference 10-12<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

### **Summary of Conference Content**

Briefing on budget 2020 covering the primary changes in taxation including USC rates, personal tax bands and additional funding towards Social Protection €365 million, €45 million for return to work initiatives and €650 million to support agriculture, enterprise and tourism. The Help to Buy scheme for first time buyers is being extended for another two years while an additional 2.5 billion is being allocated towards new housing provision. To help improve energy efficiency in local authority homes a new fund totalling €25 million is being made available for local authority applications.

The Abhaile scheme has been extended for a further 3 years to continue to provide support and advice for people in mortgage arrears.

Funding of €130 million is being provided for the Urban and Regeneration Development Fund. The fund is intended to help to rejuvenate significant but underused areas in Ireland's 5 cities and other large towns. A second call for proposals for 2020 will be made shortly.

The National Regeneration Programme which supports regeneration projects in economically disadvantaged communities is allocated funding of €72 million in 2020.

The Living City Initiative that provides tax relief for money spent on refurbishing or converting residential or commercial properties in specified cities has been extended until 31 December 2022.

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Signature: Joe Leddin

Print Name: Joe Leddin

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001

Organiser of Conference Celtic conferences

Name of Conference The Finance Act 2019

Location of Conference The Four seasons Hotel, Carlingford, co. Louth.

Date of Conference 10/11/20 January 2020

Summary of Conference Content

Friday 10/1/2020 Registration followed by  
welcome Address and opening of the conference.

Saturday 11/1/2020 We were up-dated on  
The Finance Bill 2019 sets out the proposed  
legislative changes required to put in place  
many of the budget announcements that  
were made in October 2019.

Sunday 12/1/2020 The conference went through  
a Bill that proposes change to the Real  
estate Investment trust.

Signature: Fergus Kilcoyne

Print Name: Fergus Kilcoyne



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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001

Organiser of Conference Celtic Conferences

Name of Conference Finance Act 2019

Location of Conference Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford

Date of Conference January 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>

### Summary of Conference Content

The conference set out the main changes in the areas of taxation, social welfare, health, housing, education, employment and other areas. There was continued focus on Brexit this year and the associated preparations. These included measures additional funding for Social Protection of €365 million, €110 million for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Enterprise of €110 million. Below is an overview of the content of the conference on measures announced in the Finance Act 2019.

#### **Taxation:**

The home carer tax credit and earned income tax credit both saw increases.

The Group A category in capital acquisitions tax will be increased to €335,000

#### **Excise Duties**

Tobacco excise duty increased by 50 cent for a pack of 20.

Carbon tax will increase to €26 per tonne.

A NOx emission charge will replace the 1% diesel surcharge.

#### **Social Welfare**

Weekly social welfare payments under jobseekers increased for 25 years olds from €157.80 to €203 as will for under 25s. There are similar increases for supplementary welfare allowance. Child allowance increased by €2 for a child under 12 and €3 for over 12s.

One parent family payment to increase by €15 per week.

#### **Housing**

A total of 2.5 billion to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for housing. €1.5 billion has been allocated for the delivery of 8500 social homes in 2020. Increase of €80 million in the HAP scheme. €25 million given to upgrade energy efficiency of social housing and €20 million from carbon tax for retro-fitting in the midlands.

Homeless services will increase by €20 million.

126 million allocated for Serviced Sites Fund

€60 million allocated for LIHAF

€72 million allocated to the National Regeneration Programme.

€130 million is to be provided for the Urban and Regeneration Development Fund

€59 million for grants to adapt older people's homes

### **Employment and Business**

Extra €10million of capital funding in disruptive technology.

Increase in electricity tax for business from €0.50 to €1 per megawatt hour

Stamp duty on non-residential property increases from 6 to 7%

Brexit measures included transition fund, a Rescue and Restructuring Fund, Transformation Fund for Food and Non-food Business and Micro Enterprise Emergency Brexit Fund.

### **Education**

There will be an extra 150 mainstream teaching posts and 400 additional teaching posts in schools.

The capitation grant will increase by 2.5%

Extra €26 million for school transport scheme

Extra €4 million for school hot meals

### **Health**

Prescription charge for medical card holders will be reduced by €0.50.

Signature: 

Print Name: Daniel Butler

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Organiser of Conference

ALTC Conferences

Name of Conference

Finance Act 2019

Location of Conference

Cashinstown Co. Louth

Date of Conference

10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020

Summary of Conference Content

- Topics Covered -

Basic Reproduction / Agriculture Food & Marine  
Enterprises / Pension / Income Tax / USC /  
Capital Acquisitions Tax / Excess Rents  
Stamps Tax - Carbon Tax - Benefit in Kind electric vehicles -  
VRT - SART-FED / Social Welfare - S.U. Payments -  
Jobseekers allowance - Support network at home -  
Christmas bonus - Parent families - working parents  
pension - Fuel allowance - young persons increase  
Cohesion - Means test - Household benefits - Community  
employment - Education & training - Repayment  
cost - Maintenance of children - PRSI / Housing -  
Young & home - Social housing support - families  
People support - Mortgage arrears - affordability  
Regulation - Covid-19 - Security - Stamp Duty - Employment  
+ business - KEFA - H1 - Research + develop. credit team  
income SFI - Basic support - Education - Climate Change  
depreciation - Health - Training + support VRT by road  
Garage  
Sireluna

Signature:

Michael Sheahan

Print Name:

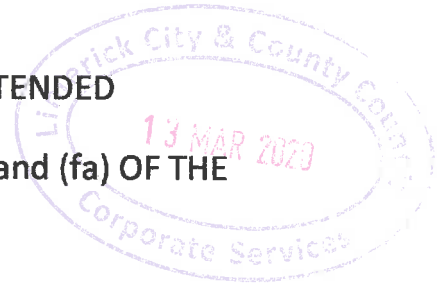
MICHAEL SHEAHAN

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Organiser of Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Conference Health & Safety

Location of Conference Clonsilla Co Cork.

Date of Conference 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2020

Summary of Conference Content

◦ Health & Welfare at Work act 2005

◦ Information for employees re safety at Work.

◦ How to deal with Emergencies and serious and imminent dangers

◦ How to carry out Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment.

Signature: Don W Sweeney

Print Name: DAN Mc SWEENEY

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Organiser of Conference Martin Egan Secretary

Name of Conference The Contribution of Irish Christianity to Irish, European  
and World Civilisation.

Location of Conference Colmcille Heritage Centre Letterkenny

Date of Conference 28/02/2020

Summary of Conference Content

Explanation of local diabetes + discussion  
and the speaker on the night was  
Dr. Seamus O'Ceallaigh was, questions and  
answers followed

Signature: Adam Teskey

Print Name: Adam Teskey

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Organiser of Conference CELTIC CONFERENCES

Name of Conference THE FINANCE ACT 2019

Location of Conference THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, CARRINGFORD

Date of Conference 10th, 11th and 12th JANUARY, 2020

Summary of Conference Content

(See Attached)

Signature: Liam Galvin

Print Name: LIAM GALVIN

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Budget 2020  
Budget announced Tuesday 8 Oct 2019

200, million for prep of Brexit

36.5 m in social protection (unemployment)

4.5 m - people to return to employment

650 m - most affected regions - agri - Tourism  
& enterprise

- The Deal Brexit - 85 m farmers  
14 m fisheries  
6 m livestock farmers  
5 m food & drink industry

- The home care Tax increase from £1500 To £1600

- Capital Acquisition Tax increase from £320,000  
To £335,000 - for gifts & inheritance

- Current VAT To be extended To 2020 on Hospitality  
& plug-in cars

- The Social Budget will be 21.1 Billion

- Subsidary welfare - will increase from £157  
To £203 for under 25 years old

- The Number of hrs a Carer can work or  
study is gone up from 15 To 18 hrs/w

- 2.5 B for housing

130 m for urban & regeneration funds

59 million for grants to adapt homes

45 m for business businesses employing 10 or more involved in manufacturing ???

1000 more SAs | New school of 12,000

4 m for school meals

7,000 new apprenticeship Training places

Prescription charges reduced from £2 to £1.50

700 new games to be recruited

Liam Gallagher



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& Contae **Luimnigh**  
**Limerick City**  
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Seirbhísí Corparáideacha,  
Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh,  
Ceanncheathrú Chorporáideach,  
Cé na gCeannaithe,  
Luimneach

Corporate Services,  
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10<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

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**To / The Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council**

Visit to  
International Towns Forum – Sustainable Development of Towns  
Stanford University, CA, USA

As Members are aware, following the attendance of the Limerick delegation with +CityxChange EU Project at the Barcelona Smart Cities Expo World Congress 2019 an invitation was received in late November 2019 by me from the Center for Sustainable Development and Global Competitiveness at Stanford University to give a keynote address at the International Towns Forum – Sustainable Development of Towns on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2020. The forum was held on the Stanford University campus in the San Francisco Bay Area of California, USA. All the travel costs were covered by the organisers to facilitate my attendance. The forum aims to facilitate discussion and international co-operation on sustainable urbanization approaches among a variety of diverse stakeholders.

Through this forum Limerick will be able to work collaboratively with leading international cities and towns from USA, Asia, Australia and Europe that share the same ambition and desire on several perspectives of sustainable development for urban areas, and share innovative ideas to improve our understanding of urban environments and urbanization processes worldwide.

In my keynote address I presented and shared insights from our efforts in Limerick to innovate and create new solutions for energy generation and consumption for the sustainable development of Limerick as part of the +CityxChange EU project. From the forum we have learned about a wide range of issues, from energy resource and generation technologies, to the impacts of electrification of the economy, to urban-focused opportunities for addressing climate change.

It has been an honour to be invited to take part in this event which was a unique opportunity to enlarge our international network of contacts and influencers and growing Limerick's reputation and visibility internationally.

Is mise, le meas,

**Councillor Michael Sheahan**  
**Mayor of the City and County of Limerick**



Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae **Luimnigh**

**Limerick City**  
& County Council



## **Mícheál Ó Siocháin**

An Comhairleoir  
Méara Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh.  
Councillor  
Mayor of the City and County of Limerick.

Oifig na Mhéara, Cé na gCeannaithe, Luimneach. V94 EH90	Office of the Mayor, Merchant's Quay, Limerick. V94 EH90
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**11<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.**

### **Re Report on Visit to New York, USA Brand Limerick Launch 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

**A Chomhairleoir, a Chara,**

As Members will be aware, I led a Limerick delegation to visit New York, USA from 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020 to 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020. The primary purpose of the visit was to launch the new Brand for Limerick in the Irish Consulate, New York, on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

The delegation comprised of ; Councillor Michael Sheahan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick; Councillor Bridie Collins; Councillor Dan Mc Sweeney; Councillor Elisa O'Donovan; Vincent Murray, Acting Director of Service, Economic Development; Pat Fitzgerald, Trade & Investment; Aoife Madden, Business Improvement; Aoife O'Shaughnessy, Brand Manager; Laura Ryan, Marketing & Communications.

The delegation arrived in New York on the evening of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

On the first day of official duties i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020, I attended a luncheon meeting with officials from the Bloomberg Philanthropy to discuss the initiation of a joint project with them. Separately, the Council Members of the delegation visited the Bank of Ireland Innovation Lab in Midtown, Manhattan and met with BoI executives. The Innovation Lab is a business accelerator facility where Irish Firms who wish to expand into the US markets can utilise the facilities and services to establish a foothold in the US market. Councillors were accompanied to these meetings by Council Officials.

On the morning of Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the full delegation met with the USA Team of Tourism Ireland in their New York Offices on Park Avenue. The purpose of this meeting was to brief them on the Limerick Brand. A presentation on the Brand was given followed by a questions and answers session from the group. Final arrangements for Tourism Ireland's Work Programme for Limerick for the St Patrick's weekend festivities was agreed. It was further agreed that the New York Office of Tourism Ireland would 'adopt' Limerick for 2020 to receive focused attention in tourism promotion.

I hosted a lunch in Rosie O'Grady's Restaurant for the family representatives of Ms. Ellen O'Grady to acknowledge her pioneering police and community work in New York City at the turn of the last century. Ms O'Grady was born in Henry Street, Limerick in 1863 and emigrated to the USA in 1880. She was appointed to the Deputy Police Commissioner post in the New York Police Department in 1918, the first woman to be appointed to such a role in the United States of America.

On the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> February the delegation and I attended an Irish Dept. of Foreign Affairs reception at the Irish Consulate hosted by the Consul General Mr Ciarán Madden. The Consulate reception afforded the Limerick delegation to launch Brand Limerick in the USA. The event was attended by eighty five members of the Limerick diaspora in the New York area with attendees from the social, political, business, educational, sporting, and cultural life of the city and region. The families of Ms Ellen O'Grady and a delegation from New Brunswick which has a Sister City Relationship with Limerick also attended. The Consulate event was a great opportunity to showcase the modern Limerick and to outline our ambitions for the future.

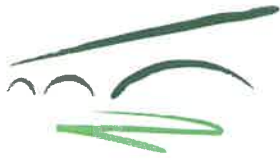
The delegation left New York on 14<sup>th</sup> February to arrive back in Ireland on 15<sup>th</sup> February.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that the objectives of highlighting best in Limerick through the Brand Launch and the various meetings around this have been achieved. I am particularly proud of being able to reach out and engage with our magnificent diaspora in the USA.

Is mise, le meas,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michael Sheahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Sheahan" clearly distinguishable.

**Councillor Michael Sheahan,  
Mayor of the City and County of Limerick**



Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae **Luimnigh**  
**Limerick City**  
& County Council

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**To: The Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council** f: +353 (0) 61 415 266

#### Context:

Mr. Jay Burke, Chairman of the Tybee Island Irish Heritage Committee, invited Councillor Michael Sheahan, Mayor and a delegation from Limerick City and County Council to participate in their parade in Tybee Island in Savannah, Georgia, USA, on Saturday the 14th of March, 2020 at 3.00 p.m.

#### Introduction:

The Council will be aware of the invitation to Mayor Sheahan from Jay Burke, Chairman of the Tybee Island Heritage Committee and also from Lawrence 'Bubba' Edgerly, General Chairman of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, to attend some of the celebrations leading up to St. Patrick's Day in March 2020. Accordingly, a delegation comprising of Councillor Adam Teskey, Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillors Emmet O'Brien and Sarah Kiely and Mr. Brian Kennedy, Director of Service, was appointed to represent the Council in Savannah, Georgia from Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to include participation at the Tybee Island Parade on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February. The invitations were issued by Marty Hogan from Savannah who acted as the group's liaison person during the visit. Marty's parents are from Limerick city and he is a regular visitor to the county.

The visit represented a great opportunity to create new economic, social and cultural links between Savannah and Limerick. Savannah has very rich Irish Heritage and ancestry dating back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century once colonisation commenced there. Around the 1840's the influx increased dramatically as a large employment boom in Savannah attracted the Irish before and after the Potato Famine. When Boston and New York were closing their doors to the Irish with their signs that "No Irish need apply", Savannah welcomed the Irish in their droves. Accordingly, recent census information states that 1 in 4 Savannahians claim to have Irish origin.

Savannah has many similarities with Limerick as it has similar population size and is built on an Estuary linking the Savannah River to the Atlantic Ocean. They have regular flooding events annually similar to those experienced in both the city and various locations in the county in Limerick. In addition, it has built a tourism industry out of its former waterfront industries which mirrors Limerick's potential under its new status as a Failte Ireland appointed Gateway to the Wild Atlantic Region. It also represents an exemplar on how we can optimise the potential of the current Tourism and new Brand Strategies.

With this in mind, several meetings were arranged with key players in Savannah to create the linkages and forge new contacts for our mutual benefit in the future.

These meetings are summarised as follows:

Representatives from Savannah's Waterfront Association.

The delegation met Julie Musselman, Executive Director and Brigitte Van Baelan, Operations Manager from Savannah's Waterfront Association (SWA) along with Bubba' Edgerly, General Chairman of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. The SWA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion, preservation and success of the restaurants, retail shops, tours and hotels along River Street, Factors Walk, Bay Street and Hutchinson Island.

Formed in 1973 as a non-profit charitable organization composed of proprietors, property owners and other stakeholders the organisation was created to:

- Preserve and maintain the waterfront's historic character
- Maintain and improve the waterfront's scenic nature and appearance
- Promote and stimulate public interest in the waterfront
- Promote co-operation and mutual assistance among property owners and businesses along the waterfront

The contacts that have been made with the SWA and their experience can help us realise Limerick's tourism potential around how to optimise its location on the Shannon River and its new Failte Ireland status as gateway to the Wild Atlantic Way Region. This also demonstrates how we can exploit our status as a Purple Flag location.

Representatives from Savannah Economic Development Association (SEDA) in the World Trade Centre.

A presentation was given to John Coleman, Director of the Executive Committee, Leigh Ryan, Vice President of the World Trade Centre, Savannah (WTCS) and Jessie Jenkins, Director of Research and Trade Development, in the WTCS on Limerick's 2030 Strategy, the Council's Economic Development role and on the economic drivers in the region. In addition, some of the major Infrastructural projects being delivered by LCCC were presented.

Jessie Jenkins from SEDA also gave a presentation on the structure of SEDA and in their economic development role in the region and internationally. Their mission is to attract investment and create jobs and their strategy to achieve that is to:

- Help regional companies do business internationally
- Help facilitate foreign direct investment opportunities for the region
- Generate revenue to support these activities

They have identified Ireland as one of their target countries for co-operation and we would hope to enhance those links over the coming months and years.

#### [Meeting with Mayor for the City of Savannah Van Johnson](#)

The delegation visited City Hall to meet Mayor Johnson and his team. The group was then invited to attend the March Council meeting in the City of Savannah Council Chamber. Mayor Johnson introduced the delegation to the meeting and corporate gifts were exchanged. The Mayor then invited Deputy Mayor Adam Teskey to address the Chamber where he outlined the similarities between Savannah and Limerick, expressed the Council's willingness to maintain economic and social links and invited Mayor Johnson to Limerick.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> March, the Covid 19 crisis deepened considerably and the US President announced he was closing US Airports to European flights. As a result of this escalation, it was decided that the delegation should cut short the visit and return to Ireland on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of March. Accordingly, we were unable to attend a meeting arranged with the Management Team and administrative staff of the City of Savannah to discuss their Public Realm, Transportation and Flood Protection Capital works. These discussions would have provided an insight into their experiences and would assist us in delivering our similar schemes in Limerick.

In addition, the delegation was unable to attend the Tybee Island Irish Heritage Parade on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> of March.

Despite the truncation of the visit, the delegation forged very important links with both the Members and Executive of the City of Savannah, Savannah Economic Development Association and Savannah Waterfront Association, which should be fostered into the future for the benefit of all parties.

**Adam Teskey**  
**Councillor Adam Teskey,**  
**Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick.**

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2020**



Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae Luimnigh  
**Limerick City**  
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18<sup>th</sup> June, 2020

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**To : The Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council**

## **Visit to Queens County New York**

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

As Members will be aware, I travelled to Queens County, New York, in early March 2020 (5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March) to attend the Annual Queens County St. Patrick's Day Parade at Rockaway, Queens, New York. I was accompanied by Mr. Gordon Daly, Director of Service.

I used the opportunity to promote Limerick and the Mid West Region and to develop business and tourism linkages.

### **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March :**

I met with Mr. Patrick Benn, Principal, Glenn Construction to receive an update on progress in establishing a modular housing factory at Galvone Industrial Estate, Limerick.

### **Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> March:**

I travelled to Rockaway Beach in Queens to represent Limerick at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Queens County Parade.

The day consisted of the following events :

**9.00 a.m.** - Attended mass for peace and justice at St. Francis de Sales Church, Rockaway. I was introduced to the congregation by Michael Benn, President of the Parade and a Limerick native.

**10.30 a.m.** - Attended Breakfast Networking Event at Knights of Columbus Hill, Rockaway. I had the opportunity to brief those present and highlight our Limerick story in terms of investment and tourism. I also had the opportunity to meet with the following members of the Irish American Community.

**Grand Marshal** – Gerard Fitzgerald, President, Uniformed Firefighter Assoc. of Greater New York  
**Honorary Grand Marshall** – Mr. Brian Glynn  
**Gael of the Year** – Ed Wilkinson

**Deputy Grand Marshalls :**

Monsignor Richard Ahlemeyer  
John Brennan, United States Coast Guard  
Joe Mure, Attorney  
Mark Healey, Editor in Chief, The Wave  
Irene Connolly Dougherty, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians  
Tommy Quinn, New York State Court Officers  
John Moroney, Ancient Order of Hibernians  
Terri Coyle, VP, Behavioural Health, St. John's Episcopal Hospital  
Ed Grayson, Chief, New York City Department of Sanitation

**12.30 p.m.** Commencement of Parade at Beach 130<sup>th</sup> Street, Rockaway

**2.00 p.m** I addressed the crowd at the parade from the viewing stand. I also had the opportunity to meet Mr. Seán Lane, Chairman of the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade and Mr. Hilary Beirne, Chairman, St. Patrick's Day Foundation, N.Y.C. and chief Administrator NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade.

**4.00 p.m.** Awards Ceremony, Knights of Columbus Hall. I attended the ceremony where a presentation of trophies and awards were presented to honourees and winners. I received a presentation to mark Limerick's attendance at the Parade and associated events and I took the opportunity to thank the Parade Committee for their invite and hospitality.

**8.00 p.m.** I attended a fundraising concert for Rockaway Rugby Club which provided the opportunity to meet with younger members of the Irish American Community and Irish people including many from Limerick and the Mid West region.

**Cllr. James Collins,  
Cathaoirleach,  
Metropolitan District of Limerick**



**Mr. Michael Benn, President of the Parade Committee introduces guests of honour and Grand Marshall**



**Presentation to Cllr. James Collins, Cathaoirleach, Municipal District of Limerick**



**Cllr. James Collins addresses Breakfast Networking Event**  
**L-R: Michael Benn, Cllr. James Collins, Seán Lane, Hilary Beirne (NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee)**



**Viewing Stand:**  
**L-R: Michael Benn, Cllr. James Collins, Eileen Collins**



**Cllr. James Collins addresses crowd at Parade Viewing Stand**



**St. Patrick's Day Parade, Rockaway**



**L-R: Eileen Fitzgerald, Gerard Fitzgerald (Grand Marshall), Cllr. James Collins, Michael Benn, Eileen Collins**



**Cllr. James Collins addresses the crowd at Rockaway Rugby Club fundraising concert**