

**Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis
held at 3.00pm in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chlair, New Road, Ennis,
Co. Clare, on Thursday 22nd of June, 2017.**

Present:

Councillors: P. Daly J. Flynn, M. Howard, C. Colleran Molloy, A. Norton, J. Breen and P. Murphy & T. McNamara.

Officials: Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Ger Dollard, Director of Services, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator & Fiona Whelan, Staff Officer.

Cllr. Ann Norton addressed the meeting and began by acknowledging the support that her fellow Elected Members had given her over the past 12 months. Serving as Mayor of Ennis had been the greatest honour of her life.

Cllr. Norton thanked Cllr. James Breen for his support throughout the year as Deputy Mayor, as well as all the staff of the Municipal District of Ennis for their support and guidance.

Ennis has benefited greatly from the hard work and commitment as well as the innovative approach towards the development of the town. With the support and contribution of Elected Members, plenty has been achieved and continues to be achieved.

As the latest CSO figures tell us, Ennis is one of the largest towns in Ireland by both population and by size. Therefore, the role played by the Members of this Chamber cannot be overstated.

As Mayor, Cllr. Norton had been fortunate enough to witness at first hand the many examples of community-led projects throughout Ennis and surrounding areas. She has seen how the business sector works closely with the Council to improve the local economy.

We must continue to support our communities, look for new ways to support local businesses, promote our local tourism assets, and ensure that Ennis continues to act as a driver for the economic and social development of the county. It is only through such a partnership approach that we will continue to further enhance Ennis as a place to visit, somewhere to rear a family, and a town in which to start a business in.

Cllr. Norton acknowledged the support of her husband Cathal and three children, Nicole, Lauren and Conán who have given a masterclass in demonstrating patience over the past year.

Cllr. Norton again acknowledged her colleagues for entrusting her with the role of Mayor and wished the new incoming Mayor the very best during their term of office.

Members complimented Cllr. Norton on her role as Mayor of Ennis for the past 12 months. She was a pleasure to work with and was the pulse of the people on the ground. She brought style to the role of Mayor and has done the town proud on a hugely successful and amazing year.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, thanked Cllr. Norton for all her work over the past year and complimented her on being a wonderful ambassador for everyone, but in particular, people with disabilities. She should be very proud of her year as Mayor of Ennis.

Ger Dollard, Director of Services, congratulated Cllr. Norton on a very successful year and especially the fact that from the outset she made it clear that she would make herself available for all events no matter when or where they were on. She certainly did this in style.

Item No. 1 Election of Mayor / Cathaoirleach:

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn, cuidithe ag Cllr. T. McNamara agus glacagh leis, “That Cllr. Paul Murphy is Mayor of the Municipal District of Ennis for the next 12 months”.

As there were no other nominations for the position of Mayor, following Cllr. Paul Murphy’s acceptance of the position, Cllr. Ann Norton declared Cllr. Paul Murphy Mayor of the Municipal District of Ennis for the next year. Cllr. Norton wished him every success for his year as Mayor and agreed that all eight members will again work together as a unit for the coming year.

The Mayoral Chain of Office was presented to Cllr. Paul Murphy by Cllr. Norton.

Cllr. Murphy thanked the members of the Municipal District of Ennis for bestowing the huge honour of Mayor to him. Over the past year, he had been privileged to serve as Leas Cathaoirleach in the County and looks forward to doing likewise for the Municipal District of Ennis. He welcomed members of his family, friends and neighbours into the Chamber today.

Particularly, he acknowledged his wife Siobhan and children, Cathal and Johnny, as well as his parents Tom and Therese, his siblings Liz, Mags and Ciarán, and his mother in law, Kay.

Cllr. Murphy acknowledged Councillor Norton who has been a fantastic ambassador for this Municipal District, for the town of Ennis and for the Elected Members. He particularly wanted to acknowledge his proposer, Councillor Flynn and seconder, Councillor McNamara.

Ennis continues to thrive as a centre of commercial activity and he believes its fortunes from a business perspective have a direct impact on the social and economic prosperity of the wider Municipal District.

We must continue to work as a Council in further reducing vacancy rates in the town, making Ennis and outlying villages attractive locations to invest in, and working with the local business community to generate new ideas like the 1 euro parking charge that will increase footfall on our streets.

From a tourism perspective, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann has really put Ennis on the map as a visitor destination and we must look forward to welcoming thousands of people to the town in mid-August. The Shannon Estuary Walk was launched last Friday and Cllr. Murphy is delighted that Clarecastle features prominently along the route. Elsewhere, we are fortunate in Ennis and surrounding communities to have so many festival and events throughout the year.

From a community, infrastructure and environment perspective, our towns and villages are benefiting from initiatives such as the town and village renewal scheme, investments are being made in developing Ballyalla, our Tidy Towns participants continue to impress in the national competition, and more areas than ever before are now served by high speed broadband. All of these positive developments have not occurred overnight however. They are the result of creative thinking, hard work and a spirit of partnership between this Council, the business sector, and local community and voluntary groups.

We must not take our eye off the ball. Instead, we must renew our focus on how we can continue to work together to address existing social and economic challenges while at the same time capitalising on all opportunities that are presented to us.

As First Citizen of Ennis and of this Municipal District over the next year, Cllr. Murphy hopes to highlight an issue that is close to his heart. It is one of the key issues affecting rural Ireland in particular. This issue has been brought to the fore in recent years having been treated as a taboo subject in Irish society for so long. Everyone knows someone who has been affected by depression or anxiety, or indeed, by suicide. Each and every one of us has a responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable in society are protected and supported.

Cllr. Murphy proposed that, sometime over the next 12 months, Ennis would host a seminar bringing together some keynote speakers as well as mental health support services under the one roof. Education is key to addressing the mental health crisis in this country and therefore, this is an event that should be particularly targeted at our young people. He hopes that such an event would not only promote the supports available locally, but that it also would encourage younger people to become more aware of their mental health and how they can develop their own individual strengths, to allow them to be better able to bounce back from the challenges and setbacks that life presents. Cllr. Murphy looks forward to exploring this proposal further with Elected Member colleagues - and others during the coming weeks.

Once again, he thanked everyone for giving him the opportunity to represent the people of the Municipal District of Ennis during the coming year. He looks forward to contributing to the workings of this Municipal District and, in turn, the wider

community in Ennis and surrounding areas, including Kilmaley, Barefield, Quin, Doora, Kilnamona and Clarecastle.

Members congratulated Cllr. Murphy on becoming Mayor of Ennis and agreed that they would work together as a team for the benefit of the town and Municipal District of Ennis. They also welcomed his proposal in relation to mental health awareness and suggested that this might be something that could be done alongside John Burke’s charity “Elevate” which also promotes mental wellbeing in young people.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive, congratulated Cllr. Murphy on his election of Mayor of Ennis and wished him every success for the coming year.

G. Dollard, Director of Services, congratulated Cllr. Murphy on behalf of the staff on becoming Mayor of the Municipal District of Ennis. He said that Cllr. Murphy would have the co-operation of the executive for the year ahead.

Item No. 2 Election of Deputy Mayor / Leas-Chathaoirleach

Ar moladh Cllr. Tom McNamara, cuidithe ag Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy, agus glacagh leis,

“That Cllr. Ann Norton is Deputy Mayor of the Municipal District of Ennis for the next 12 months”.

As there were no other nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor and following Cllr. Norton’s acceptance of the position, Cllr. Murphy declared Cllr. Ann Norton, Deputy Mayor of the Municipal District of Ennis for the next 12 months.

Cllr. Murphy and all the members present wished Cllr. Norton every success for her year as Deputy Mayor of Ennis.

Item No. 3. Approve allowance for Mayor of Ennis.

On the proposal of Cllr. Ann Norton, seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara the allowance of €12,000 for the role of Mayor was approved.

Signed: _____
Mayor
Cllr. Paul Murphy

Signed: _____
Meetings Administrator
Ann Reynolds

Date: _____