

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF CORK CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON FRIDAY, 19th JUNE 2026

PRESENT	An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir F. Dennehy in the chair and subsequently an tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boylan in the chair.
NORTH EAST	Comhairleoirí, J. Maher, J. Kavanagh, M. McDonnell, O. Moran, N. O'Flynn, J. Struthers.
NORTH WEST	Comhairleoirí J. Sheehan, M. Gould, K. Collins.
SOUTH EAST	Comhairleoirí T. Shannon, K. McCarthy, M.R. Desmond, H. Kamegni, P. Horgan.
SOUTH CENTRAL	Comhairleoirí S. O'Callaghan, S. Martin, F. Kerins, P. Dineen, D. Boyle, N. O'Connor.
SOUTH WEST	Comhairleoirí C. Kelleher, J. Lynch, A. Deasy, T. Coleman, G. O'Brien, C. O'Connor.
ALSO PRESENT	Ms. V. O'Sullivan, Chief Executive. Mr. B. Geaney, Assistant Chief Executive. Ms. R. Loughry, Director of Services, Corporate, Community & Cultural Affairs. Mr. D. Joyce, Director of Services, Emergency Management & Climate Action. Mr. J. Stapleton, Director of Services, Local Area Development & Operations. Mr. J. Hallahan, Head of Finance. Ms. N. Stewart, Meetings Administrator. Ms. R. Lynch, Administrative Officer, Corporate, Community & Cultural Affairs. Ms. V. Keating, Staff Officer, Corporate, Community & Cultural Affairs.

An tArdmhéara recited the opening prayer.

1. **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

On the proposal of Comhairleoir J. Maher, seconded by Comhairleoir H. Kamegni, An Chomhairle agreed to suspend standing orders to allow media cameras into the Council Chamber for the handover of the Lord Mayor's chain, and to allow the meeting to be streamed and recorded.

2. AN tARDMHÉARA'S ADDRESS

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir F. Dennehy addressed the meeting as follows:-

As I stand before you today at the conclusion of my term as Lord Mayor, I do so with immense gratitude, deep pride, and a profound sense of honour.

When I was afforded the privilege of this role a year ago, I described it as a *sacred trust* placed in me by the people of Cork, and that is something I have carried with me every single day.

To serve this city, has been without doubt the greatest privilege of my life.

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to meet thousands of Cork people, in our schools, our community centres, our businesses, across our parishes and neighbourhoods. And if there is one thing I will take from this year, it is this: Cork is defined by its people, their decency, their creativity, their resilience, sense of humour and their community spirit.

There have been many moments that will stay with Karen and I forever.

Together, we were honoured to represent Cork at events that celebrated everything that is best about our city, from leading many events to visiting all of the institutions in our city, marking important moments of reflection, moments of celebration and learning even more about this beautiful city that we all call home.

One of the great joys of this role was engaging with our young people, visiting schools across the city, a tradition started by Tomas Mac Curtain in 1920, speaking with students, and hopefully inspiring the next generation to believe in themselves and in public service.

We also celebrated the very best of Cork through the Lord Mayor's Civic, Community and Voluntary Awards, recognising those whose quiet dedication strengthens the very fabric of our city every day. We also had the opportunity to recognise and fundraise for vital charities in our city through the Marymount Coffee morning, Lord Mayors Gala Concert and the Lord Mayors Charity Ball.

And on behalf of Cork, we had the honour of representing our city internationally strengthening ties and building friendships, reminding us that while Cork is proudly local, it is also globally connected and outward-looking.

For me, none of this would have been possible without Karen by my side, her warmth, kindness and commitment made every occasion all the more meaningful, and I want to thank her sincerely. Two highlight events for Karen were the Lady mayoresses Coffee morning the incredibly successful International Women's day event which gathered over 40 different women's support groups from across the city into the Millenium Hall to showcase what services are available to women in our city. While these events were high profile, there were numerous other events where Karen embraced her role and supported me in my role in a manner well beyond any expectation.

This year has also been a time of real progress and ambition for Cork.

We are living through a period of unprecedented change, a city growing in confidence, in scale, and in opportunity.

Across Cork, we see transformation happening:

- Major housing developments delivering hundreds of new homes for our citizens, because housing must remain at the heart of everything we do.
- Regeneration projects like the Docklands, one of the largest urban regeneration projects in Ireland and Europe which will create vibrant, sustainable communities and reshape our city for generations to come.
- Investment in infrastructure, flood defences, public spaces, and transport, ensuring a more connected, resilient, and liveable city.
- And a clear plan for the future, one that prioritises sustainable growth, public transport, and opportunity for all.

Cork today stands at a crossroads, but it is a positive one. We have the vision, the ambition, and most importantly the people to shape a city that is inclusive, vibrant and future-focused.

As I hand on the chain of office this evening, I do so with great confidence in the future of this city.

To the people of Cork, thank you for the kindness, courtesy and love you have shown to us throughout this year. It has meant more than words can say.

Cork is changing, yes, but it is changing for the better.

We are building a city that honours its past but is not afraid to embrace its future.

It has been the honour of my life to play a small part in that journey.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

3. **ELECTED MEMBERS ADDRESS**

Comhairleoirí T. Coleman, N. O’Flynn, G. O’Brien, P. Dineen, J. Lynch, O. Moran, C. O’Connor, M. McDonnell, K. McCarthy, J. Struthers and P. Horgan addressed the meeting on behalf of their respective groups.

4. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S ADDRESS**

The Chief Executive, Valerie O’Sullivan addressed the meeting.

5. **ELECTION OF AN tARDMHÉARA**

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir F. Dennehy requested nominations for the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir S. O'Callaghan and seconded by Comhairleoir C. Kelleher, Comhairleoir D. Boylan was nominated for the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir K. Collins and seconded by Comhairleoir M. Gould, Comhairleoir F. Kerins was nominated for the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

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

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR D. BOYLAN

Comhairleoirí J. Maher, J. Kavanagh, M. McDonnell, O. Moran, D. Boylan, J. Sheehan, T. Shannon, K. McCarthy, M.R. Desmond, H. Kamegni, P. Horgan, S. O'Callaghan, S. Martin, D. Boyle, F. Dennehy, C. Kelleher, T. Coleman, G. O'Brien, C. O'Connor. (19)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR F. KERINS

Comhairleoirí N. O'Flynn, J. Struthers, M. Gould, K. Collins, F. Kerins, P. Dineen, N. O'Connor, J. Lynch. (8)

ABSTAIN: Comhairleoir A. Deasy. (1)

As those voting for Comhairleoir D. Boylan were greater than those voting for Comhairleoir F. Kerins, An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir F. Dennehy declared Comhairleoir D. Boylan elected to the office of Ardmhéara for the coming year.

6. **AN tARDMHÉARA'S ADDRESS**

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boylan addressed An Chomhairle as follows:-

Fellow Councillors, Chief Executive, distinguished guests, friends and family, Being here tonight is both a tremendous honour and a deeply humbling experience. To be elected Lord Mayor of Cork, the city I love, is a privilege beyond anything I could have imagined when I was growing up as a young Mon boy.

Like many Cork people, I didn't spend much time thinking about titles or offices. I was raised to believe that if something needed doing, you rolled up your sleeves and got involved. You worked hard. You helped where you could. You left things a little better than you found them.

That simple philosophy is what first brought me into community life, then into business, and ultimately into public service.

Tonight, I want to thank my fellow councillors for placing their trust in me.

We come from different political traditions. We often disagree. Sometimes passionately. But at our best, we all share a common purpose: making Cork a better place for the people we serve.

I am grateful for the confidence you have shown in me, and I look forward to working with every member of this Council during the year ahead.

Before I move on, I want to thank my proposer and seconder.

They are two great friends, one from my own party and one from across the political aisle.

I am deeply grateful for their support and their friendship.

I think their willingness to stand together this evening says something important about how I hope to approach the year ahead.

Politics will always involve differences of opinion. That is healthy and necessary. But there is far more that unites us than divides us when it comes to the future of our city. I want this to be a year where we work together wherever possible, where good ideas are recognised regardless of where they come from, and where our shared focus remains firmly on the people of Cork.

The people who elected us expect us to work for the common good, and that is exactly what I intend to do.

I would also like to acknowledge the outgoing Lord Mayor, Councillor Fergal Dennehy.

Fergal has represented Cork with dignity, commitment and enthusiasm. Anyone who has held this office knows the demands it places upon both the holder and their family. Fergal has given his all to the role, and I thank him sincerely for his service to our city. He has played a blinder.

I would also like to acknowledge the Lady Mayoress, Karen Brennan.

Throughout the past year Karen has supported the work of the Lord Mayor with tremendous grace, warmth and professionalism.

She brought both class and style to the role, but she also used her position to shine a light on causes, organisations and community groups that might otherwise not have received the attention they deserved.

Her commitment, compassion and generosity of spirit have been evident throughout the year.

She has been an exceptional Lady Mayoress and Cork is indebted to her for the contribution she has made.

Tonight is also a family occasion.

To my wife Brenda, thank you.

Nobody serves in public life alone. The meetings, the phone calls, the events, the campaigns, the interruptions to family plans, the moments missed and the sacrifices made are shared by those closest to us.

Through all of it, Brenda has been my greatest supporter, my strongest adviser and my closest friend. I would not be standing here tonight without her love, patience and encouragement.

To my children, Simon and Kate, thank you for sharing your father with the wider community for all these years. I am incredibly proud of you both.

To my parents, Ann and Tony, thank you for everything you have given me.

My mother gave me my deep roots in Cork, roots that stretch back through generations of Cork families who helped shape this city in their own quiet way.

My father came from Dublin and taught me values that have guided me throughout my life: honesty, hard work, respect for others and the importance of keeping your word. Everything I am today is built upon the foundation they created.

I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues at Pinergy.

For many years they have supported my role as a councillor and understood the value of public service. Balancing a professional career with elected office is not always easy, and I have always appreciated the support and understanding I have received.

Once again, as I take on the role of Lord Mayor, they have been willing to go the extra mile and support me in accepting this honour. For that, I am sincerely grateful.

Tonight is particularly special for another reason.
As far as I can establish, I become the sixteenth past pupil of the North Monastery to serve as Lord Mayor of Cork.
That is an extraordinary legacy.
The North Mon has produced generations of Cork men who have contributed to public life, business, sport, education and community service. To follow in their footsteps is something I regard as one of the greatest honours of my life.
But while tonight is personal, this year cannot be about me.
It must be about Cork.
And it must be about the people who make Cork what it is.
During the year ahead, I intend to focus on a very simple message.
Two words.
Be Sound.
Every Cork person understands exactly what that means.
You won't find it in any policy document.
You won't hear it in many boardrooms.
But you will hear it every day across our city.
Be decent.
Be kind.
Be fair.
Look out for one another.
Give somebody a hand when they need it.
Show patience when it would be easier to show anger.
Treat people with respect even when you disagree with them.
It sounds simple because it is simple.
Yet I believe it is one of the most powerful ideas we possess.
Over the coming year, I hope to bring that message into schools across our city.
When I do, I intend to talk about one of nature's most remarkable sights.
A murmuration of starlings.
Thousands of birds moving together through the evening sky.
No leader.
No bird in charge.
No grand plan.
Each bird simply paying attention to those around it.
Each making small adjustments.
Small movements.
Small actions.
And together they create something extraordinary.
I think there is a lesson in that for all of us.
We often believe that changing the world requires great acts.
But more often than not, it starts with small ones.
A kind word.
A helping hand.
A little patience.
A little understanding.
A little respect.
When enough people make those small choices, communities change.
Schools change.
Neighbourhoods change.
Cities change.

And just like the birds in a murmuration, something remarkable emerges from the collective actions of ordinary people.
 That is what Be Sound means to me.
 Not a slogan.
 Not a campaign.
 A way of living.
 A reminder that every one of us has the ability to make life better for somebody else.
 One conversation at a time.
 One interaction at a time.
 One act of kindness at a time.
 I believe Cork is uniquely placed to embrace that message.
 We are a city of character.
 A city of humour.
 A city of resilience.
 A city of innovation.
 A city that knows how to argue fiercely and still sit down together afterwards.
 Most importantly, we are a city that looks after its own.
 As Lord Mayor, I will represent every person in this city.
 Every community.
 Every corner of our city.
 Every tradition.
 Every background.
 Whether you voted for me, voted against me, or have never voted at all.
 The chain I wear does not belong to me.
 It belongs to the people of Cork.
 For the next year, I will merely be its custodian.
 I will do my utmost to honour that responsibility.
 I will serve with energy.
 I will serve with humility.
 I will serve with gratitude.
 And I will serve every citizen of Cork to the very best of my ability.
 Thank you for this extraordinary honour.
 Thank you for your trust.
 And thank you for giving a North Mon boy the privilege of serving as Lord Mayor of Cork.
 Let's make it a year of kindness.
 Let's make it a year of community.
 Let's make it a year where we remember to simply...
 Be Sound.
 Go raibh míle maith agaibh.
 Ar aghaidh, ar aghaidh.

7. **ELECTED MEMBERS ADDRESS**

Comhairleoirí J. Sheehan, D. Boyle, J. Maher, K. Collins, P. Dineen, J. Kavanagh, K. McCarthy, J. Struthers and F. Kerins addressed the meeting on behalf of their respective groups.

8. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ADDRESS**

The Chief Executive, Valerie O'Sullivan, addressed the meeting.

9. **ELECTION OF LEAS ARDMHÉARA**

An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boylan requested nominations for the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir J. Kavanagh and seconded by Comhairleoir C. O'Connor, Comhairleoir G. O'Brien was nominated for the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

On the proposal of Comhairleoir J. Lynch and seconded by Comhairleoir F. Kerins, Comhairleoir M. Gould was nominated for the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

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

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR G. O'BRIEN

Comhairleoirí J. Maher, J. Kavanagh, M. McDonnell, O. Moran, D. Boylan, J. Sheehan, T. Shannon, K. McCarthy, M.R. Desmond, H. Kamegni, P. Horgan, S. O'Callaghan, S. Martin, D. Boyle, F. Dennehy, C. Kelleher, T. Coleman, G. O'Brien, C. O'Connor. (19)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR M. GOULD

Comhairleoirí N. O'Flynn, J. Struthers, M. Gould, K. Collins, F. Kerins, P. Dineen, N. O'Connor, J. Lynch. (8)

ABSTAIN: Comhairleoir A. Deasy. (1)

As those voting for Comhairleoir G. O'Brien were greater than those voting for Comhairleoir M. Gould, An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Boylan declared Comhairleoir G. O'Brien elected to the office of Leas Ardmhéara for the coming year.

An Leas Ardmhéara, Comhairleoir G. O'Brien addressed the meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**ARDMHÉARA
CATHAOIRLEACH**