

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare and via MS Teams on Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 at 3:30 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors M. Howard, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, A. O’Callaghan, T. O’Brien, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, P. O’Gorman, J. Killeen, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O’Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Dr. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services.

**Present via MS Teams:**

Cllrs. J. Flynn, A. Norton, P. Burke, S. Talty.

**Apologies:**

Cllr. P. Daly, D. McGettigan, M. Nestor, J. Garrihy, L. Grant and I. Lynch.

The outgoing Cathaoirleach addressed the meeting and stated that it was a great honour to serve as Cathaoirleach and he thanked the members of the Council for their good will and co-operation during the past year.

Cllr. Ryan stated that he has always worn the Mayoral Chain in the knowledge that he represented everyone in the Chamber as well as the people of this county.

Cllr. Ryan felt that the history books will show that it has been another extraordinary 12 months, here and abroad, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine and was mindful of all the people whose lives have been impacted.

Cllr. Ryan mentioned some personal highlights from his term as Cathaoirleach as follows:

- The unveiling of the memorial sculpture at Shanakyle Graveyard in Kilrush, to commemorate the children who died at the Clare County Nursery, and who had gone unremembered for many years.
- The Mayors Charity Ball which he hosted with Cllr Ann Norton generated a big contribution to two worthy Clare charities, Sláinte an Chláir and Clare Crusaders.
- Recognising the outstanding achievements of seven individuals and groups with Mayoral Awards for their excellence, bravery and commitment.

- Leading the Clare congregation down 5th Avenue in New York on St Patrick's Day will remain a high point for me personally. A truly great stage to promote our county and a truly memorable experience.

Cllr. Ryan stated that during the past year he was privileged to welcome many Government Ministers to Clare to showcase some of the excellent work being done here and felt that this Council has strong relationships and continues to work with Government departments to progress projects and initiatives.

Cllr. Ryan acknowledged those who have passed away during his time as Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. Ryan thanked the Chief Executive, who was of tremendous assistance during his term, as were the staff of Clare County Council.

Cllr. Ryan commended the Council staff, along with our front line workers and everyone who has worked to ensure our safety during the Covid pandemic.

Cllr. Ryan concluded by saying that he knows this Council will continue to support our communities and local businesses, promote our local tourist attractions, and ensure that Clare remains a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

Cllr. Ryan thanked his wife Mary and his family for all their support during the year and stated that he will look back on his term as Cathaoirleach with great affection, and he wished his successor the very best.

The elected members present paid tributes to the outgoing Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P.J. Ryan and complimented the manner which he carried out his duties and co-ordinated the meetings during the year. The members extended best wishes to Cllr. Ryan's wife Mary and wished her a speedy recovery.

#### **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. Cllr. P. Hayes proposed Cllr. T. O'Brien for the position of Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council for the year 2022-2023, this proposal was seconded by Cllrs. J. Cooney and G. Flynn and agreed by all present.

As there were no other nominations, Cllr. T. O'Brien was declared elected as Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council for the coming year.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. T. O'Brien addressed the meeting and thanked Cllrs. P. Hayes, J. Cooney and G. Flynn for nominating him for the position of Cathaoirleach which he accepted not only in a personal capacity but also on behalf of all his family, friends, his parish of Killaloe and its people.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien thanked his wife Majella and his family for their ongoing support and also thanked his friends and colleagues from Bus Éireann and the NBRU for all their help and assistance over many years and for taking time out to join him.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien committed to continue to work for and on behalf of all the people of County Clare and continue the work on the many projects which are currently ongoing. Cllr. O'Brien undertook to continue the promotion and marketing of our county and acknowledged the wonderful community spirit in our county, which is evident in the support that groups and volunteers are providing to displaced Ukrainians here.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien referred to the many positive projects both ongoing and in the pipeline, and mentioned the following:

- The recently opened Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme.

- The collaboration with TII to ensure the road upgrade which serves our local international airport, Shannon Airport.
- The work and partnership with the Shannon Group to attract further investment and more traffic through our airport.
- The proposed taking over of the Shannon Heritage Tourist sites.
- Our work to develop the Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) in south-east Clare, working in partnership with the University of Limerick, which he would like to continue.
- The commencement of the new River Shannon crossing and Killaloe bypass. Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien called on our Oireachtas members to ensure that all that is necessary is done to commence this project immediately as its necessity and importance to the entire east Clare region cannot be overstated.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien referred to phase 2 of the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) and expressed disappointment that it was removed from the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and committed to have this reinvestigated and vowed to campaign to have it reintroduced as per our County Development Plan.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien continued that as a Council, internally, there will be many challenges and mentioned the completion of our County Development Plan and the passing of our annual budget which are two very important pieces of work that have both implications and consequences for our citizens.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien stated that he looks forward with optimism for the coming year to working with his fellow Councillors stated that he will be available to assist them and the Chief Executive and staff.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. O'Brien concluded by remembering his father Billy and both his grandparents, Willy & Mary O'Brien, who reared him on the cross roads in Killaloe.

The members present congratulated Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tony O'Brien on his appointment as Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, wished him well and committed their support during his term. The members welcomed the Cathaoirleach Cllr. O'Brien's family to the Council Chamber. The elected members commended the power sharing arrangement that has been in place for the benefit of the county.

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

The outgoing Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. J. Killeen thanked the members for their support and outlined some of the memorable occasions he experienced during his term as Leas Cathaoirleach.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. T. O'Brien called for nominations for the position of Leas Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. G. Flynn proposed Cllr. A. Norton for the position of Leas Cathaoirleach and this was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all present.

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

Cllr. A. Norton addressed the meeting and stated that she was honoured to be nominated as Leas Cathaoirleach for the next twelve months. Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. A. Norton undertook to work with and support Cathaoirleach, Cllr. T. O'Brien.

The Chief Executive, Pat Dowling, stated that this was an occasion to celebrate and be gracious. Mr. Dowling stated that Cllr. P.J. Ryan brought special qualities to the Office of Cathaoirleach and

showed great compassion and humanity during his term. Mr. Dowling stated that it was an honour for him and all the staff to serve and work with Cllr. Ryan during the twelve months.

Mr. Dowling congratulated Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tony O'Brien and assured him of his and the Council staff full support for the year ahead. The Chief Executive referred to the challenges facing the Council and undertook to work together for the benefit of everybody in the county.

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

The Schedule of Meetings was circulated with the agenda and was proposed by Cllr. P.J. Ryan, seconded by Cllr. P. Hayes and agreed by the members present.

**Item 4: Approval for payment of the Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach allowances for the forthcoming year.**

Approval for payment of the Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach allowances for the forthcoming year was proposed by Cllr. G. Keating, seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney and agreed by the members present.

The meeting then concluded.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Riarthóir Cruinnithe**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_