

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting of Annual Meeting of Wexford County Council
held on Monday 19th June, 2017 – 12.30 p.m.
in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Wexford.**

Attendance:

In the Chair: Cllr. P. Kavanagh, Cathaoirleach.

Councillors:

P. Breen;	M. Byrne;	G. Carthy,	K. Codd-Nolan,
A. Connick;	T. Dempsey;	A. Donohoe,	K. Doyle,
M. Farrell;	J. Hegarty,	D. Hynes;	R. Ireton;
P. Kavanagh;	W. Kavanagh;	A. Kelly;	J. Fleming;
G. Lawlor,	J. Moore;	BA Murphy,	M. Murphy;
J. Mythen,	L. O'Brien;	O. O'Connell;	J. O'Rourke;
F. OSúilleabháin;	M. Roche;	M. Sheehan;	F. Staples;
J. Sullivan,	D. Wadding,	O. Walsh;	M. Whelan.

Officials:

Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive;
Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services;
Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services;
Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services;
Mr. S. Begley, A/Head of Finance & ICT;
Mr. P. Collins, County Secretary.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Members to the Annual Meeting of the Council and thanked the Members for their co-operation, help and courtesy throughout the year and apologised if he had given offence to any member.

He enjoyed a busy year as Cathaoirleach and took the opportunity to meet everybody that he could and had met many influential, interesting and good people during the year. He highlighted the "Kids for Peace" event which he attended where young people from Lebanon and Israel came to Wexford to tell their story. He felt that adults could learn a lot from these young people as they told their stories about a day in their lives, which was a very moving experience.

The Cathaoirleach also mentioned that he was glad to see that the Street was being used by the people of Wexford for exhibitions, meetings etc and that it was there for the benefit and use of the general public.

He also highlighted the 2017 Budget and welcomed to increase the property tax by 5% to provide extra money to fund initiatives for the Council; a further increase should be seriously considered by the Council for the 2018 Budget. He advised that the Hatch Lab in Gorey was a huge success and that there was some talk of a second similar building in Gorey.

The Cathaoirleach also highlighted a number of projects in Enniscorthy such as the Technical Park, improvements at Templeshannon, and a traffic management scheme for the town which is in hand.

He advised that he had been on three trips, one to London, one to Savannah and one to Messin Ridge. He advised that on the London trip he was joined by the Chairs of the Municipal Districts and he felt that it was important to keep in touch with people who had left Wexford many years ago. He particularly paid tribute to Michael Sill, President of the London Wexford Association.

With regard to the Savannah trip he advised that it was a huge opportunity to go to Savannah and deal with the Chambers of Commerce and the Trade Centre. He advised that 9 students had visited Wexford last week from the Georgia South University and that a soccer team from Savannah is due to come to Wexford in July 2017. This was the start of a Wexford/Savannah relationship that should be followed up.

The Cathaoirleach advised that he had visited Messin Bridge and had attended at the commemoration at William Redmond's burial place on where he died on 7th June, 1917 which was a very moving event. He noted that 800 people from Wexford had lost their lives in WW1. His own grandfather had taken part in WW1 and had returned safely. He advised that at Mellin Gate a wall had been built with the names of 36,000 men who were never buried or identified.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Cllr. Michael Whelan, who served as Leas Cathaoirleach, for his support and co-operation during the year.

The Cathaoirleach thanked all the staff of Wexford County Council and was very happy with the courtesy, respect and goodwill he had received while serving as Chairman.

In particular he thanked Barbara Byrne and Patricia Devereux, Corporate Services, who had a wealth of experience, second to none. He thanked the Directors of Services and gave his good wishes to Annette O'Neill whose father was ill at present. He thanked the County Secretary and the Chief Executive Tom Enright who was always only a phone call away and had given him his full help and advice over the period of his Chairmanship.

The Cathaoirleach also thanked the Members of the Press and Photographers, who turn up to every event, for their help and co-operation during the year.

Finally the Chairman thanked his wife Brenda and family members for their support.

Representatives from each of the parties and independent Members congratulated the Cathaoirleach on a job well done – they highlighted his handling of the meetings, his fairness and impartiality and his sense of humour. They also noted his leadership qualities and his ability to represent Wexford so well.

The Chief Executive joined with the tributes for the Cathaoirleach following on from his tremendous year in 2016 when he presided over the 1916 celebrations in his role as Cathaoirleach of Enniscorthy Municipal District.

A huge effort and a huge amount of time had to be given to carry out the role of Cathaoirleach. He spoke at many events with passion, humor and authenticity and represented Wexford County Council in an exemplary fashion. The Chief Executive paid tribute to the Cathaoirleach's family, his wife Brenda and sons for the support they had given him during the year.

Election of Cathaoirleach:

Cllr. J. Hegarty was proposed by Cllr. A. Donohoe and seconded by Cllr. M. Byrne.

Cllr. J. Mythen was proposed by Cllr. A. Kelly and seconded by Cllr. D. Wadding.

Voting in favour of Cllr. Hegarty: – Cllrs: P. Breen; M. Byrne; G. Carthy; K. Codd Nolan; A. Connick; T. Dempsey; A. Donohoe; K. Doyle; M. Farrell; J. Fleming; J. Hegarty; R. Ireton; P. Kavanagh; W. Kavanagh; G. Lawlor; L. McDonald; J. Moore; B.A. Murphy; M. Murphy; L. O'Brien; M. Sheehan; F. Staples; J. Sullivan; O. Walsh; M. Whelan.

Voting in favour of Cllr. Mythen: - Cllrs: D. Hynes; A. Kelly; J. Mythen; O. O'Connell; J. O'Rourke; F. ÓSúilleabháin; M. Roche; D. Wadding.

Councillor John Hegarty was elected Cathaoirleach by a vote of 25 votes to 8, and took the Chair.

Election of Leas Cathaoirleach:

Cllr. B.A. Murphy was proposed by Cllr. W. Kavanagh seconded by Cllr. K. Codd Nolan.

Cllr. D. Hynes was proposed by Cllr. D. Wadding and seconded by Cllr. J. Mythen.

Voting in favour of Cllr. B.A. Murphy: – Cllrs: P. Breen; M. Byrne; G. Carthy; K. Codd Nolan; A. Connick; T. Dempsey; A. Donohoe; K. Doyle; J. Fleming; J. Hegarty; R. Ireton; P. Kavanagh; W. Kavanagh; G. Lawlor; L. McDonald; J. Moore; B.A. Murphy; M. Murphy; L. O'Brien; M. Sheehan; F. Staples; J. Sullivan; O. Walsh; M. Whelan.

Voting in favour of Cllr. Hynes: - Cllrs: M. Farrell; D. Hynes; A. Kelly; J. Mythen; O. O'Connell; J. O'Rourke; F. ÓSúilleabháin; M. Roche; D. Wadding.

Cllr. B.A. Murphy was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach by a vote of 24 votes to 9.

The new Cathaoirleach Councillor J. Hegarty then thanked his proposer and seconder and all those who had voted for him. He congratulated Cllr. B. A. Murphy on being elected as Leas-Cathaoirleach and also congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach Paddy Kavanagh.

Cllr. Hegarty said that he had a genuine pride in representing the people of Wexford. It was a massive honour and a privilege to serve in this role. He had no family background in politics and outlined the reasons he became involved in politics.

He also thanked his wife Karina and family and friends for their ongoing support. He was of the opinion that there were many skills and ideas around the table in Wexford County Council and that it would be his intention to pool the qualities together to achieve more for County Wexford.

He paid tribute to two men who had served on the Council – the late Pat Cody and Fergie Kehoe and advised that it was a matter of importance the Members of the Council would make the most of their opportunities. This was now Year 4 of the current Council and he asked the question “Could we do more as a Council? Can we perform better?” and “Can we make the best of what we have? Now is the time for action.”

The Cathaoirleach outlined a number of priorities that he felt were important for County Wexford:

1. Jobs for our County – it was important that infrastructure such as the Hatch Lab in Gorey be put in place over the next 10 years in County Wexford. Decisions to raise the Local Property Tax had been made by the Council to provide funding for the infrastructure. Wexford now has an advantage over other counties which needs to be translated into jobs.

Providing jobs in our own County would stop Wexford people from having to travel to Dublin and abroad for good quality jobs. Wexford should be looking for actual jobs following the building of infrastructure.

2. A healthy County - the new Cathaoirleach stated that Wexford is a perfect fit to become a Healthy County under the Healthy Ireland programme with our walking trails, sporting facilities and our high-achieving sportspeople.

This objective would tie in with the Council’s support for mental health initiatives such as the ASK campaign, which had been promoted by Cllr. F. Staples during his year as Mayor.

3. Communications – he highlighted the need for good communications with the general public, giving direction, public leadership and support - sometimes Wexford County Council’s message is not getting out to the public. The Council needs to deal with all sectors and communicate its message properly.
4. He also mentioned a number of other items – speed limits in County Wexford, the Ambassador programme and many other things that the year may bring up.

He stated that Wexford has to think big and move forward. It is important that the County Council has good meetings, which are professional and productive and take a positive approach. Wexford is a great County, with great people and has the ability and potential to do great work. He noted that Wexford was well able to work at a very high level for the 1916 commemoration and for The Gathering a few years ago - we should focus on our own county and make Wexford a better place.

Cllr. B. A. Murphy then congratulated the new Cathaoirleach and looked forward to working with him and pledged her support to him for the coming year. She also thanked her proposer, seconder and those who voted for her.

Representatives from each of the parties and the independent Members congratulated the Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach and wished them well during their year in office.

Finally, Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive, welcomed Minister Paul Kehoe, Deputies Michael D’Arcy and James Browne to the meeting. He looked forward to working with the new

Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach and agreed with the priorities set out by the new Cathaoirleach, in particular his emphasis on job creation.

He also congratulated Cllr. B.A. Murphy on her appointment as Leas-Cathaoirleach. Finally, he thanked the outgoing Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Michael Whelan for his work during the year.

The Chief Executive finally notified the meeting that Waterford Airport had announced that they would be opening up flights to three UK destinations from 24th July 2017: Luton, Manchester and Birmingham.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

County Secretary

Daingithe ar an la de , 2017.

Cathaoirleach