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**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CHRUINNITHE SPEISIALTA DE COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHIARRAÍ A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE,
TRÁ LÍ, AR AN AOINE, 29 BEALTAINÉ 2020**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON FRIDAY,
29 MAY 2020**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

Cllr. Robert Beasley

Cllr. Jim Finucane

Cllr. Niall Kelleher

Cllr. Michael Cahill

Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae

Cllr. Niall O'Callaghan

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris

Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae

Cllr. Bobby O'Connell

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Ms. M. Murrell, Chief Executive

Mr. C. O'Connor, Director Corp. Servs.

Mr P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator

Ms. C. Fitzgerald, SO Corporate

The meeting commenced at 10.34 a.m.

Cllr. Niall Kelleher, Cathaoirleach, took the Chair. He welcomed the members to the first council meeting since the outbreak of COVID-19. He pointed out that in accordance with an agreement amongst the members to take account of the public health restrictions applying under COVID-19 that only a quorum of the members (10) would be in attendance for this meeting with agreement amongst the various groups in relation to the nominees to attend. He outlined that a number of items were before the members for approval in relation to the setting of dates and venues for Council meetings in the period June/July. He advised that a protocol is in place for today's meeting and called on Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, to read the protocol to the members.

29.05.2020.01 June 2020 Ordinary Meeting of Kerry County Council

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae **SECONDED** by Cllr. Deirdre Ferris it was agreed to approve the holding of the June Ordinary Meeting of Kerry County Council in the Kerry Sports Academy, Institute of Technology, North Campus, Tralee, on Monday, 15 June 2020 at 10.30 a.m.

29.05.2020.02 Annual Meeting 2020 of Kerry County Council

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae **SECONDED** by Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, it was agreed to approve the holding of the Annual Meeting of Kerry County Council in the Kerry Sports Academy, Institute of Technology, North Campus, Tralee, on Monday, 29 June 2020 at 12.00 noon.

29.05.2020.03 Special Listowel MD Meeting

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Robert Beasley **SECONDED** by Cllr. Deirdre Ferris, it was agreed to approve the holding of a Special Listowel Municipal District Meeting in the Listowel Family Resource Centre on Friday, 12 June 2020 at 10.30 a.m. to consider:

- a) the Chief Executive's report on submissions/observations received in relation to the draft Listowel Municipal District Local Area Plan 2019-2025.
- b) the adoption of the Listowel Municipal District Local Area Plan 2019-2025.

29.05.2020.04 Municipal District Annual Meetings 2020

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae SECONDED by Cllr. Robert Beasley, it was agreed to approve the holding of the Annual Meetings of the Municipal Districts in the following locations at the following dates and times:

- a) Tralee Municipal District Annual Meeting – Thursday, 25 June 2020 at 9.30 a.m. in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Tralee.
- b) Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District Annual Meeting – Thursday, 25 June 2020 at 12.00 noon in Castleisland Library.
- c) Listowel Municipal District Annual Meeting – Thursday, 25 June 2020 at 3.00 p.m. in the Conference Room, Listowel Family Resource Centre.
- d) Kenmare Municipal District Annual Meeting – Friday, 26 June 2020 at 10.30 a.m. in the Carnegie Theatre, Kenmare.
- e) Killarney Municipal District Annual Meeting – Friday, 26 June 2020 at 1.30 p.m. in Killarney Sports & Leisure Centre.

29.05.2020.05 Protocols for forthcoming Council Meetings

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, referred to the Protocols for forthcoming Council Meetings which had been circulated to the Elected Members. The protocol is in place for elected members attending Kerry County Council meetings at Áras an Chontae during the COVID -19 pandemic. The protocol is based on National guidelines, there is a significant percentage of the population in Kerry that are deemed high risk and he asked that the members adhere to the strict protocol for the health and safety of everyone. Substantial amount of work has been undertaken to reduce the numbers of COVID-19 cases and he asked that the members would not congregate and continue to practice social distancing. A significant amount of the council's work has taken place remotely over the last number of weeks. He advised the members if they have any further queries, they can contact the following staff members.

Pádraig Corkery, Meetings Administrator	0873488733
Ciara Fitzgerald, SO Corporate Services	0874059506
Davina Griffin, SO Corporate Services	0874052125

Mr. P. Corkery stated that as outlined, the June Ordinary Meeting and the Annual meeting of the Council would be held at the Kerry Sports Academy venue and that a protocol in relation to management of attendance to cater for public health requirements would be circulated to all members prior to the meetings.

It was agreed that the protocol would be provided for the June meeting which would restrict the timeline for the June meeting to two hours and that notices of motions would be moved without debate, with written responses to be circulated by email to the Members at the conclusion of the Meeting. In accordance with standing orders it was agreed that 2 notices of motion could be submitted by each member.

It was agreed that a letter would issue to the members inviting them to submit a maximum of two Notice of Motions for the June Ordinary Meeting and requested that they would be received no later than next Thursday, 4th June at 12.00p.m.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae SECONDED by Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae, the Protocols for forthcoming Council Meetings was agreed.

The Chief Executive stated that this pandemic has significantly changed the way in which the council can conduct its business. The roadmap set out by the Government consists of four phases, which has given us a chance to put measures in place before the council is fully reopened.

Due to the short timeframe and upcoming bank holiday, Cathaoirleach Niall Kelleher requested members to forward their Notice of Motions as soon as possible to give staff a chance to prepare the responses to the motions.

29.05.2020.06 Any Other Business

Cllr. Jim Finucane PROPOSED that the future of the Shannon LNG project, should not be part of any political negotiations as a new application will come before An Bord Pleanála in September.

Cllr. Robert Beasley SECONDED this proposal.

Cllr. Niall O'Callaghan expressed concerns regarding Council staff undertaking grass cutting in Killarney, with these staff as a result not being available to work on the road works programme for the district. He also requested clarification on what estates are to be cut in Killarney as there appears to be confusion regarding this matter. He also requested an update on the retirement of staff in Killarney as previously discussed. He expressed concerns that once a new Government is formed, a new budget will be introduced and the grant funding for the Roadworks Programme may be withdrawn and so it was important that the works be completed as soon as possible. He pointed out Killarney Town was very quiet at the moment and the work for Main Street and Mission Road should be completed prior to business re-opening after the restrictions.

Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae wished to be associated with the comments expressed by Cllr. Niall O' Callaghan. There is a Roadworks programme to be completed and there appears to be confusion on what works are due to be carried out. She too requested clarity on the grass cutting in Killarney.

Cllr Jackie Healy-Rae asked if consideration has been given by the council to contract machinery in order to complete the Roadworks Programme. It is very hard to envisage how the programme will be completed by the end of the year given the timeframe and the number of engineering areas in the county.

Cllr. Robert Beasley asked that the council would again review its use of weed killer in public areas, in particular under steel barriers. He also requested that measures would be put in place to eradicate the Japanese Knotweed.

Cllr. Mikey Sheehy referred to the Business Restart Grant and advised that there was no reference number on the application forms and asked that an update would be given to the applicants as soon as possible. It is very important that the businesses reopen in a safe manner as soon as possible. He added that measures must be put in place to allow people to work remotely in this county. Finally, he wished to compliment and acknowledge the HSE staff on the excellent job they are doing.

Cllr. Michael Cahill stated the COVID-19 pandemic has again raised the issue of the quality of Broadband in this county. Constituents have contacted him complaining that their broadband is very poor quality and others can't access Broadband at all. He proposed that a letter would issue to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Mr. Richard Bruton requesting that the National Broadband Scheme would be rolled out immediately. In addition, he asked for an update on the maintenance of public toilets. Cllr Michael Cahill suggested that the council would introduce a Garden of Remembrance to commemorate the people who have passed away during COVID-19 and to honour the Frontline staff for the excellent job they have done throughout the pandemic. In relation to the Business Restart Grant, he asked that an update would be provided. In addition, Cllr Michael Cahill expressed concerns in relation to issues at the Skellig Star Hotel, Caherciveen, regarding the establishment of a Direct Provision Centre. He proposed that a letter would issue to the Minister for Justice & Equality, the HSE and the Minister for Health expressing the member's concerns and requesting that a full investigation would be carried out.

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris wished to thank the staff of Kerry County Council for their efficient response to her queries. She proposed a vote of sympathy to the family of Mr. Sean Máirtín BÁCÉIR (*address withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited document is available on request*) who recently passed away. Mr. Mairtín BÁCÉIR was a Sinn Fein party colleague who empowered republicanism and was a brilliant constituent who put forward the importance of the Gaeltacht. He will be sadly missed.

All members wished to be associated with Cllr. Deirdre Ferris's comments.

Chief Executive Mr. M. Murrell responded to the Members:

In relation to the commencement of the Roadworks programme, the Chief Executive outlined the position regarding the return to work following the restrictions, which were required to be done in a safe manner in accordance with Government protocols. In this regard a suite of protocols had been agreed in respect of the local government sector to cater for the various activities and the approach in relation to the return to work of all staff was in line with these protocols. In this regard there was a significant focus in the Council in relation to the road works scheme which would be a priority item. She undertook to get clarification in relation to the position regarding grass cutting in Killarney and stated that Members would be updated by the MD manager in relation to this matter.

In relation to the cost contingency measures the Chief Executive advised she had advised the members of proposals in relation to expenditure savings being put in place. This matter is being fully examined by the Head of Finance but is difficult to clarify the full scope of income or expenditure at this time as further clarification was required from central government in relation to the level of support etc.

In relation to the members' queries regarding the Roadworks Budget, the Chief Executive advised that grant funding of €51m has been received for the programme and she is confident that the funding will remain. The Council will be carrying out the works based on the budget available and that temporary contracts for workers in this area would be renewed based on the funding available for this year's programme.

In relation to the use of weed killer, the Chief Executive advised that it is difficult to eliminate its use completely. Alternatives have been examined in three work areas

within the county including Rathass Graveyard and Council is anxious to move to an alternative.

In regard to the Business- Restart Grant, the Chief Executive advised that following the announcement of the grant, the LEO office only had a few days to roll out the grant application process and particulars. Every effort is being made to process the scheme and ensure that the timelines are met. If there are issues arising, she asked that the members would bring them to her attention.

In response to working remotely, the Chief Executive advised that substantial work has been done to promote this concept in Kerry and this was an area to be promoted strongly. An Inter-agency Business Advisory Team has been established that both the Cathaoirleach Niall Kelleher and Cllr. Michael O'Shea (Chair Economic Strategic Policy Committee) are members of. This group is focused on supporting businesses through the current climate. Kerry County Council in partnership with Kerry ETB are leading out on the development of a "Safe Destination" programme which is being developed with Kerry Branch of the Irish Hotels Federation. A virtual mall is currently be developed on the Kerry County Council website with a map showing what business are open physically and those businesses that are working online.

In relation to the maintenance of public toilets the Chief Executive advised that the 5 km is still in place and the beaches shouldn't be busy at this stage in accordance with the restrictions. Following the introduction of the 20km rule an assessment will be done of the catchment areas and the council may have to reopen public toilets. The Standard Operation Procedure which is due to be published for the local government sector will have to be put in place before public toilets can reopen.

Cathaoirleach Niall Kelleher advised that excellent work is being done through the Inter Agency groups and Sub committees to get the message across that services are available in Kerry for working remotely at home and in our Hubs throughout the county.

The Cathaoirleach asked members to contact the Government parties in relation to the need for support in relation to the loss of rates and other income.

The meeting concluded at 11.22 a.m.

Pádraig Corkery
Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council