

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ONLINE ON TUESDAY, 21ST DECEMBER, 2021, AT 2.30P.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor D. Butler, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Benson, Carey, Collins (B), Collins (J), Collins (M), Costelloe, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Galvin, Hartigan, Kiely, Kilcoyne, McSweeney, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Donoghue, O'Donovan, O'Sullivan, Ryan (E), Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C), Slattery, Talukder, Teefy, Teskey.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. P. Daly), Director, Planning, Environment and Place-Making (Ms. N. Gallagher), Director, National and Regional Shared Services (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Ms. L. Flannery), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Mr. M. Leahy), Communications Officer (Mr. D. Tierney).

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from the Deputy Chief Executive/Director, Support Services.

1. Granting of Honorary Freedom of Limerick

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Special Meeting and stated that the Special Meeting had been called to seek the Council's approval to the granting of the Honorary Freedom of Limerick to Vicky Phelan.

He outlined how the Freedom of Limerick is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon an individual by Limerick City and County Council, and that the honour is reserved for those who have made an exceptional or unique contribution to the common good, or to persons who have made outstanding contributions to the life of Limerick.

He referred to the numerous messages, calls, texts and emails that he had received regarding Vicky and the high regard that people had for her across Irish society, for her work in uncovering the Cervical Check scandal. He also referred to her tireless support of other women who have been affected and are fighting for justice, a fight that continues to this day.

He also noted how Vicky has continued to face her own health challenges head-on with a drive and determination that has garnered the respect and admiration of all, and how all of this encapsulates the ideals of the Freedom of Limerick.

He noted that since 1877, only four women have previously received the Freedom of Limerick, namely - Ishbel Maria Hamilton-Gordon, Countess of Aberdeen in 1884; Maud Gonne in 1900; Kathleen Clarke in 1918 and Trudy Hunt in 1997, so this was a unique honour being bestowed on a unique person.

The Mayor advised that he had discussed the proposal with Vicky Phelan, and he confirmed that she had indicated that she would be honoured and delighted to accept the Freedom of Limerick, if the Elected Members were in agreement to same.

The Members were unanimous in their support of the proposal, and they noted how Vicky Phelan has been such an advocate for cervical cancer awareness and for women's health in general. They also commended her continued bravery in facing and dealing with her own ongoing health issues and treatments. They also noted the fantastic support and care her own family had given her over the years in dealing with all the challenges she had to face. They also referred to Ruth Morrissey, who had also campaigned fearlessly with Vicky Phelan on the cervical cancer scandal, who had passed away in July 2020.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor Galvin, it was unanimously agreed by all the Members that the Honorary Freedom of Limerick be conferred on Vicky Phelan.

It was agreed that the Freedom Ceremony would take place early in 2022 in consultation with Vicky Phelan and her family and having full regard to her health and Covid guidelines, etc.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Date: _____