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**MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CRUINNITHE BLIANTIUIL DE COMHAIRLE CONTAE  
CHIARRAÍ A THIONÓLADH I LÁR IONAD SPORT, INSTITIÚID  
TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA, TRÁ LÍ, AR AN LUAN, 29 MEITHEAMH 2020**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN  
THE KERRY SPORTS ACADEMY, I.T. TRALEE, ON MONDAY, 29 JUNE 2020**

**PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR  
Councillors/Comhairleoirí**

**Tom Barry  
Patrick Connor-Scarteen  
Deirdre Ferris  
Fionnán Fitzgerald  
Michael Foley  
Maura Healy-Rae  
Sam Locke  
Marie Moloney  
Bobby O'Connell  
Aoife Thornton**

**Robert Beasley  
Brendan Cronin  
Jim Finucane  
Seamus Fitzgerald  
Donal Grady  
Niall Kelleher  
Dan McCarthy  
Norma Moriarty  
Michael O'Shea  
Johnnie Wall**

**Michael Cahill  
Charlie Farrelly  
Breandán Fitzgerald  
Cathal Foley  
Jackie Healy-Rae  
Michael Kennelly  
Jimmy Moloney  
Niall O'Callaghan  
Mikey Sheehy**

**IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR**

**Ms. M. Murrell, Chief Executive  
Mr. J. Breen, Director Water Services  
Mr. M. Scannell, Dir. Job Cr/Sust. ED  
Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance  
Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Admintr.  
Mr. B. Looney  
Mr. J. Purcell, A/SEE Corp. Servs.  
Ms. C. Fitzgerald. S.O.**

**Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir. of Rds, Transp'n & Marine  
Mr. M. O'Donoghue, Director Housing  
Mr. C. O'Connor, Director Corp. Servs.  
Mr. J. Kennelly, A/Dir. Of Service  
Mr. O. O'Shea, Press Officer  
Ms. O. O'Shea, CO Corporate Services  
Mr. M. Mulcahy I.T. Dept**

The meeting commenced at 12.10p.m.

Cllr. Niall Kelleher, Cathaoirleach, took the Chair. He welcomed everyone to the Kerry Country Council Annual Meeting at the I.T. Sports Academy and called on Mr. C. O'Connor Director of Service, to read the protocols for meetings during COVID-19 to the meeting.

**Protocols/Induction**

Mr. C. O'Connor, Director of Service, referred Elected Members to the Protocols for Kerry County Council Meetings held in Kerry Sports Academy, ITT North Campus during COVID-19 which had been circulated. The protocols were approved at the Special Meeting of Kerry County Council held on 29 May 2020. They are based on national guidelines and public health guidance. He gave an overview of the protocols, highlighting the symptoms of COVID-19, hand hygiene and social distancing procedures, time limit for meetings, documentation and use of the speaker system.

The outgoing Cathaoirleach preceded to read the following into the record of the meeting.

“Chief Executive, officials and staff of Kerry County Council, fellow councillors, members of the press, ladies and gentlemen.

One of the proudest days of my life was when I was elected Mayor of Kerry. Not only have I always loved where I live and where I work but I have always loved politics. I cherish the opportunity of representing people to the best of my ability and, hopefully, I will continue to do so for years to come. But as we all know only too well, ultimately, that’s for the people to decide.

Being elected Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council – Mayor of Kerry – was a wonderful privilege and an incredible honour for me, for my family, for my friends and for those who have supported and encouraged me in my still relatively short time in public life.

I was immensely privileged to have had the opportunity to take on this hugely important role but I was fully aware that the position brought with it a huge sense of responsibility. The priority, at all times, was to ensure that the chain of office of the Mayor of Kerry was afforded the respect, the dignity, the importance and the esteem it always warrants. And that’s the way it always should be.

I endeavoured to be a mayor that was fair, responsible and representative of the wider community and I worked hard to promote inclusivity among all groups, all persuasions and all nationalities, in every town and every village and in every parish in Kerry.

I set some targets this time last year and, with the rest of you, I worked hard to deliver on them. But, as we all know only too well, we have had a very unwelcome visitor in our midst since last March and that not only seriously curtailed our activities, it changed our world. And not for the better.

My heart goes out, totally and absolutely, to the heartbroken families who have lost loved ones due to complications associated with Covid-19. My thoughts are with those who have been infected by the deadly virus and those who are struggling to come to terms with what it has brought into their homes and into their lives.

Nothing could have prepared us for what we have experienced since last March and it is my sincerest wish that we will never have to go through anything like it again.

My thoughts today are also with the wonderful band of everyday heroes who are working in the frontline, the medical personnel and all other staff in our hospitals, care homes and in the community, the ambulance crews, emergency services, first responders, pharmacists and family doctors and their staff, community health workers, management and staff in supermarkets and other essential services and all those – far too many to mention – who have played their part in helping others during what has been the most difficult and most worrying period of time in all our lives.

I want to thank too the executive, management and staff of Kerry County Council and our municipal district councils for the magnificent way they responded during the pandemic.

The Kerry County Council led community support initiative, led by our CEO Moira Murrell and supported by so many other wonderful organisations, groups and volunteers, played a huge role and had a powerful impact over the past three months and more and I thank each of every one of those involved for their truly wonderful contributions.

Thank you too to the people of Kerry, the vast majority of whom adhered faithfully to public health guidelines and behaved so responsibly and maturely throughout the crisis. I know it was so very difficult for people to have to stay behind closed doors in their own homes, separated from their families, their children, their grandchildren and their friends and not even being able to enjoy a short stroll for so long.

I know it was so difficult too for children and young people to be away from their pals and from their normal routine and my thoughts go out, in a very special way, to those who have lost their jobs and to exam students who faced such uncertainty and endured so much stress as they attempted to plan for their futures.

I wish the Class of 2020 all the very best going forward and I hope that, in terms of what they want to pursue career wise, all their dreams come true.

Whatever way you look at it, and from whatever angle, Covid-19 was a devastating blow, in particular, for our tourism industry. As the home of tourism, we have a very special and unique county and we must again ensure that we are well placed to rebuild, to grow and to prosper.

In a county renowned for extending the hand of welcome, when growth projections for tourism in Killarney alone suggested that the total number of visitors to the town was on target to increase to 1.4 million by 2025, it was so very painful to watch it all slowly sliding away, like sand slipping through the fingers of a child building castles on a beach.

With that in mind, I must express my absolute disappointment at the decision of the incoming government to include tourism in a seriously over-sized and confusing cabinet portfolio along with five other briefs. We need a Minister for Tourism and not a Minister for Media, Tourism, Art, Culture, Sports, the Gaeltacht and whatever you're having yourself.

Now more than ever, our tourism industry needs a stand-alone ministry to ensure that it is given every chance, every support and every resource is needed to try to rebuild and to try to salvage something from what has been a devastating year. I have appealed to the Taoiseach to have an urgent rethink on that issue, not just for Kerry's sake but for Ireland's sake.

And while on the subject of the new cabinet, I wish to warmly congratulate our former council colleague, my Fianna Fáil party colleague and my immediate predecessor as mayor, Norma Foley, on her appointment as Minister for Education.

It was an inspired choice by the Taoiseach given Norma's wonderful abilities, her incredible work-rate, her passion for politics and her determination to make a difference and I have total confidence that Minister Norma Foley has all the tools required to become one of the great ministers of her or any generation. It is indeed a great honour for this county to have a representative at the cabinet table.

As we look to the future and we embrace opportunities to rebuild our county, we do so in the knowledge that a great spirit of co-operation already exists in Kerry but there can never be an opportunity for complacency to creep in. There's no point in saying it will be alright on the night – we must work to ensure it will be alright and we can leave nothing to chance as we rebuild the Kerry brand.

Now more than ever, we must all put on the green and gold jersey, line out for Team Kerry and do everything we can to reclaim our position as the most successful, the most spectacular and the most vibrant county in the entire country.

We need to constantly strive to build on what has gone before, to learn from any mistakes made and successes achieved and make our county the best place to grow up in, to be educated in, to work in, to do business in, to socialise in and to grow old in.

It was once said that courage is needed to stand up and speak but courage is also needed to sit down and listen and I hope that my fellow councillors, of all political persuasions, will agree that, during my term in office, I was always prepared to listen to what they had to say. I was at all times determined to give them the time, the space and the opportunity to air their views and the concerns and issues affecting the people they were elected to represent.

It is our duty to continue to listen to what the people are telling us and if we fail in that task, then I'm sure they will let us know.

Sometimes we succeed in what we set out to achieve. More times we don't. But the people of Kerry can be assured that, come what may, we always give it our best shot. I've said it before but it's worth repeating here. Coming from a business background, I find it very hard sometimes to deal with excessive bureaucracy. I accept that we have to work within boundaries, however, but we need to work smarter and faster to get the job done which has to be to everyone's aspiration.

Over the last few months this council has found new ways of being effective at carrying out its business and while Mayors and their chains spend a lot of time in front of Cameras, I think I have spent the most time of all in front of a camera, albeit a different type of camera, a webcam, I commend those councillors whom may not have been tech savvy for getting up to speed with Webex, Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams and webinars and we all learnt as we went along dealing with the Pandemic. There is one thing that personally stands out for me as a lesson of this pandemic but important always and that the words of an Irishman Dr Michael J Ryan, the Executive Director of WHO, he said, and I quote:

*"The problem in society we have at the moment is that everyone is afraid of making a mistake. Everyone is afraid of the consequence of error.*

*"But the greatest error is not to move. The greatest error is to be paralysed by the fear of failure."*

While these words were spoken about the reaction to the Covid-19, it's important to acknowledge that sometimes we get it wrong and it's the lessons that we learn that's important.

I hope that my term as mayor has made a difference, despite the dreadful events of the past three or four months.

I extend a word of thanks to my deputy mayor and colleague, Cllr Norma Moriarty, who demonstrated great dedication, a wonderful work-rate and gritty determination and so much in her approach to the position. Cllr Moriarty was a wonderful support to me, she always had the best interests of the council and its members at heart and I greatly appreciate her contribution and support.

I would like to thank the Chief Executive, Moira Murrell and the management and staff of Kerry County Council for their unstinting support and unfailing courtesy to me at all times. Moira is the captain of a very good team, a steady pair of hands at the wheel, dedicated, intelligent and hugely innovative and I thank her and her staff for everything they do for this great county and its people.

To my family, a huge thank you. It's an understatement to say that the year would never have been possible without their endorsement and support. My wonderful wife, Linda, who is a constant support and a great encouragement to me, and with (*Names withheld for data protection purposes*). If I learned just one thing in the past year, it's that's family is what really matters in life. And that's the way it will always remain with me.

Thanks also to my parents, and my grandfather, Connie.

But, as I stressed this time last year, my grandfather may have ignited my political interests, but I am very much my own man and I will always stand up for what I believe in, even if it means I am standing alone.

This great county is a very different place today than what it was when I became mayor last year, but I genuinely believe that we can all look to the future with new hope.

We must all work harder than we ever did before, individually and collectively, to help this wonderful county we are proud to call home to be an even greater place than it already is.

We can never allow our heads to drop. We must drive forward with purpose and determination and the greater the obstacle the more satisfying it will be to overcome it.

To quote the late great John F Kennedy – who inspires me a little bit more than Mean Girls – In a time of domestic crisis, men of goodwill and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics.

Team Kerry let's drive on.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh”.

Cllr. B. Cronin complimented the outgoing Cathaoirleach on an excellent job and said he was very fair to all members. Since March 2020 it has been extremely unusual times and complimented him on how he managed the Webex meetings. Cllr. B. Cronin took the opportunity to congratulate former councillor, Deputy Norma Foley on her appointment as Minister for Education. This is a tough position, but she will be very capable of carrying out the job. This is a huge achievement for the county to have a Minister at the Cabinet table. He expressed disappointment that an individual Minister for Tourism wasn't appointed to the cabinet. This country and in particular this county are very dependent on the Tourism industry and with a loss of €400m estimated for Kerry, it is the life blood of our county. He proposed that a letter would issue to An Taoiseach asking that he review the decision to include Tourism with a number of other cabinet portfolios and give it the respect and recognition it deserves and appointing a standalone Minister for Tourism.

Cllr. M. O' Shea welcomed the Connor family to the meeting. He complimented the outgoing Cathaoirleach on an excellent speech and a fantastic year. He praised him on how he carried out his duties impeccably while in the midst of a national crisis. He also acknowledged the excellent job he did on the Business and Economic forums. He also acknowledged that a number of Businesses were reopening in the county today under phase 3 of the road map. He too wished to congratulate former councillor Norma Foley on her appointment as Minister for Education. She is an excellent speaker and it is so important that this county has a Senior Minister and hopefully it will have a Junior Minister appointed in the coming days. He also wished to congratulate Cllr. Norma Moriarty on her role as Leas-Cathaoirleach. He wished the incoming Cathaoirleach the very best for the year ahead.

Cllr. M. Gleeson wished to congratulate the outgoing Cathaoirleach for the tremendous amount of time and dedication he gave this county over the last year. He said that he showed a good example when he cut his trip to America short in March and returned home and self-isolated for 14 days. We have been asked to holiday within our own county and asked that the towns would cooperate with each other. He also congratulated former councillor, Cllr. N. Foley on her appointment as Minister for Education. These are enormously challenging times and he asked that Minister Foley examine the introduction of a distant learning programme between St. Finians, Killarney and the I.T. Tralee.

Cllr. M. Sheehy congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach on a fantastic year, saying it is a very proud day for his family and during these challenging times he put on the Kerry Jersey and did an excellent job in representing this county and promoting it as a Safe Destination. He wished to be associated with well wishes for Minister Norma Foley, stating it is a huge honour for the county and in particular Tralee. He also wished to congratulate Mr. Paul Gallagher who was appointed Attorney General who is also from Day Place in Tralee.

Cllr. T. O'Brien also wished to concur with the comments expressed by the previous speakers for the outgoing Cathaoirleach, stating he did a fantastic job, in particular chairing the Webex meetings and gave everyone a fair chance. Cllr. T. O'Brien congratulated Minister Norma Foley on her appointment as Minister for Education. It is a major achievement; she is a former Mayor of Tralee and he wanted to extend his delight for her appointment. The county is going to struggle due to the lack of Tourism and he wished to be associated with the proposal to appoint a standalone Minister for Tourism. In conclusion he congratulated Cllr N Moriarty on her term as Leas-Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. J. Wall also wished to be associated with the well wished for the outgoing Cathaoirleach. He paid tribute to the wonderful job he did in such unusual times. Cllr. J. Wall also wished to commend Minister Norma Foley on her appointment as Minister for Education. He said she has always excelled in everything she did and referred to the quote from Shakespeare that Minister Foley made reference to: '*wise & slow they stumble that run fast*'. He also extended congratulations to Minister Foley's husband Denis and her mother Hannah.

Cllr. B. O'Connell complimented both the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach on an excellent job. He said that he was always a very fair Cathaoirleach and that pre-COVID he did a fantastic job in representing the county.

Cllr. J. Finucane congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach on his term, pointing out it has been a very challenging few months. He also wished to compliment the public, the Health Care workers, the Government and Mr. Paul Reid CEO Health Service Executive on the leadership and guidance they have shown. He congratulated the Leas-Cathaoirleach Cllr. N. Moriarty on a very successful year. He also wished to be associated with the well wishes expressed for the newly appointed Minister for Education Norma Foley. He thanked the I.T. Tralee for facilitating the meeting and acknowledged that from January 2021 it has been granted Technological University status in conjunction with Cork Institute of Technology and will be recognised as Munster TU. Cllr. Finucane also asked that the newly appointed Minister support the Shannon LNG project which is now with An Board Pleanala and the project gets the respect it deserves. In conclusion he said he was hopeful that the Government would introduce a super Junior Minister for Tourism in the coming days.

Cllr. F. Fitzgerald wished to congratulate the outgoing Cathaoirleach on a very successful term. He also wished to be associated with the call for a stand-alone Minister for Tourism. In this current climate we need to encourage the nation to stay and holiday at home. He congratulated Minister Norma Foley on her appointment and said that he has known her for a long time as a teaching colleague and she always has the children at the heart of her priorities. It is a very happy day for her family who have a long history in politics, he said.

Cllr. T. Barry also wished to be associated with the comments expressed by the previous speakers for the outgoing Cathaoirleach and also wished to compliment him on his role on the Joint Policing Committee. He also wished to congratulate Minister Norma Foley on her appointment as Minister for Education.

Cllr. D. McCarthy wished to be associated with the comments expressed for both the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach and the well wishes for Minister Norma Foley.

Cllr. C. Farrelly wished to congratulate the outgoing Cathaoirleach on an excellent term and thanked in particular for the courtesy he has shown him, stating he represented the county with distinction and always has the county at heart. He also acknowledged his role as Chairperson of LCDC and thanked Mr. Michael Scannell D.O.S. and Ms. Niamh O' Sullivan S.E.O and the staff of the Community Support Team. He also wished to be associated with the comments expressed for Minister Norma Foley and also wish to support the calls for a Super Junior Minister for Tourism. Finally, he welcomed the Connor-Scarteen family to today's meeting.

Cllr. M. Moloney congratulated the ongoing Cathaoirleach on a very successful year, stating that he can now enjoy his time with his family again. She also wished to congratulate the outgoing Leas Cathaoirleach N Moriarty on a job well done. She extended her congratulations to all newly elected Cathaoirligh and Mayors of the Municipal Districts in the county and offered them her full support. She also wished to be associated with sentiments expressed to Minister Norma Foley on her appointment. In relation to Tourism she too expressed concerns regarding the decision not to appointment a stand-alone Minister for Tourism. The Tourism industry is a huge income to the county, in particular Killarney.

Cllr. J. Moloney congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach, pointing out that while it wasn't the year he envisaged, he represented the County of Kerry with distinction and did his family proud. He also congratulated Leas-Cathaoirleach N. Moriarty and the assistance she gave to the Cathaoirleach. He also congratulated Minister Norma Foley on her appointment and said that while she sat next to him in the Council Chambers, she gave him great assistance. She will do a fantastic job in education and will bring Kerry to the cabinet floor.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach, thanking him for the courtesy and fairness he showed all independent councillors. She congratulated Minister Norma Foley on her appointment and said she had no doubt that her teaching background would be beneficial to her. Hopefully for children and students, everyone will be back to school on a full-time basis in September. In conclusion she expressed disappointment on the Government appointment for rural Ireland and was disappointed that the position for Rural Affairs had been diluted and not been given its own Ministerial role and asked that it be reviewed .She wished to concur with the previous comments expressed regarding the proposal to call on the Taoiseach to appointment a Minister for Tourism and also called on the Government to introduce a 0% VAT rate for the viability and continuity of the Business sector. Finally, she welcomed the Connor-Scarteen family to the meeting and said that both families had gone back a long way.

Cllr. D. Grady wished to congratulate the outgoing Cathaoirleach who he believed served as an excellent Cathaoirleach for the county during COVID-19. He stated that Cllr. Kelleher had always treated him very fairly and stood up to the task at hand. He too wished to be associated with the well wishes expressed for Minister Norma Foley and said she will be a brilliant Minister. He also expressed hope that Deputy Brendan Griffin would retain his role as Junior Minister for Tourism. He also welcomed the Connor family to the meeting. In conclusion he thanked the Chief Executive and staff of Kerry county Council for their support in particular during this pandemic.

Cllr. S. Locke wished to concur with the comments of the previous speakers regarding the outgoing Cathaoirleach and in particular the leadership he had shown during this pandemic. He wished to congratulate Minister Norma Foley on her appointment. He said that he has known Minister Foley all her life and the appointment of a Minister is

advantageous to the county. As a teacher she will know her duties and she will serve as a gold standard to the county in other ministerial Departments. He added that Tourism is the main source of Income for Kerry and hoped that Deputy Brendan Griffin will be given a Super Junior Minister role in this department. For the incoming Cathaoirleach he acknowledged that it will be a very difficult year trying to restart business in Kerry. He acknowledged the guidance that Kerry County Council have shown to businesses during this pandemic and thanked the staff for the brilliant work and cooperation they have shown. In conclusion he acknowledged the reopening of the County Buildings today and the work of each individual councillor over the last four months.

Cllr. M. Cahill wished to be associated with the comments expressed by the previous speakers for both the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach. He also wished to congratulate Minister Norma Foley on her appointment, pointing out that she sat amongst the members in the Council Chamber only a few short months ago. She is a woman of integrity and is now holding one of the most Senior Government roles and will be brilliant for the people of Kerry. Cllr. M. Cahill wished to acknowledge (*Name withheld for data protection purposes*) the teenage boy from Killorglin who is in urgent need of surgery to correct complication in his spine caused by scoliosis. In conclusion Cllr. M. Cahill said that it was very important that we all work together to help revive the Tourism industry in this county and said that the granting of the South Kerry Greenway would bring a huge lifeline to the county. He also welcomed the announcement of just over €1m for Caherciveen Town from the Department of Rural and Community Affairs and the Community Development's Rural Regeneration Fund which will be used to fund the Caherciveen Town Regeneration Project.

Cllr. R. Beasley wish to concur with the comments expressed by the previous speakers for both the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach. He also wished to pay tribute to Minister Norma Foley and expressed his disappointment that the position for Minister for Tourism was included with another portfolio. He asked that the newly formed Government would support the Tarbert - Ballylongford Landbank.

Cllr. A. Thornton congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach and complimented him on his chairing of the meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic. She also wished to congratulate Leas-Cathaoirleach N. Moriarty. In conclusion she wished to be associated with the well wishes expressed for Minister Norma Foley on her appointment.

Cllr. N. O' Callaghan congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach on his term. He stated that he was always very fair and in particular during the Webex meetings. It was a pity that the last four months of his term had been curtailed but he handled the situation very well. He also wished to be associated with the comments expressed for the Leas-Cathaoirleach N. Moriarty and Minister Norma Foley.

Cllr. M. Foley wished to concur with the comments expressed by the previous speakers. He also asked that the newly formed Government would support the Shannon LNG project.

Cllr. D Ferris congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach and said that due to the COVID-19 and the short time she has served in Kerry County Council, she was unable to engage with her colleagues.

Cllr M. Kennelly also wished to be associated with the well wishes expressed for the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach. The year 2020 will never be forgotten in history and reminds us of the economic loss of 1982, however this county will rise again. He congratulated the newly appointed Minister for Education Norma Foley on her Ministerial role and asked that the newly appointed Government would help to progress the Shannon LNG project.

The Chief Executive congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach and said that he had been very mindful of the Chain of Office and held it with distinction. She thanked him for his cooperation and said that he had been very supportive of staff and management throughout the year and wished him well for the future.

### **29.6.2020.01 Election of Cathaoirleach**

Cllr. B. O'Connell PROPOSED Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen as Cathaoirleach. He said that Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen was firstly elected in 2009 in the Killorglin Electoral area, re-elected in 2014 in the South & West Kerry Municipal District and last year he was re-elected to the Council in the new Kenmare Municipal District. The O'Connor Scarsteens have played an integral part in Kerry Politics for over 100 years, being prominent and active figures since the War of Independence, they are the longest ever serving family with unbroken service on Kerry County Council. The Scarsteens at different times on Kerry County Council represented all parts of South Kerry including Kenmare, Killorglin, Cahersiveen, Dingle, Rathmore, Killarney and their surrounding districts. Patrick, his father Michael and Grandfather Pat never lost an election to the Council, yet they never held the office of Mayor. In fact, if elected today Patrick would be the first Kenmare person to be Mayor of Kerry/ Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council since the council was founded in 1899.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald SECONDED the proposal and stated that It was a great honour to second Cllr. B. O'Connell, to propose Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen as Mayor of Kerry, Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council. He wished to concur with the comments expressed by Cllr. B. O'Connell. "Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen is a true gentleman in all walks of life, his family has been immersed in politics since the foundation of the state. He is a very hard working and diligent person who has worked tirelessly for the people of South Kerry and the people of the County. In his time, he was chairperson of the South & West Municipal District, Chair of the County Development Board, Chair of the Joint Policing Committee and Chair of the Kerry Roads and Transportation SPC. During his term in all those roles, he carried out his work efficiently and in a professional manner which has put him a strong position to be Mayor of Kerry and Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council."

Cllr. T. Barry PROPOSED Cllr. R. Beasley as Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council. "Cllr. R. Beasley was first elected to Kerry County Council in 1979, he is on his 5<sup>th</sup> term in this council and has served as Deputy Mayor. He is a diligent councillor, has a unique way of connecting with people and a commonsense approach. He has been a great help to me since being elected to Kerry County Council and has the potential to be an excellent Cathaoirleach during this pandemic."

Cllr. D. Ferris SECONDED the proposal and said that she has known Cllr. R. Beasley since she was a child. "He is a true gentleman and on a professional note

he epitomises the true belief of republican and democracy” and she asked that members would consider him for Cathaoirleach.”

A Vote was taken which resulted as follows:

**For Cllr. P. Connor-Scarreen:** Cllrs: Cahill, Connor-Scarreen, Cronin, Farrelly, Finucane, B. Fitzgerald, F. Fitzgerald, S. Fitzgerald, Flynn, M. Foley, Gleeson, Grady, Jackie Healy-Rae, Johnny Healy-Rae, M. Healy-Rae, Kennelly, Locke, McCarthy, J. Moloney, M. Moloney, Moriarty, O’ Brien, O’ Callaghan, O’ Connell. O’ Shea, Sheehy, Thornton, Wall, Kelleher, **(29)**

**For Cllr. R. Beasley:** Cllrs: Barry, Beasley, Ferris, Foley. **(4)**

**Not Voting (0)**

**Absent: (0)**

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, declared Cllr. P. Connor-Scarreen elected Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council.

Cathaoirleach P. Connor-Scarreen then took the Chair and read the following speech into the record of the meeting.

“The Scarreen’s are not noted for long speeches, however, please bear with me on this occasion, as we've been waiting three quarters of a century for this day!

*Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet!*

Chief Executive Moira Murrell, fellow Councillors, Council Officials, members of the press and members of my family. I am delighted to be joined by my wife Katie, father Michael, mother Eleanor, aunt Mary, mother in law Mary, Godfather Jack and cousin Jim.

It is a great honour and privilege for me to be elected Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council and Mayor of Kerry today. I wish to thank my colleagues for putting their confidence in me. It is a very proud day for me, my family, my party and my loyal supporters. I am fully aware of the huge sense of responsibility the role of Mayor involves and I pledge to carry out my duties in a dignified, energetic and professional manner. I intend to be fair and reasonable to everyone in the Chamber.

I wish to thank my proposer Castleisland Councillor Bobby O’Connell and my seconder Dingle Councillor Seamus Cosáí Fitzgerald. Both colleagues have given me great advice and guidance throughout the years.

The outgoing Mayor Niall Kelliher unfortunately didn't get to experience the second half of his term as normal, however when difficulties associated with the Coronavirus pandemic arose, he excelled in his duties. Us Councillors were aware of the great work he did through online briefings and later physical meetings. He was professional and fair in his approach throughout his term. Niall represented us at home and abroad with distinction.

When duty called the outgoing Deputy Mayor Norma Moriarty stepped up to the mark, she is undoubtedly one of the best Councillors I have ever worked with. She is very capable and has a fantastic grasp of community issues.

The Council staff from all Departments especially Corporate Services are of great assistance and I look forward to working with them in the year ahead. I will work closely with Management yet hold them to account if necessary.

It is vital for the democratic process that the general public are made aware of the work we as Councillors do. I want to thank the press for reporting on meetings and highlighting our work in a reasonable, balanced and fair way to the public.

Kerry is no different from so many other places that have been hit badly because of the Coronavirus Pandemic and I wish to sympathise with any families that have lost loved ones. I also wish to pay tribute to the frontline workers, community workers helping kick this virus out of our County. We should honour them with a function in the coming year.

Our economy has been hit badly however we have great people in this room, in this authority and in various business, voluntary and community sectors throughout the County. By taking a 'Meitheal' approach we will lead Kerry to a stronger position than it was ever in before. Kerry people will get through this by putting on the Kerry jersey, by working together, supporting local, buying local and taking a 'Kerrycation' instead of a vacation. Despite present difficulties we have a lot to look forward to and a lot to aspire to.

Not only is Kerry world renowned for our beautiful scenery, friendly people, excellent food and accommodation, we also know how to host some of the best festivals and events. Unfortunately, some of our key festivals will not take place this year such as the Rose of Tralee, Puck Fair, Dingle Regatta, 15th August Kenmare Fair etc. However, I am sure in 2021 they will bounce back better than ever. Kerry's population is increasing and many people from other parts of Ireland and further afield have contributed to make Kerry a wonderful place to live and work in. Kerry people are noted for being welcoming and inclusive.

Although today marks the highlight of my Political career it comes nowhere near the best day of my life when I married Katie last September. Katie is full of life, she gives whatever she is involved in well over 100%. I'm lucky she has a good interest in Politics, and it helps she has the same persuasion!

I know Katie will give me great assistance, guidance and support in the year ahead. I don't know if we will get to go to New York next St Patrick's day, if we do, I wouldn't be surprised if Katie tries to lead the parade!

I'm blessed to be living in both Kenmare and Killarney which are so close to each other, and fortunate our Killarney home is in the parish bordering my electoral area in Beaufort!.

My Mother Eleanor has lived with Politics most of her life, has been involved with improvements to our Community and she has kept the business going when my father Michael and I pursued our passion for politics and work as Councillors. I'm fortunate my parents are still working in the family business. I know her late father Denis O'Sullivan Mountain, who was President of our local branch, would be very proud today.

Today is an exceptionally special day for my father Michael as I'm the first Scarteen to ever become Mayor/ Cathaoirleach. Dad, my mentor like his father before him, was excellent at getting things done and delivering for constituents. Well able to put across his point and traits of hard work, diplomacy, courtesy and respect were most commonly used to achieve results for his constituents. Despite his easy-going manner, he still possesses great political skills.

One of his first endeavours before putting his name on a ballot paper was to remove the O from O'Connor through deed poll so he would be higher up on the ballot paper and to add Scarteen, the townland where his father Pat was from, formally to his name. My father often diffused tense situations within the chamber with his witty sense of humour and he used his skills honed as dance hall owner in breaking up fisticuffs between Councillors outside the chamber on one occasion.

We never got too caught up in political taglines of left or right, we just work for everyone and in turn get great support from a cross section of all the Community.

*I like the dreams of the future better than the History of the past, however those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it !.*

The Connor Scarreens' Political journey begun over 100 years ago has taken us from being prominent activists in the IRA, then the National Army, Cumman Na nGaedheal, and Fine Gael since it was founded. Recent election results indicate significant political changes; however, we will adapt and I'm in it for the long haul.

- It's a great honour to be the First Kenmare Person to be elected Mayor/ Cathaoirleach since Kerry County Council was formed in 1899.
- We are proud to have represented the people of every part of South Kerry on the Council.
- For over 50 years we were Kenmare's only local political representatives.
- My grandfather Pat and his brother Tim sat side by side on the Council for one term. Pat also had the honour of serving in Seanad Eireann and Dáil Eireann.
- For me our electoral success pales in significance to the political achievements of the revolutionary period which led to the foundation of the state. My Granduncles Tom and John O'Connor Scarteen played a prominent role at this time.
- In the forthcoming year we will mark the 100th Anniversary of the Headford Ambush outside Killarney, which was one of the biggest and most successful engagements in the Country during the War of Independence, Tom was last to leave the ambush and he took part in many other battles. After seeing Michael Collins in Killarney he went pro treaty and became a General in the National Army, he took part in the shelling of the four courts in Dublin and engagements in Limerick before leading the National Army to South Kerry by Sea, joining up with supporters and going on to capture Kenmare, Waterville and Cahersiveen and the surrounding areas. He and his brother Captain John were noted for taking it handy on former comrades in Kerry during the Civil War. Sadly, Tom aged 20 and his brother John aged 25 were shot dead unarmed in my home.
- We are now more open in talking about this difficult and sad period and I know that when the time comes shortly to mark the 100th anniversary, it will be done with maturity, respect, and sensitivity to both sides.
- The Scarreens have always aspired to a United Ireland and hopefully I will see it in my lifetime.

Now more than ever I ask that Councillors are responsible and reasonable when it comes to any difficult yet necessary decisions this Council will have to take in the forthcoming year.

Some of my priorities may be hard to ascertain in the short time due to the difficult and unprecedented financial position the Country and County are in, however I hope we achieve progress on as much of the following as possible.

- Helping get the Kerry economy back up and running.
- In Kerry we often have to create our own success, therefore supporting entrepreneurial endeavour should be to the fore.
- The promotion of Kerry as a safe Tourist destination.
- The organising of a Kerry Day- to promote the County at home and abroad.
- Greater linkage and access to the County- including the growth of Kerry Airport, the further advancement of the Macroom and Adare Bye passes.
- Further support for digital hubs and remote working. This could be a game changer in reversing rural decline.
- More focus on regeneration of our towns and villages. Thankfully a few days ago Cahersiveen received a significant grant under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund for a town centre project. We need to secure more such projects for the County.
- Further development of the RDI Hub in Killorglin and the Agri Tech Centre in North Kerry.
- Improving our local Environment for future generations, we have a unique opportunity in the upcoming County Development Plan which I believe should have a strong green focus including offshore renewable energy, better public transport, more charging points for electric vehicles, reducing the use of plastics in the County etc.
- The ending of Direct Provision. How Ireland assists refugees and asylum seekers needs to be radically changed. Also, Racism in our society needs to stop.
- The further progression of Greenways and outdoor pursuits in the County so locals and visitors alike can improve their health and experience Kerry's beautiful scenery in a safe manner.
- Improvements to our Infrastructure including road improvements and more parking for towns like Kenmare, Killarney and so many others. New wastewater treatment plants are needed in many towns and villages and Kenmare is one that urgently needs an upgrade.
- A lot of council houses have been constructed in the last few years however many more are needed.
- Greater focus is needed in assisting farming communities.
- We need to see better results by the IDA in Kerry.
- Hopefully we will see the Tarbert/ Ballylongford Landbank utilised to its full potential.
- Some people and businesses in Kerry are really struggling, State agencies and authorities need to be sympathetic and flexible.
- I look forward to the establishment of the Munster Technological University in Tralee which is a great boost for Kerry.

Cé nach bhfuil puinn Gaeilge agam féin, tuigim go bhfuil dhá Ghaeltacht againn i gCiarraí, agus geallaim go dtacóidh mé le muintir na Gaeltachta i gcónaí"  
*(Although I don't have much Irish myself, I understand that we have 2 Gaeltachts in Kerry and I pledge to support the Gaeltacht communities at all times).*

"Ba mhaith liom tacú leis na comhairleoirí líofa anseo an Ghaeilge a úsáid chomh minic agus is féidir"

*(I'd like to encourage the fluent speakers amongst the councillors to use the language as often as possible)*

I will always be available to everyone across the political divide 24/7, if you want me to attend an event in your community, I will do my utmost to be there. I am hugely honoured and proud to serve as Mayor for all of Kerry. I will leave no stone unturned in doing my very best for my County. I will be a campaigning Mayor and I will travel the length and breadth of the County.

The last few days are historic days for our Country and our County, A new Government including opposing Civil War sides has been formed! A colleague, Norma Foley that was sitting with us here a few months ago is now Minister for Education, I'm delighted for her and it's a great boost for Kerry to have a cabinet Minister.

Today is the day our Country and County is opening up after the biggest pandemic to ever hit the world!

For me, my family, supporters and community becoming Mayor of Kerry is a day to cherish and it creates history in its own right.

I wish the new Government all the best in the Country's recovery. Now more than ever we need to exhaust every funding stream available from Central Government and the EU.

I look forward to working with all those in this Chamber, our Oireachtas members and MEP in delivering for Kerry and its more than 150,000 residents. We may be in for a tough couple of years, however we in Kerry County Council will be the driving force in leading this great County back to normality and to a better place than ever before. We will strive to make Kerry the best place in the world to grow up, work and grow old in.

Go raibh Maith Agaibh go leir.

Ciarrai Abu."

Cllr. D. McCarthy stated as a fellow Kenmare man it is an honour to congratulate him on his election as Cathaoirleach. The Connors and McCarthys have a long history of friendship and stated it is a great day for the Cathaoirleach's family, friends and Kenmare town.

Cllr. J. F. Flynn congratulated the incoming Cathaoirleach and said that he is an absolute gentleman and has been an excellent councillor for his constituents and looked forward to working with him throughout the year.

Cllr. Jackie. Healy-Rae congratulated the new Cathaoirleach and said that both political families go back a long way. He said he had no doubt that he will be dedicated and committed to the position and offered him his full support.

Cllr. B. Cronin congratulated the newly elected Cathaoirleach, stating it is a great day for all the Connor-Scarteen family and that he himself had the honour of serving

with the Cathaoirleach's father Michael Connor-Scarteen on Kerry County Council. He offered the Cathaoirleach his full support.

Cllr. M. Gleeson congratulated the Cathaoirleach and referred to his speech where he mentioned respect and stated that at all times both the Cathaoirleach and his family always showed respect to the people of Kerry.

Cllr. D. Ferris wished to congratulate the Cathaoirleach and wished him well for the year ahead.

Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae said that he wanted to sincerely congratulate Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen on being elected Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council. He recalled where he himself attended the Annual Meeting with his grandfather as a child and stated that both families battled hard elections but always got on and respected each other. He asked that the Cathaoirleach would continue to support the acquisition of parking in his hometown of Kenmare. He wished to congratulate the outgoing Cathaoirleach stating he was always very helpful and fair to each councillor. He stated that Cllr. R. Beasley is a fine councillor and in different circumstances he would have voted for him. He too wished to be associated with the well wishes for Minister Norma Foley,

Cllr. T. Barry congratulated the Cathaoirleach and offered him his full support.

Cllr. R. Beasley congratulated the Cathaoirleach on his election and said that he deserved it and it is great day for both him and his family and wished him the best for the year ahead. In conclusion Cllr. R. Beasley proposed a vote for sympathy to the Storey family on the recent passing of Bobby Storey.

Cllr. M. Cahill congratulated the Cathaoirleach and said that he was a man of great integrity and will be a fine Cathaoirleach for the county. He also wished to congratulate Senator Mark Daly on his appointment as Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann.

Cllr. N. O' Callaghan congratulated the Cathaoirleach and his family. He also wished to acknowledge Cllr. R. Beasley who he said had been very good and courteous to him.

Cllr. M. Kennelly congratulated the Cathaoirleach and also wished to congratulate the O' Connor family on the history they have made in Kerry County Council today.

Cllr. D. Grady wish to concur with the comments expressed by the previous speakers regarding the newly elected Cathaoirleach. He stated that he was truly apologetic that he was unable to vote for Cllr. R. Beasley, that he had utmost of respect for him.

Cllr. A. Thornton wished to congratulate the new elected Cathaoirleach and said that he is a very respectful and honourable person.

Cllr. N. Kelleher congratulated him the Cathaoirleach on being the Cathaoirleach of this great county, stating it is a great day for the town of Kenmare.

Cllr. J. Finucane congratulated the Cathaoirleach and said it is a great day for both him and your family. It is very clear to see the commitment the Connor family have given to public service since the beginning of the state. He offered him his full support for the year ahead.

On behalf of the Labour Party Cllr. M. Moloney congratulated the Cathaoirleach and offered him her full support. She also wished to congratulate his family who have given so much to politics in this county.

Cllr. M. Foley wished to concur with the previous comments expressed for the Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. N Moriarty said

“Ba mahith liom rud amhain eile a rá, Tá se ceart ag ár Meara nua a rá go gcaithimid go leir ar ndícheall a dhéanamh ár dteanga a úsáid. Nilim fein liofa ach an coupla focail atá agam táim ag iarraidh iad a usaid nios minice. Tá se an tabhatach spreagaidh a tabhairt do gach dhaoine eile an rud ceanna a dheanamh agus beimid ag dul chun cinn le cheile”.

She congratulated the Cathaoirleach and wished him well for the year ahead. She offered him her full support and said that he will be an excellent diplomat for the county. In reference to the outgoing Cathaoirleach she said that he was an excellent Cathaoirleach and did an excellent job in such difficult circumstances. She congratulated Minister Norma Foley on her appointment as Minister for Education and Senator Mark Daly as Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann. In reference to the Tourism industry in this county, she noted that it had been supported by many other sectors in the county such as the Kerry ETB.

Cllr. C. Foley wished to congratulate the Cathaoirleach and said that it is evident that his family are steeped in politics. He pointed out that it will be a very difficult year ahead given the financial position and offered him his full support. In reference to the outgoing Cathaoirleach he congratulated him on a job well done. He said he was always very courteous and wished both him and his family well.

Cllr. J. Wall wished to be associated with the previous comments expressed for the Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae congratulated the Cathaoirleach and said that it was very proud day for his family. She offered him for her full support for the year ahead.

The Chief Executive congratulated the Cathaoirleach and welcomed everyone to the meeting. This will be a very tough and challenging year and said the Cathaoirleach will have the full support of the management and staff of Kerry County Council.

### **29.6.2020.02 Election of Leas Cathaoirleach**

Cllr. M. Kennelly PROPOSED Cllr. A Thornton as Leas Cathaoirleach. “Cllr. A. Thornton was first elected in 2014 and has been an excellent councillor for the constituents of the Listowel Municipal District. She will bring a lot of experience and be hard working for the people of Kerry.”

Cllr. M. Foley SECONDED the proposal. Cllr. A. Thornton and said that she has raised very important issues in the area she represents.

Cllr. C. Foley PROPOSED Cllr. R. Beasley as Leas Cathaoirleach

Cllr. D. Ferris SECONDED the proposal.

