

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT ANNUAL MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, AND ONLINE, ON MONDAY, 7th JULY, 2022, AT 3PM.**

**PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:**

Councillor D. Butler, Mayor.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Benson, Carey, Collins (B), Collins (J), Collins (M), Collopy, Daly, Donegan, Egan, Foley, Galvin, Hartigan, Keary, Kiely, Leddin, McSweeney, Mitchell, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, O'Sullivan, Ruddle, Ryan (E), Ryan (M), Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C), Slattery, Talukder, Teefy, Teskey.

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive (Dr. P. Daly), Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Support Services (Mr. S. Coughlan), Director, Housing (Ms. C. Curley), Director, Community, Tourism and Culture (Mr. G. Daly), Director, Planning, Environment & Place-Making (Ms. N. Gallagher), Director, Transportation and Mobility (Mr. B. Kennedy), Director, National & Regional Shared Services (Mr. K. Lehane), A/Director, Economic Development and Enterprise (Mr. V. Murray), Senior Executive Officer, Regeneration (Mr. B. Troy), Meetings Administrator, (Ms. L. Flannery), Administrative Officer (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. A. Foley),

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting and acknowledged the shock and sadness still felt by all following the sudden and untimely death of a colleague and dear friend, Councillor Jerry O'Dea. He said that it was a poignant moment for all the Elected Members given that Jerry had been due to be elected as Mayor but unfortunately this was not to be and instead they were gathered here today to try and move on with the business of the Council.

The Mayor also informed Members that the media were present and may wish to record elements of the meeting. In accordance with Standing Orders, the Mayor sought agreement from the Members in this regard. All Members were in agreement for recording to proceed if required.

The Mayor acknowledged the work and commitment of Council Members to the Local Authority and to Limerick, and the betterment of our communities and citizens. He especially thanked the Members for their assistance and hard work in the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan which was the first Development Plan adopted by Limerick City and County Council.

He thanked the Chief Executive, Management and staff across all Departments, including District Offices, and outdoor staff, for their work on a daily basis for all of Limerick. He thanked

the staff in Corporate Services for their support during the year and in particular, Eleanor Buckley, in the Mayor's Office who kept his diary going at all times.

The Mayor noted all the many special moments and events during his year as Mayor and he stated he was proud to represent Limerick and celebrate all that was good in Limerick City and County. The Mayor thanked all his family and friends for their support during the year and in particular his wife Tanya and children who were so supportive to him.

In conclusion, the Mayor thanked the outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ruddle, for his invaluable support during the year and invited him to address the Meeting. Cllr Ruddle said that it was an honour to be Deputy Mayor and he thanked the Mayor and all the Members for their support during the year and he thanked the staff for their assistance and support during the year.

## **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 Collins (M);  
Seconded by Councillor Collins (B);

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

As there were no other nominations, the outgoing Mayor declared Councillor Foley elected as Mayor of the City and County of Limerick and offered him his congratulations and best wishes for the coming year.

Having taken the Chair, the incoming Mayor, Councillor Foley, gave the following address:

Colleagues, Chief Executive and officials of Limerick City and County Council, family and friends. It is such a huge honour for me to be elected as the first citizen of Limerick today. It is a position that all local politicians strives for, but not all are elected, so I am so proud to now being among that number. There is a long and valued history of Mayors of Limerick and I intend to uphold that honoured tradition and do my best for the people of Limerick. I would like to congratulate Cllr Butler and Cllr Ruddle on their very successful term as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively.

Being Mayor is a responsibility that I will take very seriously, with the humility that the office deserves. I am custodian of these chains for the next 12 months and I will do my best for all communities right across our great city and county.

Before I continue it important for me to mention our colleague Jerry O'Dea RIP. While this is a huge personal moment for my family, and me it would be remiss of me not to mention my friend and colleague. It was his sudden passing that triggered this event for me and while it is

a hugely joyous day for me, it is bittersweet. Again, I would like to express my condolences and the condolences of the people of Limerick to Jerry's family and friends – his father, children and siblings. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

I wish to thank my proposer Cllr Michael Collins and seconder Cllr Bridie Collins for proposing me for the position of Mayor of the City and County of Limerick and I want to thank all those who have supported me in the election today. We all stand for election and become involved in politics for the right reasons, representing our communities and peers and seeking to make our collective lives better and more progressive.

I left school when I was 15 years old and went to work. I have worked hard to rear my family, better my community and do my best to ensure that the mandate given to me was and is discharged to the best of my ability. Limerick is a great place to live and work. It is for everyone and there is a place for everyone. I have shown, and there are many more like me, that you do not have to be a high academic achiever to make a difference. All you need is honesty and dedication...and perseverance. These are the principals that I relate to my work and will continue to abide by these as I begin my term as Mayor.

A career as a public representative is not possible without the help of many people and organisations. Firstly, my wife and family have always had my back and fully supported me since I was first elected in 2006 to Limerick County Council. Helen, Kevin and Jason this honour today is as much yours as mine and I am so proud to have such a wonderful wife and family to celebrate with and share in the success of today's events. My mother Rita and four brothers and two sisters have also stood by me and supported me at all times. Thanks too to my political mentor - former Councillor and Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council, Michael O'Kelly, the local Fianna Fail organisation in Abbeyfeale and of course Gerard Collins.

The biggest challenge we face now is the provision of housing - for our young people in particular. Between now and 2026 we have been tasked to deliver over 2,500 new homes. The Council must ensure that there are no obstacles to getting these homes built. Failure or excuses are not an option. The Council must also get a handle on the level of vacant homes in its possession and put a programme in place to bring them back into use and tenanted as soon as possible. Funding and the resources must be provided to at least half the number of vacant homes by the end of this year and eliminate the main bulk of homes within a three-year period. No Council-owned home in Limerick should be vacant for more than six months. Remember we are not just talking about bricks and mortar. We are talking homes for people, for the elderly, less abled, for people to raise their families, thus allowing the creation of strong and sustainable communities – everything that we want for Limerick.

Community is hugely important in towns and villages right across Limerick. Communities are the lifeblood of many areas, a 'godsend' to many people who live in isolated areas or alone. Limerick has shown how strong our communities are with the advent of COVID and the demands and restrictions that placed on us all and that volunteerism that came to the fore, remains very strong.

Limerick is a place that people from many different countries and creeds call home. I will represent all communities in Limerick and ensure that every section of these communities

receives and acknowledges due recognition and service for our council and that nobody is left behind.

Different thinking, customs, etc. help to enrich Limerick. We must be open to new ideas, give people the voice to articulate and debate them and then move on together. We all have to make hard decisions, but once we communicate and explain reasons behind these decisions then we can move on, and capitalise and ensure that Limerick remains a very attractive place to live. And remember we are not always right, we should never be afraid to listen to others and change our positions if required.

Limerick and the wider region has been buoyed by a series of jobs announcements in recent months and weeks. We must continue to make sure that we do not rest on our laurels. We must continue to search out that company, create the 'next best thing', and provide the proper housing, public realm, facilities and services that are required for a modern society to function. We have to make bold, brave, and sometimes tough choices, but they have to be right for Limerick. Limerick City like other cities around the world needs to look to the future, embrace what a city needs to be, wants to be and should be.

Vested interests need to be Team Limerick, not Team Me. What is best for Limerick is best for everyone. Change is tough but change creates opportunities. While we need to have an undoubted focus on the city, our towns and villages need action plans also. Vacancy, dereliction, broadband, are issues regularly mentioned when talking about our county's towns and villages. Let us have action plans to tackle these. Let us ensure that these locations are attractive for people to either remain, or are attractive for others to move to. It is not a case of either/ or when it comes to city or county. It should be a case of all.

Finally, we are a proud sporting county be it Gaelic Games, Rugby, Soccer, Swimming, Athletics and many other codes, with thousands of men, women and children participating in sport every week. Sport plays a hugely important role in many people's lives both on and off the pitch. This is where community and volunteerism are once again on show with many people giving of their time and skills to help others. Exercise is also important for your mental health and I want to remind planners and developers that adequate provision of urban and rural walking routes, completion of footpaths, and playgrounds and park are a priority for any development. They should never be left as an afterthought. We have to rethink our processes and thinking.

And of course, I cannot end without wishing our Limerick Hurlers the very best in the All Ireland Hurling final next Sunday week. Their exploits since 2018 have provided us all with huge amounts of joy and happiness, at a time when collectively we were at a low ebb. Let us hope their and our dream of a three-in-a-row becomes a reality on Sunday week.

Luimneach Abú-Go raibh míle maith agaibh

**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 Collins (M);  
Seconded by Councillor Slattery;

“That, Councillor Kieran O’Hanlon 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.”

As there were no other nominations the Mayor declared Councillor O’Hanlon elected as Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick and congratulated him on his election.

The incoming Deputy Mayor, Councillor O’Hanlon, then addressed the Meeting:

I am delighted to be elected today to the post of Deputy Mayor and it is a position that I have never held before. It’s a day tinged with sadness as we think of the late Cllr Jerry O’Dea and my thoughts are with his family today. Thanks to my Fianna Fail colleagues for nominating me, and all my colleagues who supported me here today. I am honoured to take up the position of Deputy Mayor of our fine city and county. I will endeavour to work hand-in-hand with Mayor Foley in supporting him in carrying out his duties as Mayor and I know we will work very well together.

The Members welcomed the guests who were present. 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 Butler, and the outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ruddle. Members commended them for the manner in which they had performed their roles during the year.

The Chief Executive congratulated Councillor Foley and Councillor O’Hanlon on their election to the Office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick respectively. He stated that it was an honour to hold the Office of Mayor, a responsible position that carried with it the challenge of delivering leadership for and on behalf of the people of Limerick. He looked forward to working with them over the next twelve months to promote Limerick. He also acknowledged the accomplishments of the outgoing Mayor and Deputy Mayor and their efforts to lead the Council in very challenging circumstances as a result of COVID-19.

This concluded the Meeting.

**Signed:**

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**Mayor**

**Date:**

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