

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Clare County Council held in the
Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on
Friday, 22nd June, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors J. Breen, P. Daly, T. McNamara, M. Howard, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

Apologies: Councillors A. Norton, P. Murphy

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, A/Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Loretta McNamara, Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance.
- Mr. Mark Dunphy, Communications Officer.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tom McNamara presided.

The outgoing Cathaoirleach thanked his fellow Councillors for giving him the opportunity to serve as Mayor and their support and that of the Leas Cathaoirleach, Chief Executive, Council staff and media in carrying out his duties. He thanked his wife Mary and sons Stephen and Kevin for their help, support and patience over the last 12 months.

He stated that he had had a wonderful year and would take many wonderful memories of his time as Cathaoirleach. He saw a number of defining trends including a surge in digital technology and our ageing population and felt that local government has a key role to play in combating exclusion and isolation and developing our sense of community through the Rural Development Strategy. He said that he was honoured to represent this County as First Citizen both in Ireland and abroad. When he travelled to the U.S.A. he met some familiar faces and names and was taken aback at how attuned our Diaspora are to events at home and was equally proud of the positive contribution they are making to their adopted country.

He congratulated Cllr. G. Flynn on being elected Cathaoirleach of Shannon Municipal District, Cllr. P. Burke, Cathaoirleach of Killaloe Municipal District, Cllr. I. Lynch, Cathaoirleach of West Clare Municipal District and Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy, Mayor of Ennis Municipal District.

Several members paid tribute to the Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach for the manner in which they conducted the business of the Council in a fair, inclusive and impartial manner during their year in office.

The Chief Executive, Pat Dowling, also joined in the tributes to both for the way they carried out their respective roles during the year in dealing with the staff, communities and members of the public. He said that it had been a particularly busy year a highlight being the launch of the Rural Development Strategy. He referred to the Cathaoirleach's involvement with Kilmaley Daycare Centre, and advised that the Minister has credited Kilmaley Daycare Centre for developing national policy in this area. Also, his role in promoting the work of Clare County Council particularly among young people. In September a programme is going to be launched to allow students to visit Áras Contae an Chláir to see local government in action.

Item 1: Election of Cathaoirleach of the Council for the coming year.

The outgoing Cathaoirleach called for nominations for the post of Cathaoirleach for the forthcoming year. At this point in the meeting Cllr. G. Flynn proposed Cllr. Michael Begley for the position of Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council for the year 2018-2019, this proposal was seconded by Cllr. P.J. Ryan and agreed by all present.

As there were no other nominations Cllr. M. Begley was declared elected as Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council for the coming year.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Begley thanked the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach for their contribution over the past year. He spoke of the honour it was to be accepting the role of Cathaoirleach and thanked his wife Fidelma and family for their ongoing support. He welcomed his wider family and friends into the Council Chamber and expressed his great pride as being the first person from Clonlara and indeed, the wider Southeast Clare area to have been bestowed this great honour as only 45 other people have held the title of Mayor in the 119 year history of this Council since 1899. He looked forward to meeting communities and individuals across the county and further afield over the next year and doing his utmost to represent all to the best of his ability. He referred to his years in the Council from the time he was elected in 1991 and before. The Cathaoirleach said that the Council staff are committed public servants and he has seen the enormous benefits associated with the executive and elected members working closely together and he thanked the Chief Executive and his management team for the openness and spirit of collaboration that they have adopted in working with councillors.

He took the opportunity to acknowledge Colm Wiley, a former Mayor, who passed away earlier this year.

Clare County Council's vision for enhancing the quality of life for all the people is clearly evident in the wide ranging work programme being implemented across the county at present. He felt that Clare County Council is meeting head on the rural, physical, economic and social challenges and opportunities that it faces by being innovative and brave in its ambition. In the area of rural development, he believes that Clare faces unique challenges but is dealing with these through the development of digital hubs, rural transport initiatives and the appointment of Rural Development Officers. He would like to see the local authority work closely with the O'Curry Irish College in Carrigaholt and the wider community in Loop Head to consolidate the college's future, as well as strengthen the longstanding Gaeltacht that has existed. This would tie in with the great success of the Loop Head Lighthouse Visitor Centre and the Council's excellent ongoing work in the area of rural development. He wished to commend the Council for its work in supporting and promoting Clare's rich cultural heritage and suggested that the Council examine the prospect of supporting the hosting of events that celebrate some of the lesser known, but equally important, contributors to Clare's proud cultural tradition.

Several elected members present wished Cllr. M. Begley well in his role as Cathaoirleach and offered their support and help to him in the coming year.

The Chief Executive, Pat Dowling, wished the new Cathaoirleach well and looked forward to working with him in the coming year. He assured him of the co-operation of all staff during his year in Office.

Item 2: Election of Leas Cathaoirleach of Council for coming year.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Begley called for nominations for the position of Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. P. Hayes proposed Cllr. A. O’Callaghan and this was seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney and agreed by all present.

As there were no other nominations for the post the Cathaoirleach declared Cllr. A. O’Callaghan elected as Leas Cathaoirleach for the coming year.

Members and the Chief Executive joined in wishing Cllr. A. O’Callaghan well in his role as Leas Cathaoirleach over the coming 12 months.

The outgoing Leas Cathaoirleach P. Burke took the opportunity to thank his colleagues for their kind words and he really enjoyed his year as Leas Cathaoirleach, one of the highlights of which was representing this Council at the Famine Commemoration at UCC.

Cllr. A. O’Callaghan thanked his fellow members for giving him the honour to hold the role of Leas Cathaoirleach. He spoke of the honour it was to be accepting the role of Leas Cathaoirleach and thanked his wife and family for their ongoing support. He referred to St. Joseph’s Hospital and the great facility it provides and the need to support it and look after our aging population. The Leas Cathaoirleach concluded his speech by stating that he was looking forward to working with the new Cathaoirleach and the staff of Clare County Council for the coming year.

Item 3: Schedule of Ordinary Meetings for next twelve months.

The Schedule of Meetings was circulated with the agenda and was proposed by Cllr. C. Curtin and seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney and agreed by the members present.

It was stated that the next meeting will be held on Monday, 9th July, 2018 at 3:45 p.m.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____