

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF CORK CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY, 24th JUNE, 2010

- PRESENT** An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Murphy in the Chair and subsequently An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir M. O'Connell in the Chair.
- NORTH EAST** Comhairleoirí J. Kelleher, T. Tynan.
- NORTH CENTRAL** Comhairleoirí M. Barry, C. Clancy, K. O'Flynn, T. Gould.
- NORTH WEST** Comhairleoirí J. O'Brien.
- SOUTH EAST** Comhairleoirí D. Cahill, L. McGonigle, D. O'Flynn, T. Shannon, C. O'Leary, K. McCarthy, J. Corr.
- SOUTH CENTRAL** Comhairleoirí E. O'Halloran, S. Martin, M. Finn, F. Kerins.
- SOUTH WEST** Comhairleoirí J. Buttimer, M. Shields, M. Ahern, G. Gibbons.
- APOLOGIES** Comhairleoir T. Fitzgerald.
- ALSO PRESENT** Mr. J. Gavin, City Manager.
Mr. D. O'Mahony, Director of Services, Corporate Affairs.
Ms. D. Hegarty, Law Agent.
Ms. V. O'Sullivan, Director of Services, Recreation Amenity & Culture.
Mr. T. Duggan, City Architect.
Mr. P. Moynihan, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs.
Mr. N. Carroll, Staff Officer, Corporate Affairs.
Ms. K. O'Donoghue, Clerical Officer, Corporate Affairs.

An tArdmhéara recited the opening prayer.

1. **ELECTION OF AN tARDMHÉARA**

An tArdmhéara D. Murphy addressed the meeting.

An tArdmhéara D. Murphy requested nominations for the office of Ardmhéara:

Comhairleoir J. Kelleher proposed, and Comhairleoir J. Corr seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir M. O'Connell.

Comhairleoir M. Barry proposed, and Comhairleoir J. O'Brien seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir C. O'Leary.

A vote was called for where there appeared as follows:-

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR M. O'CONNELL

Comhairleoirí J. Kelleher, D. Murphy, C. Clancy, K. O'Flynn, M. O'Connell, D. Cahill, L. McGonigle, D. O'Flynn, T. Shannon, K. McCarthy, J. Corr, E. O'Halloran, S. Martin, J. Buttimer, M. Shields, M. Ahern, G. Gibbons.-(17)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR C. O'LEARY

Comhairleoirí T. Tynan, M. Barry, T. Gould, J. O'Brien, C. O'Leary, M. Finn, F. Kerins.-(7)

An tArdmhéara D. Murphy declared Comhairleoir M. O'Connell elected to the office of Ardmhéara.

An tArdmhéara M. O'Connell then addressed An Chomhairle:

“Thank you, thank you very much indeed. Can I ask you all to allow me just a minute or two to reflect on what has just happened to me tonight?

Lord Mayor of Cork.

The first citizen of this great city of ours, this amazing chain around my neck.

The history that goes with it, the prestige, the honour, the pride and the responsibility of it all.

I'm deeply honoured by all of this and humbled at the thought of all the great men and women that have gone before me.

There is a place called Kilmurvey on the Aran Islands. I am thinking of the inscription on the grave of that great Cork storyteller, historian and author Sean Beecher, who is buried there.

I think of the word he has written on his headstone, a word that means so much to me and says so much about us as a people, where we come from and who we are.

Sean Beecher, Corcaíoch – Cork Man.

Is mise Michael O'Connell agus is mise Corcaíoch. I'm Michael O'Connell and I'm a very proud Cork man tonight.

I want to thank the Labour Party for nominating me for the position of Lord Mayor.

I would also like to thank the members of council for supporting me here tonight and I will endeavour to make Council as inclusive as possible this coming year.

Right now I am thinking of all those former Lord Mayors, who are now legends in this city and part of our history and culture.

Terence McSweeney, Thomas McCurtain and my own cousin, Chrissie Aherne.

I also remember former Lord Mayors from my own party, people like Pat Kerrigan, Gerry O'Sullivan, Frank Nash, Toddy O'Sullivan and John Murray, who are both here tonight.

All have represented this great city of ours with pride, intelligence and passion.

Thank you for trusting and believing in me.

I promise to do my very best to live up to the standards that they brought to the office of Lord Mayor.

And speaking of Lord Mayors, can I pay tribute to Dara Murphy, whose term has ended tonight.

Dara, you were a fantastic ambassador for this city.

So too was your wife Tanya and on behalf of the citizens of Cork city, the council and myself would like to thank you for all the work you and Tanya have put in over the past 12 months.

Right now I'm smiling to myself. It's a very happy occasion and also a very sad one at the same time for me.

I am thinking of my first night as an elected councillor in this very chamber 11 years ago.

I'm thinking of my late great mother and father Eileen and Gerry. I remember my first night clearly and I can still see my mother's face pressed up against the door of the chamber as she looked on from outside, so proud of her son who had become a councillor in this city.

The gallery was full and she was unable to get a seat, so she looked on through the glass.

There would be no need for that tonight mum, as now I have the key and you could sit here next to me if you wanted to for the next 12 months.

I think of my father and all the advice and encouragement he gave me as I chased my dream.

I think of small-John and Dillon, who are looking down on me tonight.

I am thinking of what my mother and father would say now if they were alive to witness this, new chapter in my life.

They were great parents and teachers and everything I am today is because of them.

I would also pay tribute to the late parents of my wife Catherine, that's Timmy and Dolly Buckley and her aunt Hannah for their support.

All 3 played a huge part in my life as well and would have loved to have been here today.

I remember Catherine's father Timmy speaking on our wedding night in the Metropole Hotel 36 years jokingly saying to me, ye won't last six months.

Now here we are. I am Cork's first citizen and she is Lady Mayoress and I know they would be very proud tonight of their daughter and me.

Distinguished guests, former Lord Mayors, member of Cork City Council, TD's, city manager Joe Gavin, Bishop of Cork and Ross John Buckley, family and friends.

As the 110th Lord Mayor of Cork City and on behalf of the Lady Mayoress and myself can I welcome you one and all to the City Hall tonight.

Thank you for taking time to share in my inauguration. It means so much to me to have you here with me.

I am thrilled to have so many of my family and friends in this room with me this evening, because without them their support and advice over the years this day would never have arrived for me.

I can see Tom Coleman from the Blarney Street Community Association.

I can see Michael Walsh and Tony Farrell from Sunday's Well Boy's School. Thanks for coming.

To my brother Paddy – thanks for everything. To my beautiful wife Catherine, who has been by my side through thick and thin, there are not enough words that would allow me to express how I feel about you.

Thank you for being a great mother to our children Aileen, Kieran and Michael.

Thank you for being a great mother in law to Julie and Richard. Thank you for being such a fantastic and loving grandmother to Kate, Ben, Ava and Allie.

But most of all thank you for being the biggest supporter and at times my biggest critic all these years.

Without your devotion to the children and me this would not be possible and I know how proud you also are tonight at becoming Lady Mayoress of our city.

Can I ask for a round of applause please for the new Lady Mayoress Catherine O'Connell?

Ladies and Gentlemen being the Lord Mayor of Cork is a job that carries a huge responsibility and I am ready for that responsibility.

Right now the people of our city are facing very difficult times. Unemployment is at an all time high in this city. People have huge mortgages on homes that are in negative equity. People are struggling to survive.

I am very aware of this and I can guarantee you all that for the next 12 months I will dedicate my time as Lord Mayor to improving the quality of the lives of the people of Cork City.

We need to try to restore the confidence of our people, and through the office of Lord Mayor I intend to try and to do this we need to create opportunities for our people to return to work.

I want to develop a positive atmosphere and environment within the city that will lead to an upsurge in the local economy.

In that regard I am prepared to work with every agency; every government body, Bord Failte, Cork Business Community, the enterprise boards and the Cork Business Association to ensure the city of Cork foremost in the minds of the decision makers.

I can see many members of the Cork Business Association here tonight and thank you for taking the time to share this joyous occasion with my family and I. Cork city is a place of innovation, a place of resounding character and resilience, a place of determination and depth and a place of spirit and pride.

Our people are unique and they are the greatest resource this city has. I believe we need to tap into this, our unique selling point and promote it. We need to use it and encourage thinking and innovation all across this city.

I will use the office of the Lord Mayor to promote creation of jobs and I would like us all to focus on job retention and on fairness in the workplace in Cork. We need to focus on the up-skilling of our workers and creating further educational opportunities for them and in particular for those who have lost their jobs recently.

We need to create further learning opportunities for people that will lead them back into the workplace with their pride and self confidence restored.

I intend to lead that focus through this office.

I welcome the number of new major development projects that have been granted planning permission recently.

I am speaking of projects such as those planned for Blackpool and Mahon, the Docklands project, the development of Páirc Uí Chaoimh for example.

It is vital that work starts on these projects during my time as Lord Mayor as these projects will have an immediate impact on the creation of a significant number of jobs, both during the construction phase and also on a longer term basis once they are up and running.

I will also assist and work very closely with the Cork Chamber of Commerce, the Cork Business Association and the enterprise boards.

I intend to meet with them as soon as possible and see how we here in City Hall can assist business in this city and help it survive and prosper.

I will focus on delivering on the commitment to the building of the bridge at Water Street.

This is a vital step in progressing the development of the Docklands and as Lord Mayor I plan on making it a priority to ensure the money for this project is ring-fenced for the building of the bridge.

And remember the Docklands development is already a huge success. You just have to look the road from here to the City Quarter area of the city.

Look at the impact the new City Quarter and the Boardwalk have had on the local economy and the creation of new jobs.

This project is essential to the future of this city.

Ladies and gentlemen, local government will be sorely tested in the years ahead.

We will come to rely more and more on the voluntary, charitable and community organisations to work with the council to support vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities.

I will focus on communities and volunteerism and speaking of it, I see Philip Hosford and Catherine O'Connell of Gurrabraher Credit Union are here.

These are two people who do great work in the Credit Union for their community.

Thank you all for all the work you do in the local community and can I thank everyone who gives of their time voluntary in their own community.

The people in our local communities are the heart beat of this city. They are fantastic people who need to be heard - and I will listen.

I will go out to meet these people in their local communities and hear their concerns and their needs.

The people who run community centres, sports clubs and other places where people gather are special people.

I want our city to do more to support their causes. Within the first two months of taking office I plan to arrange a series of meetings with local community volunteers across the city, to listen to their views.

I want to find out how they would like to see their community and city developed over the coming years.

Following on from these discussions and debates at these meetings it is my intention to propose that the Cork City Council would hold a special meeting of councillors at a venue in the local community.

This will give our elected councillors a chance to discuss the ideas and issues raised and to invite members of the public to attend.

The heritage and culture of Cork city is very important to me. And can I make this promise to all those who are actively involved in the areas of culture and heritage.

As Lord Mayor of this city I will support and encourage all the heritage and cultural projects in this city.

I am available to meet with you, to lend the weight, resources and expertise of the city to support and help the development of your festivals.

The number of visitors who come to our city to watch or participate in events such as the Jazz Festival, the Choral Festival, the Cork Folk Festival, the Film Festival, the Cork World Book Fest and the Arts Fest are so important to the finance and well being of this city, never mind all the jobs they create, both on a part-time and full time basis.

I promise that during my spell as Lord Mayor no stone will be left unturned by us in City Hall in promoting any of your ideas that will benefit this city.

The area of sport and recreation is another one that I will focus on over the next 12 months.

We will be unveiling various projects over the course of my tenure as Lord Mayor to further improve and expand on what Cork currently offers its citizens in these areas.

I would like to see Cork jerseys on sale in Cork airport; I believe we should have a dedicated sports museum here in Cork.

We need to showcase our sporting prowess to a wider audience in Cork and Ireland.

I believe sport and recreation plays a huge role in the lives of our people. We are a sport mad city. We have some fantastic clubs, both large and small and they deserve our support.

When you consider the amount of young people who are in this city right now, sport and recreational activities take on an even bigger significance in their lives.

It keeps them in contact with people. It gives them a outlet and a sense of identity and success on the pitches, tracks and courts of this city can help restore their confidence and self-belief.

Tourism is another area I believe we need to target. Tourism is very important to this city, and we need to encourage more people to come visit Cork.

Cork should become a festival city that is synonymous with fun, quality, value and excellence in the area of food, entertainment and hospitality.

We need to build on our current reputation as a great place to visit and get more guides like the Lonely Planet singing our praises. We have the people; we have the facilities and the natural resources to make this happen. We have the heritage, the culture, the sport and some of the most beautiful scenery in the world and

we need to further tap into these resources. I am looking forward to seeing a specialist event centre in Cork. We need one now. The success of the Marquee proves this year-in year-out.

We need an event centre that can cater for thousands of fans. This is essential for the future wellbeing of this city and again I refer to the Docklands project. An event centre will create new opportunities. If we can attract major international artists and just as important major international conferences that are currently going elsewhere to this city, jobs will follow.

New attractions, such as the planned centre on Spike Island can and should become major attractions and draw tourists, both national and international to Cork.

I keep repeating this type of activity will lead to job creation. I will work with all local authorities to make Cork a safer and cleaner city and again details of the incentives I have planned will be unveiled at a later date.

I will spend the year telling people how great Cork City is and I want you all to do the same. Every School I visit will be made aware of my pride in Cork and in them.

We plan to focus on the promoting the smart economy in these schools. I will introduce a new thinking on my visits, with their first introduction to the smart economy in primary schools.

I want to introduce an educational aspect to my visits. I will bring special guests with me that will promote an educational theme and create interest and a new awareness of the smart economy. Every opportunity I get to meet business leaders and foreign VIP's I will use this office to promote Cork and its people.

I will work with the leading multi-nationals in this city, companies like Apple in my own area, who are great employers and very loyal to Cork as well as leading multi-nationals like EMC, who provide so many jobs to the people of both Cork City and County.

I intend for them to help us secure more jobs and foreign investment for Cork and ask them what we as a city can do to promote their business and use their expertise and experience of working with Cork people to attract similar industries to our city.

I promise you I will meet with everyone who can help get this city back on its feet and thriving again.

That's my mission statement for the year. Finally, ladies and gentlemen there are four very special people I want to mention before I finish my speech.

Fr Jack Harris and Fr Kieran Twomey – You are both very welcome. All those prayers that you offered up to St Jude, the patron saint of lost causes on my behalf worked.

Thank you for your support, both spiritual and practical.

Distinguished guests thank you for listening to me. My wife and I look forward to serving the people of Cork with intelligence, honour and dignity over the next 12 months.

Go raibh maith agaibh go leir.”

2. **ELECTION OF LEAS ARDMHÉARA**

Nominations were requested for office of Leas Ardmhéara.

Comhairleoir M. Ahern proposed, and Comhairleoir L. McGonigle seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir D. O’Flynn.

Comhairleoir T. Tynan proposed, and Comhairleoir C. O’Leary seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir J. O’Brien.

A vote was called for where there appeared as follows:-

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR D. O’FLYNN

Comhairleoirí J. Kelleher, D. Murphy, C. Clancy, K. O’Flynn, M. O’Connell, D. Cahill, L. McGonigle, D. O’Flynn, T. Shannon, K. McCarthy, J. Corr, E. O’Halloran, S. Martin, J. Buttimer, M. Shields, M. Ahern, G. Gibbons.-(17)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR J. O’BRIEN

Comhairleoirí T. Tynan, T. Gould, J. O’Brien, C. O’Leary, M. Finn, F. Kerins.-(6)

An tArd-Mhéara declared Comhairleoir D. O’Flynn elected Leas Ardmhéara.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**ARDMHÉARA
CATHAOIRLEACH**