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**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CRUINNITHE BLIANTUIIL DE COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHIARRAÍ A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE, TRÁ LÍ, AR AN AOINE 29 MEITHEAMH, 2012.**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON FRIDAY
29TH JUNE 2012.**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

R. Beasley	J. Brassil	T. Buckley
M. Cahill	P. Connor-Scarteen	J. J. Culloty
B. Cronin	P.J. Donovan	T. Ferris
J. Finucane	S. Fitzgerald	N. Foley
M. Gleeson	D. Healy-Rae	P. Leahy
P. McCarthy	A. McEllistrim	B. Moynihan Cronin
T. O'Brien	B. O'Connell	P. O'Donoghue
M. O'Shea	L. Purtill	J. Sheahan
G. Wharton-Slattery		

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager	Mr. J.D. Flynn, Director of Corp. Servs.
Mr. M. McMahon, Director of Planning	Mr. O. Ring, Director of Env. & W.S.
Mr. J. Breen, Dir. Hsg.&Comm.& Ent.	Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir. Of Roads
Ms. K. Moriarty, Deputy Head of Fin.	Mr. G. O'Brien, Meetings Admin.
Mr. P. Corkery, Press & Comm. Off.	Ms. K. Lynch, AO Finance
Ms. B. Reidy, SSO Corporate Affairs	Ms. C. Fitzgerald, A.S.O. Corp. Affairs
Ms. O. O'Shea, CO Corporate Affairs	

APOLOGY/

Councillor/Comhairleoir

M. O'Shea M. Griffin

The meeting commenced at 12.15pm.

The Mayor Cllr. T. Buckley took the Chair.

The Mayor informed the meeting that Cllr. P.J. Donovan wanted to raise an important issue.

Cllr. P.J. Donovan said the signs erected recently at Kells Beach are still in place. He got a commitment at the June Council Meeting that he would be contacted the following day regarding the signs. He was not contacted by anyone since then. He pointed out that the Draft Pier and Harbour Bye-Laws were rejected by Council and he believed these signs should not have been erected.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue supported the views expressed by Cllr. Donovan.

Mayor Buckley read the following statement into the record of the meeting.

“Meara Tofa, Comhairleoirí, Bainisteoir Chontae, baill foirne an Chomhairle, agus a dhaoine go léir, ba mhaith liom fáilte mór chur roimh gach duine go dtí cruinniú ginearálta bliantúil Comhairle Contae Chiarraí

Incoming Mayor, Councillors, County Manger, staff of Kerry County Council and everybody here today, I would like to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of Kerry County Council.

Standing here at the finishing line of my 12 months as Mayor of Kerry, I have a mixture of emotions. The two that stand out though are pride and sadness. Pride that I had the honour to serve as Mayor of this great county for the past year, and sadness that I now have to pass the chain over to somebody else. It doesn't seem like 12 months have passed since I took over the role of Mayor, and the time since then has absolutely flown.

When I became Mayor I promised myself that I would put as much effort as possible into the role and when I look back I think that I have achieved this. During the course of my year I have seen parts of the county that I had never before visited and met a huge amount of Kerry people.

And what really stood out for me was the pride that Kerry people have in this county, and the work that local communities do for their own, usually on a voluntary basis and with little publicity. They are the unsung heroes of our county.

There is no doubt that it has been a varied year with plenty of highlights and a number of disappointments. I cannot forget the Council meeting in my own home place of Clounmacon. It meant a lot to me personally and to the community, who worked hard to make it a success. I was delighted to hear the positive comments from my fellow councillors and the Council management in relation to the welcome they received.

One of the most visible and welcome sights has been the major roads projects taking place in the county. Despite the reduction in funding for infrastructural projects, I was delighted that during my time as Mayor, work began on the Tralee Bypass project, as well as on projects on the n69 Tralee-Listowel road and N86 road at Annascaul. I am hopeful that a positive decision will be reached by An Bord Pleanála in relation to the N86 Camp to An Daingean road improvement project.

The emphasis on improving our water quality supplies has also seen the standard of a number of smaller water supplies improved, while we look forward to the Waterville Water & Sewerage Scheme being finalized and commissioned next year,

During my time as Mayor I have been delighted to see a greater emphasis on tourism projects throughout the county. The importance of tourism to the county cannot be denied and it is crucial that Kerry County Council plays a role in encouraging and promoting improvements to the tourist product. The launch of the GoKerry.ie website will greatly benefit tourism in the county, providing a co-ordinated gateway for those looking to visit this county.

And it was with great pride that I travelled to London in April to attend the London Rose Selection and also to launch the London Van Poster campaign. This will see hundreds of vans owned by Kerry contractors carrying posters promoting Kerry as a tourist destination.

The commitment of the members of the Kerry Association in London to assist us in promoting the county and to invest their own money in doing so is a hugely positive move.

Additionally, the St Patrick's Day trip to New York and the participation in the St Patrick's Day Parades in 5th Avenue and Pearl River were a special highlight. These trips are important for a number of reasons. Firstly to connect to our Kerry Diaspora and secondly to make and maintain contacts with those who may be in a position to assist this county.

Other high points included being present in Dublin when Killarney was announced as Ireland's Tidiest Town, an award that was long overdue in my opinion.

Additionally, the Kerry Community Awards celebrated all that is good about the community spirit in this county, while the opening of the playgrounds in The Glen Ballinskelligs and in Tarbert provide facilities for the younger generation.

However, for me personally, one of the disappointments of the year has been the continued lack of progress in relation to the Shannon LNG project.

Three different deputations have travelled to Dublin to meet with those involved in the decision-making process, and despite this and a positive meeting with the Hess Company in New York during the St Patrick's Weekend visit, it has not advanced any further.

The importance of this project to the county, in relation its effect on the economy and also from a jobs point of view, cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately through, it appears that this sense of urgency is not reflected elsewhere.

There are a number of people that I would like to thank for helping me during my year as Mayor.

County Manager Tom Curran has always had an open door policy to me. His input, advice and assistance throughout the year were invaluable.

So too has the assistance of Director of Corporate Service, John Flynn, Ger O'Brien, Beth Reidy and the other staff of the Corporate Affairs section, with whom I have been in constant contact during the year.

I would also like to pay tribute to the staff of this organization. I have said it before and I have no difficulties in saying it again. The people working for Kerry County Council are its most valuable asset. The work they put in on behalf of this county and the people of the county is second to none and I want to put on record my thanks for their efforts.

On a personal note I want to thank my wife Mary and my family for their patience and support over the year. It cannot have been easy for them watching me head off to meetings and events on an almost nightly basis.

They have supported me 100% throughout the year, but I have no doubt they will be glad to see a little more of me into the future, particularly at milking time.

Lastly I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor Cllr Pat Leahy for his help and advice when I took up the office. I would like to extend the same courtesy to my successor and congratulate them on their new role. It is a demanding 12 months, but one that is deeply rewarding and something that I will look back on with pride for the rest of my life."

Cllr. M. Gleeson congratulated the Mayor on an excellent year in office and said he was fair to all members and in these times of strife the Mayor's calmness was wonderful. One of the highlights of the year was the April meeting in Clounmacon. It was a pleasure to interact with the local community and their hospitality was tremendous. He was enormously proud to have the Mayor present in Dublin when Killarney won the Tidy Towns Competition. The Mayor visited Killarney when requested to do so and he represented the Council and county with distinction.

Cllr. B. O'Connell congratulated the Mayor on his year in office and said he was a credit to the Council, his electoral area and the county. This was evident not just in Ireland but also in London and New York.

Cllr. T. O'Brien congratulated Mayor Buckley on a fantastic year in office. Being Mayor of Kerry puts a lot of pressure on the Mayor's family but he had great support from his family.

Cllr. N. Foley commended and congratulated the Mayor on an outstanding year in office. He represented the members with distinction and honour and his gentlemanly traits were the hallmark of his year. One of the highlights was the visit to Clounmacon. She said the Mayor brought wisdom and experience to the position of Mayor.

Cllr. B. Cronin congratulated and complimented the Mayor on his great year in office. He was always calm and it was great to see him achieve the honour of becoming Kerry's first citizen. In conclusion he said the Mayor carried out his duties with respect, honour and enthusiasm.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae congratulated the Mayor on his term in office and said he represented the Council and county with distinction. He was very fair to all members and he gave his full attention to every meeting and event. The Mayor attended many events and this was appreciated. He wished him the best for the coming year.

Cllr. J. Finucane said as Deputy Mayor, it was a pleasure to work with Mayor Buckley. His year as Mayor was flawless and he led three deputations in relation to the Shannon LNG project. He had no doubt if it was not for the Mayor and County Manager's efforts there would not be certainty on this project which he hoped will rejuvenate North Kerry.

Cllr. G. Wharton Slattery congratulated the Mayor on his year in office and said the highlight for her was the day the Council meeting was held in Clounmacon. There was a very strong community spirit evident that day. She thanked him for his assistance since she was co-opted to the Council and wished him well for the future.

Cllr. P. Leahy congratulated the Mayor on his great year and said he did the Council proud. It was evident on the recent visit to Clounmacon that the people of the area hold him Mayor in high esteem.

Cllr. P. McCarthy said he wished to be associated with the kind comments to the Mayor and said he represented the Council and county with distinction. He wished him well in the future.

Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen complimented the Mayor on a fantastic year and said he served with honour and distinction. He is a credit to the people of the Listowel Electoral Area and the Council. The Mayor also represented the Council with distinction on his visits to London and New York. He thanked him for attending a number of events in South Kerry during the year.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald congratulated the Mayor on an excellent year. He attended events in every part of the county including Dingle. He worked with people in London to promote Kerry and he thanked him for his tireless work during the year.

Cllr. M. Cahill joined in the tributes to the Mayor who excelled in the role. He was a proud Mayor who was courteous to all members. The people in Clounmacon were very proud of him. In conclusion he thanked the Mayor for travelling to Glencar for the opening of the new Playground and said this was very much appreciated by the people of the area.

Cllr. J. Brassil thanked the Mayor for being fair to all members and said he ran the Council meetings efficiently. He knew how much the year meant to him and he looked forward to working with him for the people of the Listowel Electoral Area.

On behalf of Cllr. Ferris and himself Cllr. R. Beasley thanked the Mayor for a great year. He travelled to all parts of the county, to London and New York and on deputations for the Shannon LNG project. He wished him the best for the future.

Cllr. P.J. Donovan congratulated and complimented the Mayor on an excellent year. He thanked him for attending the opening of the new Playground in The Glen, Ballinskelligs.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue congratulated the Mayor on his year in office and said it was a great success. The Mayor was always dignified in the way he handled the meetings and his calmness impacted on the members. He was very impressed that the Mayor travelled on a Sunday afternoon to the opening of the Playground in The Glen, Ballinskelligs.

Cllr. L. Purtill congratulated the Mayor on an outstanding year and said he was a credit to the Council and Listowel not to mention Clounmacon. He was always courteous and a true gentleman.

Cllr. J. Sheahan congratulated the Mayor on a great year and said he represented the Council with distinction both at home and abroad. He was fair in the way he conducted the meetings.

Cllr. A. McEllistrim complimented the Mayor on a job well done and said he represented the Council well and had time for everyone.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty thanked the Mayor for an excellent year and said he was fair and calm. He thanked him for attending the opening of the Men's Shed in Killarney and said it meant a lot to those in attendance. He wished him well in the future.

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager, on his own behalf and on behalf of all the staff thanked the Mayor for his excellent year. It is evident that it was a busy year from the number of events he attended and this was in recognition by him of the importance of the role of Mayor. The Mayor was a great ambassador for the Council in Dublin at deputations, in London and in New York. It is important to keep in touch with our Diaspora. Many Irish people working abroad would like to return home but it is not possible in the present difficult economic times. It was a tribute to the Mayor that he always made time for anyone who wanted to talk to him. The Mayor's family were very involved and attended many functions with him. It was evident the day the Council visited Clounmacon that the Mayor is held in very high esteem by the community there. It is great to get out into a community and to let people see what the Council does. He thanked the Mayor for his kind comments and said the Mayor was always available to come into the offices when requested to do so. He complimented his Deputy Mayor Cllr. J. Finucane who was rarely called upon unless two events clashed. In conclusion he sincerely thanked the Mayor for his hard work over the past twelve months and said it was a pleasure working with him. He wished the Mayor and his family the best for the future.

12.06.29.01 Election of Mayor

Cllr. P. Leahy said it gave him great pleasure to propose his Labour Party colleague Cllr. Terry O'Brien as Mayor of Kerry. Cllr. O'Brien was first elected to Tralee Town Council in 1999 and has held his seat in every election since then and is a dedicated and proud member of the Labour Party. He was delighted to see his colleagues Deputy Spring, Senator Marie Moloney and Cllr Dan Galvin present at the meeting.

Cllr. Leahy said the Chain of Office will rest lightly on his shoulders as he held the position as Mayor of Tralee on three separate occasions. He is, as all will agree, a man that speaks his mind and tells it as it is. He is a true Kerry man that loves his county. He works hard and tirelessly for all of his constituents. His contribution and commitment to Kerry Council needs no explanation as he is an avid contributor at all meetings and discussions and is a valued member of the Council since 2004.

Cllr O'Brien is a devoted family man, and he and his wife (Name withheld for Data Protection purposes – a paper copy of the unedited Minutes are available on request) are the proud parents of (Names withheld for Data Protection purposes – a paper copy of the unedited Minutes are available on request), probably at this stage the best known twins in the county and it is no secret that they are the apple of their father's eye. Cllr. O'Brien has always had immense support from his family, his brothers (Names withheld for Data Protection purposes – a paper copy of the unedited Minutes is available on request) and his sisters (Names withheld for Data Protection purposes – a paper copy of the unedited Minutes is available on request) and of course his father (Name withheld for Data Protection purposes – a paper copy of the unedited Minutes is available on request), who could not be present. Cllr. Leahy said he especially wanted to mention Terry's mother, (Name withheld for Data Protection purposes – a paper copy of the unedited Minutes is available on request). It is without a doubt a very proud and emotional day for (Names withheld for Data Protection purposes – a paper copy of the unedited Minutes is available on request) as she watches her son take the position as Mayor of this county, as he was sure there was a time when she thought such a day would never happen. It is also a proud day for him and for his Labour Party colleagues, Cllrs. Gillian Wharton-Slattery and Breeda Moynihan-Cronin. He said he knew that as Mayor of Kerry he will carry out his duties in representing all of the people of Kerry with the determination, enthusiasm and commitment and indeed a sense of humour that we have come to know him for. In conclusion Cllr. Leahy PROPOSED Cllr. Terry O'Brien for the position of Mayor of Kerry.

Cllr. G. Wharton Slattery SECONDED this proposal and concurred with the views expressed by Cllr. Leahy. She knew Terry for a long time and he will be an excellent Mayor. His dedication to the Council knows no bounds and this is a proud and emotional day for his family.

The outgoing Mayor, Cllr. T. Buckley informed the meeting as there were no other nominations he declared Cllr. T. O'Brien elected Mayor of Kerry.

Mayor O'Brien then took the Chair.

Mayor T. O'Brien said he was very proud to serve as Mayor of Kerry for the next year and he hoped to make a positive contribution to the county. He thanked his proposer Cllr. Pat Leahy and his seconder Cllr. Gillian Wharton Slattery. It will be a very interesting year with many projects and zonings coming up. Kerry must do more for itself. There are a huge number of Kerry people all over the world and as a Council we need to make use of these contacts. During the year he hoped to meet people and to inspire them to invest in Kerry. He said the countykerry.ie website should have links to Killarney, Listowel, Dingle etc. He hoped all Kerry emigrants would visit Kerry next year for The Gathering. We need to sell ourselves better in future. Many famous people came from Kerry eg. John B. Keane, Michael Fastbender, Stan McCarthy, CEO Kerry Group etc. and we are very lucky to have people of this calibre from Kerry. He said he was concerned at the dilution of the powers of elected members and while he had no problem with reform he did not want to see councillors lose all their important functions. It is a very important part of politics that a councillor or a TD is accessible for people and they rightly expect that. He believed further savings and efficiencies can be achieved without impacting on frontline services and he was not referring to staff cuts. He serves on the Audit Committee with Cllr. Purtill and it is very educational. It is important to ensure value for money in all services and to maximise our income streams. He acknowledged all those who paid the Household Charge and also those who pay rates. There are a lot of volunteer groups in Kerry including Tidy Towns Committees etc. The county looks fantastic and this is thanks mostly to the efforts of volunteers. He said it is important to educate the people of Kerry on the services provided by the Council and he suggested that tours of water treatment plants/wastewater treatment plants etc. should be organised. He invited all present to lunch in Kerins O'Rahilly's. He thanked his Mom, Dad, his Aunt who was at the meeting and the Irish Wheelchair Association who are very supportive of his role as a councillor. He also thanked his wife, Teresa and his children Mark and Milly. He looked forward to working with all councillors and management for the coming year. In conclusion he said he replaced former Cllr. Maeve Spring on Kerry County Council and he wanted to remember her on this special day.

All councillors congratulated Mayor O'Brien on his election and wished him health and success for the coming year. They said he was an inspiration and they looked forward to working with him. They also said it was a very proud moment for his family and the Labour Party.

The County Manager congratulated Mayor O'Brien on his election and said it was a great honour for him and his family. He looked forward to working with him and said he was an inspiration to people with disabilities.

12.06.29.02 Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr. J. Finucane said it was a great honour to PROPOSE Cllr. P.J. Donovan as Deputy Mayor. P.J. is a very committed and dedicated member of the Council and works very hard for the people of his electoral area.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald SECONDED this proposal and said PJ was elected to Kerry County Council in 1999 and he was a very honourable man and a great worker.

As there were no other proposals Mayor T. O'Brien declared Cllr. P.J. Donovan elected Deputy Mayor.

Annual Meeting Lunch

Mr. G. O'Brien informed the meeting that a group photograph would be taken on the front lawn immediately after the meeting and this would be followed by Lunch at the Charlie's Bistro at Kerins O'Rahilly's, Strand Road. He also invited the Press to the Lunch.

The meeting concluded at 1.45pm.

Gerard O'Brien
Meetings Administrator

Mayor of Kerry