

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON
WEDNESDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2008.**

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ NA CRUINNITHE BLIANTIUIL DE CHOMHAIRLE
CHONTAE CHIARRAÍ A TIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS
AN CHONTAE, TRÁLÍ, AR AN CHÉADAOGIN 25TH MEITHEAMH, 2008.**

PRESENT/I LATHAIR

Councillors/Comhlairleoirí

R. Beasley	J. Brassil	T. Buckley
M. Cahill	M. Connor-Scarteen	B. Cronin
T. Ferris	S. Fitzgerald	T. Fitzgerald
T. Fleming	N. Foley	M. Gleeson
D. Healy-Rae	M. Healy-Rae	D. Kiely
P. Leahy	B. MacGearailt	P. McCarthy
A. McEllistrim	C. Miller	T. O'Brien
B. O'Connell	P. O'Donoghue	M. O'Shea
L. Purtill	J. Sheahan	

IN ATTENDANCE/I LATHAIR

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager	Mr. J.D. Flynn, Director of Corp. Serv.
Ms. A. Haugh, Director of Environment	Mr. O. Ring, Director of Water Services
Mr. M. McMahon, Dir. Of Planning	Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Director of Roads
Mr. G. O'Brien, A/SEO Corp. Affairs	Mr. P. Corkery, Press & Comm. Officer
Ms. B. Reidy, SSO Corp. Services	Ms. D. Griffin, SO Corporate Affairs
Ms. M. Galvin, CO Corp. Affairs	

The meeting commenced at 12.15 pm.

The Mayor Cllr M. Healy-Rae took the Chair. The Mayor commenced the meeting with a prayer.

Suspension of Paul Galvin

Cllr. T. Fitzgerald called on the GAA to ensure that the penalty fits the crime in the suspension of Paul Galvin and added that his suspension should be reduced to 3 months.

Vote of Congratulations for Kerry Ladies Under 14 Football Team

Cllr. M. Connor-Scarteen extended a vote of congratulations to the Kerry Under 14 Ladies Football Team on winning the All-Ireland title recently. All Members said they wished to be associated with this vote of congratulations.

Mayor M. Healy-Rae thanked his Proposer and Seconder and the Members who voted for him for giving him the opportunity to serve as Mayor for the past 12 months. He complimented all Members on the tremendous work carried out over the past 12 months which has been very busy in the adoption of Local Area Plans and the review of the County Development Plan together with other routine work.

The past 12 months was made all the easier by the great understanding Members have with the County Manager who has an excellent Senior Management Team and he complimented them also. The County Manager is very proud of County Kerry and this is reflected in the great work he is doing for the County.

He also thanked Cllr. Danny Healy-Rae for his assistance as Deputy Mayor over the past 12 months. He said that it was a privilege to serve as Mayor of Kerry for the past year and when elected to the position, he made his year a time dedicated to communities and he gave priority to any community based grouping in whatever part of Kerry if they wanted him to attend any function, he made every effort to do so. Mayor M. Healy-Rae said that it has been a great learning curve for him personally. He had seen at first hand what is achievable with the drive, commitment and vision of a few people all in a voluntary capacity. The dedication and commitment of those who provide community services, crèches, playgrounds etc is to be admired and they are the lifeblood of Kerry. There is a wonderful diversity of cultures in our society at present and it is by listening to those diverse opinions and respecting these different opinions that the respect for the different cultures evolves.

Mayor Healy-Rae said there are many challenges in local government. The heyday of the Celtic Tiger is gone, finance will become tighter and priorities for capital spending will become of paramount importance. Members, as the elected representatives, will have to make decisions that will effect the lives of the citizens of this County. Members must at all times follow the principle of the importance of local democratic institutions in representing local communities in delivering services, in regulating for the common good and in developing the physical, economic and social environment of the local community. In the recently published Paper on the Reform of Local Government, there is a full chapter on connecting with communities. It envisages more participation from communities in Local Government, be it in the form of consultation, plebiscites or committees and the enhancement of Strategic Policy Committees. This will allow decision making to be handled at the appropriate level and the people of the County will influence decisions taken and this must be welcomed. He added that it is important to have a strong local government structure where the mantra would be "citizens first". In recent times, Members have been considering the review of the County Development Plan. In this document, Members try to outline the way forward for the County for the next 5 years and to have a fair and balanced approach to the future development of Kerry. The Draft County Development Plan is now out for public consultation to be reviewed by interested parties and he urged all bodies, be they State Agencies or community groups to read and review the document and to make submissions so that elected members will be in a better position to have the views of all represented in the final document.

He added that the position of Mayor of Kerry is chiefly ceremonial but it is a position that gives great opportunities to highlight all that is good about our County. When a Member is elected Mayor and takes the Chain of Office, they become the official ambassador for the County and it is incumbent on the holder to promote the whole of Kerry wherever the opportunity arises.

He thanked the staff of Corporate Services for their assistance during the past 12 months and all the Directors of Services for their co-operation. He thanked the group of five people who assisted him in his term of office and also Timothy O who is a lifelong friend and has travelled many parts of the country with him in the last 12 months. He thanked his family for their patience as he was away from home a lot. He thanked Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae for his assistance and guidance throughout the 12 months. In conclusion, he said that his year as Mayor was made all the easier by the whole-hearted co-operation of the County Manager, Mr. Tom Curran of whom he said, without fear of contradiction, there is no man more proud of his County and passionate about local government. In conclusion, he wished the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor every success for the coming year.

On behalf of the Fine Gael Party, Cllr. B. O'Connell congratulated the Mayor on his excellent year as Mayor of Kerry and said that he was very diplomatic and fair to all Members. It was a difficult job as there were a lot of meetings held and he carried out his duties with distinction. He also commended him on his many appearances on national TV and said he was a credit to the County and his family.

On behalf of the Fianna Fáil Party, Cllr. P. O'Donoghue thanked the Mayor for his courtesy and co-operation during his term as Mayor and said that he brought the Mayoralty to a new height. The number of meetings held is very onerous on Councillors and very time-consuming. Other local authorities conduct their business in the afternoons and he called on the new Mayor to see if a more streamlined approach could be brought to Council meetings. He commended the Mayor on his professionalism and dignity during his year as Mayor.

On behalf of the Labour Party, Cllr. T. O'Brien congratulated the Mayor on his excellent year in office and said that he was a great Ambassador for the County. He complimented the Mayor on the way in which he worked with younger people in particular at Civic Receptions. He added that the Mayor was fair to all members of the Council.

On behalf of the Sinn Féin Party, Cllr. R. Beasley congratulated the Mayor on his year in office which was very busy. He said that he carried out his work with distinction and he was a very colourful Mayor.

Cllr. B. Cronin complimented Mayor M. Healy-Rae on his term as Mayor and said that he was especially effective in the way in which he ran Council meetings, a number of which ran very late. He added that there is a huge demand on Members, in particular, in dealing with the Local Area Plans. He apologised to the people of the Killarney Electoral Area as he had missed two meetings due to the passing of his father.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae said that it was a privilege and an honour to compliment Mayor M. Healy-Rae on the way he officiated as Mayor of the County for the past 12 months. He was very enthusiastic and dedicated to the job. He also complimented the Mayor on highlighting the County abroad or in various parts of the country. He also commended him on the efficient and cordial way he conducted Council meetings. In conclusion, he said that Mayor M. Healy-Rae did his family, the people who voted for them in the Killarney and Killorglin Electoral Areas and in the South Kerry constituency proud during his term of office.

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager said he wished to be associated with the kind words expressed by Members to Mayor M. Healy-Rae and said that they were very well deserved. Mayor Healy-Rae was one of the hardest working Mayors that he had ever worked with and his commitment to the job was second to none. He thanked the Mayor for his kind words for the staff of the Council and said they were appreciated. He added that at Council meetings, the Mayor gave him every support and courtesy and made it very easy to work with him. He said that he was aware that the next 12 months would be very difficult for all Members and he wished the Mayor and the incoming Mayor every success over the coming 12 months and assured them of his support.

Mayor M. Healy-Rae thanked all Members for their kind comments and also thanked the media for their support over the past 12 months. The media play a very important part in highlighting the issues dealt with by Members as it is important that the people of the County are made aware of these issues.

08.06.25.01 Election of Mayor

The Mayor invited nominations for the position of Mayor.

Cllr. C. Miller said that it gave him great pleasure to nominate Cllr. Tom Fleming for the position of Mayor.

Cllr. M. Cahill **SECONDED** this proposal and said that Cllr. Fleming was a man of the highest integrity and was very hard working and would be very professional as Mayor.

Cllr. T. Buckley **PROPOSED** Cllr. L. Purtill for the position of Mayor. He added that Cllr. Purtill is following in his father's footsteps who served in Kerry County Council and he has worked full-time tirelessly for the people of his constituency.

Cllr. P. McCarthy **SECONDED** this proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Cllr. T. Fleming: Cllrs. Beasley, Brassil, Cahill, Cronin, Ferris, T. Fitzgerald, Fleming, Foley, D. Healy-Rae, Kiely, MacGearailt, McEllistrim, Miller, O'Donoghue, O'Shea, M. Healy-Rae (16)

For Cllr. L. Purtill: Cllrs. Buckley, Connor-Scarteen, S. Fitzgerald, Gleeson, Leahy, McCarthy, O'Brien, O'Connell, Purtill, Sheahan (10)

Not Voting: None (0)

Mr. J.D. Flynn, Director of Corporate Services deemed Cllr. T. Fleming elected Mayor of Kerry as he had received the majority of the votes of the Members present.

Mayor T. Fleming then took the Chair.

Mayor T. Fleming said that it was a great honour to be elected Mayor of Kerry. He thanked his Proposer and Seconder and all those who voted for him. He commiserated with Cllr. Liam Purtill who is a gentleman and a very dedicated Councillor. He congratulated the outgoing Mayor and said that he wished to be associated with the tributes paid to him. He served the County with distinction at home and abroad and had gained huge respect and put Kerry on the map. He added that he looked forward to working with the Members of Kerry County Council who are excellent workers and he hoped to have a good working relationship with them over the coming 12 months which will be tough as Members are facing a Local Election in 2009. The Members of Kerry County Council are very hard-working, have great integrity and always carry out their duties for the good of the County. He said that in Kerry, we are fortunate in having an excellent County Manager in Mr. Tom Curran together with his Senior Management Team and all staff, indoor and outdoor.

At the recent Civic Reception for Pat Falvey, Pat mentioned the importance of the team effort and the Members' goal is to achieve a high quality of service for the County of Kerry and Members are achieving as much as finances will allow. He added that Kerry is fortunate to have Mr. John O'Connor, Head of Finance looking after the finances as he is very prudent and capable and does an excellent job. It is important to use every method possible to achieve housing for applicants. He added that Roads would be a high priority for him in the coming 12 months and he thanked the Engineering staff and the Roads staff for the tremendous work carried out by them in recent years. Many local roads need improvement and his aim over the next 12 months was to see as many of these as possible improved. 90% of all roads in the County have been surface dressed in the past 10 years.

Mayor Fleming added that many major schemes have been achieved including water and wastewater schemes, in particular, in coastal towns. The late Colm Kennelly attended a conference in Europe at which he learned that funding was available for sewerage schemes in coastal towns. On his return, he arranged to have plans drawn up and forwarded them to Government. 70% of the funding was made available for these projects and all our coastal towns were provided with wastewater treatment schemes. The provision of wastewater schemes for small villages will be a high priority for him in the coming 12 months and he said that it is important that they would be expedited. It is a cause of concern that the level of development that will be permitted will be very

limited until such time as adequate sewerage schemes are provided. It is important to set a programme to deliver these schemes in as short a timeframe as possible even if it involves working in partnership with private developers.

He added that Kerry is very fortunate in having the landfill site at Muingnaminnane and said there has been great co-operation with the local community.

Mayor Fleming stated that management are very pro-active in the area of job creation and KEAT was established with a view to pursuing this. Kerry is also fortunate to have the Institute of Technology in Tralee together with a major airport. All these are important assets to have when it comes to job creation. He said that it is obvious that there have been very few visits to the County by prospective investors through the IDA and Enterprise Ireland in recent years. Most of these visits have taken place in the Cork region and it is important to provide the necessary infrastructure in the County in order to attract investment. Cork County Council has not improved the access to Kerry on their side and this is unacceptable. A lot of progress has been made by Iarnród Éireann who have invested large sums in upgrading the railway network and providing a top class service. He congratulated the management of Kerry Airport on increasing the number of flights in and out of the County.

The agricultural community is also very much a part of the social fabric of the County and its importance cannot be over-emphasised. Through the County Development Plan, Members should strive to achieve a situation whereby people will be granted planning permission on their own landholding for family members and also for people from the area. Members never intended that people would be forced to move into villages. He called on the Planners to facilitate genuine needy people in our communities wherever possible. He called on the general public in Kerry to make submissions on the Draft County Development Plan which is on public display and to make their views known.

Health is a very important issue for the County and in recent times there have been many changes in the centralisation of our health services. This is a retrograde step for the people of the County and it is important to maintain services at Kerry General Hospital and in community hospitals. He complimented all Members on the Regional Health Forum South and said those meetings are very well attended. Many resolutions have been passed and forwarded to the HSE and the Government for consideration. He thanked all those involved in the delivery of community services in the County including Home Help, those involved in primary care units, nurses etc. He said that Members can do a lot in co-operation with Oireachtas Members to improve service delivery in the County.

Mayor Fleming referred to the policy for the provision of playgrounds in the County and said that these facilities are very important for young people and they must be funded. The provision of services for the youth at teenage stage is also very important and the provision of non-alcohol cafes would provide an opportunity to young people to lead a life that does not focus on drink. He called on the Council to formulate a policy on this issue.

Local entrepreneurs give good employment in the County but the provision of broadband is essential for these businesses.

In conclusion, he thanked the media for their coverage of Council meetings and said they had a great interest in issues being considered by the Council.

On behalf of the Fine Gael Party, Cllr. B. O'Connell congratulated Mayor T. Fleming and his family on his election as Mayor. He said that he was a great personal friend of his and in the past, he had served as Mayor with distinction and would do so again in the coming 12 months.

On behalf of the Sinn Féin Party, Cllr. T. Ferris congratulated Mayor T. Fleming on his election and wished him every success in the coming year.

Cllr. M. Gleeson congratulated Mayor T. Fleming on his election and wished him every success in the coming 12 months and assured him of his support. He added that one of the Members' major contributions to meetings is Notices of Motion and all Members are very interested in them and would like to be afforded the opportunity to contribute to Motions. He added that there are six TDs in the County and they are Members conduit to national level and they must be ready to accept Member's recommendations and their criticism where appropriate and not to take the criticism personally. He emphasised the need to protect our water sources which, after our people, are our greatest asset.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae congratulated Mayor Fleming on his election and wished him every success in the coming year. He assured the Mayor of his co-operation and assistance wherever possible and said that he looked forward to working with him over the coming 12 months.

On behalf of the Fianna Fáil Party, Cllr. P. O'Donoghue congratulated Mayor Fleming on his election as Mayor and said that it was a very proud moment for him and his family. When he last served as Mayor, he was very facilitating of all Members and he had no doubt that he would do an excellent job in the coming 12 months. He called on the Mayor to give thought to the more efficient running of Council meetings and assured the Mayor that all Members would co-operate with him.

On behalf of the Labour Party, Cllr. T. O'Brien congratulated Mayor T. Fleming on his election and also complimented Cllr. L. Purtill on being nominated for the position and said that Cllr. Purtill was the gentleman of the Chamber.

On behalf of the Sinn Féin Party, Cllr. R. Beasley congratulated Mayor T. Fleming on his election. As a result of the population decline in the Listowel Electoral Area, there will be a reduction in the number of Councillors from that area from the Local Elections in 2009. This population decline is due to the difficulties people have encountered in getting planning permission in that area, in particular, for one-off rural houses. In conclusion, he wished the Mayor every success for the coming 12 months.

Cllr. B. Cronin congratulated Mayor T. Fleming on his election and also his family and wished him every success. He welcomed the Mayor's proposal to focus on health and young people in the coming 12 months and he assured him of his support on the Regional Health Forum South.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae complimented Mayor T. Fleming on his election and wished him every success. He assured Mayor Fleming of his co-operation in the coming 12 months.

Cllr. L. Purtill congratulated Mayor T. Fleming on his election and wished him every success for the year.

Cllr. C. Miller congratulated Mayor T. Fleming and his family on his election as Mayor and said that he was sure he would be a great Ambassador for the County.

08.06.25.02 Election of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor, Cllr. T. Fleming invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. T. Fitzgerald PROPOSED Cllr. N. Foley as Deputy Mayor and said that she had served for the past 4 years on Kerry County Council and for three periods on Tralee Town Council where she served as Mayor on two occasions.

Cllr. A. McEllistrim SECONDED this proposal.

Cllr. B. O'Connell PROPOSED Cllr. P. Leahy for the position of Deputy Mayor. Cllr. T. O'Brien SECONDED this proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Cllr. N. Foley: Cllrs. Beasley, Brassil, Cahill, Ferris, T. Fitzgerald, Foley, D. Healy-Rae, M. Healy-Rae, Kiely, MacGearailt, McEllistrim, Miller, O'Donoghue, O'Shea, Fleming (15)

For Cllr. P. Leahy: Cllrs. Buckley, Connor-Scarteen, Cronin, Gleeson, Leahy, McCarthy, O'Brien, O'Connell, Purtill, Sheahan (10)

Not voting: (0)

The Mayor declared Cllr. N. Foley elected Deputy Mayor as she received the majority of the votes of Members present and he congratulated her on her election.

Cllr. P. Leahy congratulated Cllr. Foley on her election as Deputy Mayor and wished her the best for the coming 12 months.

Cllr. N. Foley thanked her Proposer and Seconder and all those who voted for her.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue congratulated Cllr. N. Foley on her election as Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. R. Beasley also congratulated Cllr. Foley on her election.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae wished Cllr. N. Foley every success in her position as Deputy Mayor for the coming year and said that it was a very proud day for her and her family.

Mr. G. O'Brien asked all Members to assemble at the front door for a photograph. He informed Members and the Press that lunch would be in Ballygarry House Hotel and he invited the Press to attend.

Emergency Motion

On behalf of Women 2000, Cllr. B. Cronin said that Women 2000, Kerry ICA and the West Kerry Action Group have succeeded in obtaining an appointment with the Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney in order to discuss issues relating to Kerry General Hospital. They collected almost 21,000 signatures in the short time that the petition was available and on 21st April, the Council passed a motion of support for the aims of the petition. Their appointment with the Minister is at 2.30pm on Thursday, 10th July either at Leinster House or Hawkins House in Dublin. They will be presenting the petition on the same afternoon to her Private Secretary. Women 2000 feel that this may be one of the last opportunities to protest about any downgrading of our hospital and therefore, they asked that as many people as possible accompany them to Dublin. They feel that there needs to be obvious backing from Councillors and political representatives and for this reason, they were calling on all Members to vote for the following motion:

"This Council agrees that as many Members as possible will travel to Dublin on July 10th in support of the presentation of the Woman 2000 petition."

He added that all too soon, vital services are to be removed from Tralee and it is imperative that Members take this opportunity to convey the feelings of Kerry people to the Minister. He urged as many Members as possible to travel to Dublin on July 10th and to show their support for Kerry General Hospital. Cllr. Cronin said that as a member of the Regional Health Forum, he wished to convey his full support for this group as they are highlighting the concerns of the people of Kerry. He formally PROPOSED the resolution.

Cllr. P. McCarthy SECONDED the resolution and wished the group every success. He asked the Mayor to give a commitment that he would arrange a deputation to include a number of the Consultants from Kerry General Hospital and Members of Kerry County Council to meet with the Minister for Health.

All Members present supported the Woman 2000 petition.

Cllr. M. Cahill said that he fully supported the Woman 2000 petition but he would be out of the country on July 12th at a family wedding. He added that Professor Keane would be making a presentation to the Members of the Regional Health Forum South in Cork the following day.

The meeting concluded at 1.40pm.

Mr. J.D. Flynn
Director of Corporate Services

Mayor of Kerry