

**These Minutes have been edited for Data Protection purposes.
A paper copy of the unedited Minutes is available on request.**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON FRIDAY
25th JUNE 2010.**

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CRUINNITHE BLIANTUIIL DE COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHIARRAÍ A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE, TRÁ LÍ, AR AN AOINE 25 MEITHEAMH, 2010.**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

R. Beasley	T. Buckley	M. Cahill
P. Connor-Scarteen	B. Cronin	P.J. Donovan
T. Ferris	J. Finucane	S. Fitzgerald
T. Fleming	N. Foley	M. Gleeson
B. Griffin	D. Healy-Rae	M. Healy-Rae
P. Leahy	P. McCarthy	A. McEllistrim
M. Moloney	T. O'Brien	B. O'Connell
P. O'Donoghue	M. O'Shea	L. Purtill
A.J. Spring		

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager	Mr. J.D. Flynn, Director of Corp. Servs.
Mr. J. O'Connor, Head of Finance	Mr. M. McMahon, Director of Planning
Mr. O. Ring, Director of Env. & W.S.	Mr. J. Breen, Dir. of Hsg. & Comm.& Ent.
Mr. G. O'Brien, Meetings Admin.	Mr. P. Corkery, Press & Comm. Off.
Ms. B. Reidy, SSO Corporate Affairs	Ms. D. Griffin, SO, Corporate Affairs
Ms. M. Galvin, CO Corporate Affairs	

The meeting commenced at 12.10pm.

Mayor B. O'Connell took the Chair.

Mayor O'Connell read the following speech into the record of the meeting.

"County Manager, Tom Curran, Council management, elected members, invited guests and friends and family, it has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Mayor of Kerry for the past 12 months.

When I took the chain of office last June, I had no idea of what the role of Mayor entailed. Twelve months later I can tell you that it is an unforgettable experience. But what has really stood out for me is the genuine goodwill shown towards me personally and towards the office of Mayor.

My time as Mayor has also further emphasised that being from Kerry offers a huge advantage. Everybody is aware of Kerry, from a sporting viewpoint, or from visiting the county as a tourist, or through its culture. This has opened doors, in both social and formal settings.

It has been an eventful 12 months, with many highlights and unfortunately some low points.

For many people, the ice and snow that covered the county during last December and January was something that we had never experienced before, and had a significant impact on the county.

I would again like to pay tribute to the Council staff, particularly the roads and water services staff who worked long hours above and beyond the call of duty to minimise the impact of the weather conditions.

Other high points during the past 12 months included the huge progress made in the construction of the Castleisland Bypass, and we will be enjoying the benefits when it opens later in the year.

The opportunity to officially open the Castleisland Area Services Centre was a huge honour for me as a Castleisland person, and the people of the town and further afield will see the benefits for years to come.

Another highlight was the visit by myself and the Manager to Chicago and New York over St Patrick's Weekend. Valuable links were built up with tourist and business interests and I hope that these will be of future benefit to Kerry, as will the links built up with Kerry businesspeople across the world.

The economic situation continues to dominate our thinking. The high level of unemployment in Kerry is of huge concern to all of us in this chamber. To that end, the One Step Forward Information Seminar in the Carlton Fels Point in March targeted those who recently been made unemployed, giving information on rights, further educational opportunities and job searches.

We must continue as a Council to work with the agencies, to provide the right environment for investment and to ensure that all avenues are explored in terms of job creation.

Minutes Annual Meeting

I would like to thank the staff and management of Kerry County Council for their help and courtesy towards me during the past 12 months. I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their help and effort to improve this county.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my friends and family, in particular my wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes), for their patience. With a new arrival on the way in the coming weeks, I get the feeling that one busy job will be replaced by another even busier job.

To the incoming Mayor, the very best of luck in what is a demanding, but rewarding role.”

Cllr. M. Gleeson congratulated Mayor O’Connell on his excellent year in office. He commended his commitment and dedication to the role of Mayor and on the very high standard he set in managing Council meetings. He added that this will be hard to emulate.

Cllr. T. Buckley complimented the Mayor on his excellent year in office. He managed Council meetings efficiently and the business was conducted in a very business like manner.

Cllr. B. Cronin complimented the Mayor on his 12 months in office and in particular the efficient manner in which he conducted Council meetings. He thanked the Mayor for his hospitality in Castleisland last December and wished Mayor O’Connell success in the future.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae complimented the Mayor and thanked him for his service both to the Council and the county over the past 12 months. When he was elected Mayor it was a great day for his wife, (Name withheld for data protection purposes), his family and the Fine Gael Party. He performed his duties in an excellent manner. He wished the Mayor and his wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes) well in the future.

Cllr. J. Finucane said Mayor O’Connell was an extemporary Mayor. He was a great ambassador for the Council and the county. Council meetings were managed efficiently. In conclusion he said Mayor O’Connell set a standard which will be the bench mark for future Mayors.

Cllr. P. Leahy congratulated and complimented Mayor O’Connell on his term in office. He managed Council meetings very efficiently and this was very much appreciated by all members.

Cllr. P. McCarthy congratulated Mayor O’Connell on a job well done. He set a very high standard as Mayor and he did the Council, the county and his Party proud.

Minutes Annual Meeting

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae said he wished to be associated with the tributes paid to the Mayor. He thanked him for the efficient way he conducted Council meetings and he wished him the best in the future.

Cllr. T. O' Brien congratulated the Mayor on an excellent year in office and wished him well in the future.

Cllr. M. Cahill also congratulated the Mayor on a very successful year in office and extended his best wishes to him and his wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes) for the future.

Cllr. P.J. Donovan concurred with the compliments paid to the Mayor by previous speakers.

Cllr. A. McEllistrim congratulated the Mayor on a fantastic year in office. She said the Mayor was a hard working councillor and she was delighted he got the opportunity to serve as Mayor. This was a great honour for his family, his party and for Castleisland. She wished the Mayor and his wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes) the best of luck in the coming weeks when their baby is due.

Cllr. N. Foley said she wished to be associated with the tributes paid to the Mayor on his outstanding year in office. She congratulated him on his enthusiasm and work ethic and said he represented the county with distinction.

Cllr. L. Purtill congratulated the Mayor on his excellent year in office and said he was a great ambassador for the county.

Cllr. T. Fleming said he wished to be associated with the compliments to the Mayor who represented the Council and the County very well at home and abroad. He has boundless energy and enthusiasm and this was evident in the Chamber. He was very business like and efficient in the running of meetings and this is appreciated by all members. He wished the Mayor and his wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes) well in the future.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald congratulated the Mayor on his term in office and said he was very fair to all parties. He wished the Mayor and his wife well in the future.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue congratulated the Mayor on an excellent year in office and said he was the first Fine Gael Mayor for many years. He thanked him for being fair and said he brought his many years experience as a councillor to the position. He had to deal with some very difficult meetings which he did fairly and efficiently. He wished the Mayor success in the future.

Cllr. M. Moloney congratulated the Mayor on his term in office and said he set a very high standard. He represented the Council and the County with great commitment. She thanked him for being fair and impartial.

Cllr. B. Griffin complimented the Mayor on his excellent year in office. He said the Mayor was very helpful to him in his first year in the Council and he appreciated that very much.

Cllr. R. Beasley said he wished to be associated with the kind remarks to the Mayor. He was an excellent Mayor in the way he discharged his duties and he was a great ambassador for the county.

Cllr. A.J. Spring said as the Mayor's Deputy he was well aware of how the Mayor worked over the past twelve months. He brought a new standard to the office of Mayor and he was very efficient.

Cllr. P. Connor Scarteen said the Mayor did the Fine Gael Party, Castleisland and the County proud during the past year. During his term in the Council the Mayor represented three different electoral areas and this is unique. He commended the Mayor on the efficient way he conducted Council meetings and he wished him well in the future.

Cllr. M. O'Shea congratulated the Mayor on an excellent year in office and said he was very fair to all members.

Cllr. T. Ferris congratulated the Mayor on a job well done and said he was very efficient in the Chamber.

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager, said on his own behalf and on behalf of staff he wished to be associated with the tributes paid to the Mayor. He did the Council and the County proud during his term in office. He attended many functions in his capacity as Mayor and was always well prepared. He carried a tremendous workload and he excelled over the past 12 months. He thanked the Mayor for the courtesy extended to him and staff during his term as Mayor. He was delighted that councillors paid tribute to the Mayor on the efficient way he handled meetings. To be successful you need to be firm and fair and have a sense of humour and the Mayor has all three. In conclusion he wished the Mayor and his wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes) well in the coming weeks.

10.06.25.01 Election of Mayor

Cllr. T. O'Brien said he was delighted to nominate Cllr. P. Leahy for the position of Mayor. Pat was first elected to the Council in 1991 and he served with great distinction for the past 19 years.

Cllr. A.J. Spring **SECONDED** this nomination. He will be the first Labour Mayor since 1972 when John Joe Sullivan was Mayor. He is a great friend and mentor.

Minutes Annual Meeting

Cllr. T. Fleming said he would welcome the election of Cllr. Pat Leahy to the position of Mayor of Kerry.

Mr. G. O'Brien, Meetings Administrator informed the meeting as there were no other nominations he deemed Cllr. P. Leahy to be elected Mayor of Kerry.

Mayor P. Leahy then took the Chair.

Mayor P. Leahy welcomed his family and supporters to the meeting. He also welcomed former Labour Party Leader Mr. Dick Spring to the meeting. He then read the following speech into the record of the meeting.

“Bainisteoir Chontae, comhairleoirí, Stiúrthóirí Seirbhísí, agus a chairde go léir, is onóir mór dom a bheith anseo inniu mar Mheara Chiarraí.

Manager, councillors, Directors of Service, and friends, it is a huge honour for me to be here today as Mayor of Kerry.

Since I was first elected to represent the people of Kerry in 1991 I have been fortunate to work with the people of Kerry and work for the people of Kerry as a councillor.

But for me personally, to be elected the first Labour Mayor since John Joe O'Sullivan in 1972 is a source of deep pride. I also take great pride in following in the footsteps of Jack Aherne, the last Moyvane man to Chair the Council back in 1949.

I would like to thank those councillors who voted for me and I will try my best to ensure that everyone in here is treated equally and fairly. I must also pay tribute to my predecessor, Cllr Bobby O'Connell who has put down a strong marker over the past 12 months.

In taking up the office of Mayor there is no escaping the fact that we are currently going through a serious economic crisis, which has affected everyone within this county.

This Council has not escaped either, and difficult decisions have been made and will continue to be made by management and councillors. There are those who will not be happy with some of the decisions we make inside this Chamber, and there are some decisions that we as councillors will not be happy with, but we must make them for the good of the county.

In order to achieve the best for Kerry, a good relationship between the management and councillors is crucial. There no doubt that we will have our

differences and there will be arguments and raised voices, but I think that we work well together and will continue to do so.

In relation to services, the emphasis must continue to be placed on the key services, of roads, housing, water and wastewater.

Our county's roads must continue to receive the necessary investment to bring them back up to a good standard. The damage caused to them during the winter freeze has had a huge impact on travel in the county and I would appeal to national government for additional funding to repair these roads.

This is particularly important for Kerry which has such a large amount of secondary and local roads. Our secondary roads are crucial routes within the county, and given the rural nature of our population, a good secondary road network is vital for accessing the towns and villages of Kerry. I would also like to see the Council have greater control over where our roads funding is spent.

I also hold strong views on the staff embargo, which has seen staff retire or depart from this Council without being replaced. This has had a huge impact in the Listowel area, particularly in relation to road maintenance. With the Shannon LNG project progressing, I will be calling for additional temporary staff to be appointed in the Listowel area.

As a member of the Transport SPC, road safety in Kerry is a crucial part of the work we carry out, and in conjunction with the Gardaí and other bodies, I hope that road deaths will reduce during my time as Mayor.

The economic crisis has also had a huge impact on our housing programme. At a time when the numbers on our housing lists continue to grow, the national policy has changed from construction of Local Authority houses to leasing.

This is taking place despite house prices being at their lowest in years and I must admit my severe misgivings in relation to this new policy.

In relation to water and wastewater the increase in regulations over both water and wastewater will add significantly to the Council's costs. Kerry requires major investment in relation to replacing out water pipe network and also in relation to the provision of water treatment and wastewater plants.

The Water Services Investment Programme has identified a number of key projects to be invested in. These must be brought through to fruition, but there is also need for national government to look at the level of funding that Kerry and other Councils have to put into the capital side of these projects. With no assistance from Government in relation to the annual maintenance and operation of these plants, it adds significantly to Council costs.

In relation to planning, I make no apologies for pointing out the difficulties faced by those looking to build houses in my own area in North Kerry. Given the soil conditions in the north of the county, applicants are struggling to pass the percolation test.

These are genuine people, looking to build homes in their own local communities, and there must be some way of finding a solution to this problem.

In these difficult economic times, employment levels within this county are growing significantly and as a Council we must work with the various agencies to ensure that we create the right conditions to stimulate employment. I know that the County Manager, through KEAT and the County Development Board are working in this area, but one key area has to be the provision of broadband throughout the county.

Another key area in terms of employment is our tourism industry, and I welcome the announcement last week that Kerry beaches picked up 13 Blue Flags. These are crucial in attracting tourists to our county, and we need to ensure that our scenic areas in Kerry are protected, while at the same time balancing the needs of those living in these areas.

In closing, I would like to thank the Labour Party for their support, and also my family, my wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes) and my children (Names withheld for data protection purposes) for their backing over the 19 years since I became a member of this Council."

In conclusion the Mayor thanked his brothers, their wives and his extended family for their support and said he looked forward to working with Management in the next twelve months.

10.06.25.02 Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr. A.J. Spring PROPOSED Cllr. M. Moloney for the position of Deputy Mayor. He said Marie is synonymous with the fight for women's rights and workers rights and is a very hard working councillor.

Cllr. T. O'Brien SECONDED this proposal.

Cllr. T. Fleming welcomed Cllr. Moloney's nomination as Deputy Mayor.

Mr. G. O'Brien, Meetings Administrator informed the meeting as there were no other nominations he deemed Cllr. M. Moloney to be elected Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. B. O'Connell congratulated Mayor Leahy on his election as Mayor and said he deserves this accolade. He is a fantastic worker for his constituents in North

Kerry and he thoroughly deserves this honour. He also congratulated Cllr. Moloney on her election as Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. T. Buckley congratulated Mayor Leahy and Deputy Mayor Moloney on their election. The Mayor was elected to Kerry County Council at the same time as himself and he is a very hard worker.

Cllr. R. Beasley congratulated the Mayor on his election and said he has given great service to North Kerry. He also congratulated the Mayor's wife and family on this great honour.

Cllr. B. Cronin congratulated the Mayor on his election and also his wife and family. He said this is justification for the excellent service he has given to the Council over the past 19 years. He wished him success in the coming year.

Cllr. M. Cahill congratulated the Mayor on his election and said it is a great honour for him and his family. He also congratulated the Labour Party on this special occasion. Pat is a very popular councillor and this is evident in the fact that he was elected unopposed. He wished him well during his term as Mayor.

Cllr. T. O'Brien congratulated the Mayor, his wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes), his daughters and the Labour Party on his election as Mayor. He said this is a very proud day for the Mayor and he wished him well for his term as Mayor.

Cllr. N. Foley congratulated the Mayor and said his election to the position of Mayor is testament to his excellent service and the regard he is held in by all members. She had no doubt that he would represent the County and the Council with great distinction. His election to the position of Mayor of Kerry is also a great honour for the Labour Party. In conclusion she wished the Mayor and Deputy Mayor well for the coming year.

Cllr. J. Finucane congratulated the Mayor on his election and said he is a very decent honourable politician. It is a great honour for him, his family and the Labour Party and he had every confidence in him. He assured the Mayor of the full co-operation of the members of Fine Gael.

Cllr. Tom Fleming congratulated the Mayor and said he is one of the hardest working councillors. He does his utmost for his constituents and he will be an excellent Mayor and he will represent the Council and County with pride. He wished him success in the year ahead.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae said he was delighted to see Cllr. Pat Leahy elected Mayor of Kerry. He wished the Mayor and his family well for the year ahead which will involve a lot of hard work. This is also a great honour for the Labour Party. He added that Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae also sent his best wishes to Mayor Leahy.

Minutes Annual Meeting

He also wished the Deputy Mayor M. Moloney well in her new role. He congratulated the Labour Party on this great honour and welcomed former Tanáiste Mr. Dick Spring to the meeting.

Cllr. M. Moloney congratulated the Mayor and wished him success for the coming year. The Labour Party is very proud of him and she had every confidence in him to represent the Council and the County with great distinction. She thanked Cllrs. A.J. Spring and T. O'Brien for nominating her as Deputy Mayor and she said it is a great day for the Labour Party. She welcomed Mr. Dick Spring to the meeting and said she was saddened that Maeve Spring was not present.

Cllr. L. Purtill said when he was canvassing the Listowel Electoral Area prior to the Local Elections in June 2009 Pat Leahy was a household name and he was very popular. Pat is a very conscientious worker for his constituents and he wished him well for the coming year.

Cllr. T. Ferris congratulated the Mayor and his family on this great honour. She said she was delighted there is a change in the Party colours leading the county. She wished him success for his term of office.

Cllr. A.J. Spring congratulated the Mayor and said he was delighted for the Mayor, his family and the Labour Party. Pat is a gentleman and a great friend and he is spoken highly of across all parties and by Labour Party members around the country. He said he hoped he would have a very good year as Mayor.

Cllr. A. McEllistrim congratulated the Mayor and said following 19 years as a member of Kerry County Council she was delighted he got this honour. She also congratulated his family and said it is a great day for the people of Moyvane. In conclusion she wished the Deputy Mayor success in the coming year.

Cllr. M. O'Shea congratulated the Mayor and his family on his election. This is a tremendous honour but also a major challenge. He also wished the Deputy Mayor well for the coming year.

Cllr. P. McCarthy congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their election and said it is a great day for them and for the Labour Party. He said he was sure they would represent the county with pride and distinction.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae said he was very pleased to see Cllr. Pat Leahy elevated to the position of Mayor of Kerry. This is a great honour and even better as he was unanimously elected. He congratulated the Leahy family on this great honour. He supported the priorities set out by the Mayor in his speech and said that all members would work with the Mayor to try to make progress in these areas. He congratulated Deputy Mayor M. Moloney and also wished her well for the coming year.

Cllr. B. Griffin congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their election and wished them both successes in the coming year. This is a special day for their families and for the Labour Party. He acknowledged the presence of the former Tanáiste Mr. Dick Spring who was in the public gallery. He said he represents Kerry County Council on the Regional Health Forum with the Deputy Mayor and he was well aware of how hard she works.

Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their election and said it is a great honour for the Labour Party. He welcomed Mr. Dick Spring to the meeting.

Cllr. P.J. Donovan congratulated the Mayor, his wife and family on this great honour. He also congratulated the Deputy Mayor and said it is a great honour for the Labour Party and he looked forward to working with both of them in the coming year.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and said it is a great honour for them and their families. He wished them success for the coming year.

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointments. He assured them both of his full co-operation and also the co-operation of staff. He congratulated the Mayor's wife (Name withheld for data protection purposes) and family and said he looked forward to getting to know them better in the year ahead. In conclusion he said he hoped the Mayor would have a good year.

Vote of Sympathy

The following Vote of Sympathy was noted from the Vote of Sympathy book.

Cllrs. B. Cronin PROPOSED that a Vote of Sympathy would be extended to the family of the late Sis Cronin.

Cllr. T. Fleming SECONDED this proposal.

Annual Meeting Lunch

Mr. G. O'Brien informed the meeting that a group photograph would be taken on the front lawn immediately following the meeting and this would be followed by Lunch at the Meadowlands Hotel at 1.30pm. He invited the Press to the Lunch.

The meeting concluded at 1.15pm.

Gerard O'Brien
Meetings Administrator

Mayor of Kerry