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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF KILLARNEY HELD IN KILLARNEY SPORTS & LEISURE CENTRE, ON FRIDAY, 26 JUNE 2020

MIONTUAIRISCÍ AN CHÉAD CRUINIÚ BLIANTIÚIL DE CHEANTAR BARDASACH CHILL ÁIRNE THIONÓLADH I LÁR IONAD SPÓIRT IS FÓILLÍOCHTA CHILL ÁIRNE AR AN AOINE, 26 MEITHEAMH 2020

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

Cllr. B. Cronin

Cllr. M. Gleeson

Cllr. D. Grady

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae

Cllr. N. Kelleher

Cllr. M. Moloney

Cllr. N. O'Callaghan

In attendance/i láthair

Ms. A. McAllen

Mr. J. Ahern

Mr. P. Corkery

Ms. E. O'Donoghue

Mr. O. O'Shea

Ms. M. Galvin

MD Manager

SEE Killarney MD

Meetings Administrator

MD Officer

Press & Communications Officer

A/ASO Corporate Affairs

The meeting commenced at 1.30pm.

Cathaoirleach M. Gleeson took the Chair.

Cathaoirleach Gleeson requested that a Minute's silence would be held to honour Detective Garda Colm Horkan who recently lost his life in the line of duty and also to remember all of those who died as a result of the Coronavirus.

Cathaoirleach Gleeson proceeded to read the following into the record of the meeting.

"Bail ó Dhia oraibh: A chó-chomairleoirí, a Bainisteoir, a Oifigh Cheantair 's a Dhaoine Uaisle go léir. Fáiltím romhaibh go dtí ár gcruinniú bliaintiúil.

Is cinnte gur bliain fíor neamh-ghnáthach a bhí inti, idir stoirmeacha, báisteach ana-throm agus dár ndóigh an Covid 19.

Welcome colleagues, Manager, Municipal District Manager, Council staff and representatives of the Media.

We have all come through a most unusual and challenging year but we have survived and we are grateful.

At the outset I wish to sincerely thank Cllr Cronin for stepping into the breach while I was observing isolation protocol.

I thank you colleagues for your tolerance while I and maybe some others of us tried desperately to come to terms with WebEx and Zoom. Overall, there was acceptance, support and understanding. Táim fíor-bhuíoch daoibh. I am deeply grateful to you all.

At one of the very few functions that went ahead prior to the great shutdown, the opening of the Anam Centre, those of you who attended would have heard me make some strong comments before I began my few words of address. I firstly said, and I quote: "I express my deepest gratitude to the special people in the Town Hall who helped me survive the overall indifference to the role of Municipal District Chairperson/ Mayor." I reiterate that sentiment today. Thank you for your generosity of spirit, for your courtesy and your incredible commitment.

Last year at the AGM following my election I said that we are representing a very special town and Locality. I said that, because Killarney is widely known and hugely respected not just in Ireland but also far from home, that we as the elected representatives must work hard for its advancement but also be recognised and supported as the leaders.

I wish to tell you two brief happenings in my past life and I ask you to interpret them as you will:

1: Exactly 52 years ago I, with my UCD football team colleagues, visited some cities on the east coast of the United States. An Alumni of the College who was resident in New York and was obviously very well regarded arranged for us to visit the Mayor of the City, John Lindsay. The general Irish community were amazed and delighted that a team of college footballers were so hosted at City Hall because for Americans the Mayor is second only to the President of their country.

2: Some years ago, when I was Mayor of Killarney Town Council, 70 people from North Carolina came to stay. They were very eminent people, some Officials in the Pentagon etc. They wondered if the Mayor and his wife would call to say a few words of welcome on Sunday evening at 6.00 o'clock. We did so, said our few words and were asked if we would stay for something to eat. We accepted and they were overwhelmed and almost overcome that the Mayor of the "City," as they described our special place, was prepared to devote so

much time to them. I'm absolutely certain that those couple of hours spent by Kathleen and I have reaped a rich harvest for Killarney's tourist business. Not because of us but because of the Mayoral gesture.

The Mayor is the pre-eminent position for towns and cities in most of the countries from which we welcome visitors. Please keep that in mind.

This year in Killarney my wife was not even invited to the Saint Patrick's Day Parade and I wasn't asked about its possible cancellation or informed of the postponement. That is not how the position of Mayor should be treated.

I thank the Rathmore Committee for their courtesy and efficiency in the matter of their parade.

Tourism is our business and welcome is a large part of our daily definition or that was so. And yet we as a Municipal Council can't set out a Book of Condolences without the 'Say So' from Árus an Chontae.

Maybe it's because the entire structure is new to many but we need to very seriously re-examine how we in a prime tourist town and District manage not only our business but our public relations. Or maybe I should say how we are allowed to do our business or not allowed to do so! I am not saying this to criticise anyone and I am certainly not saying it for myself because I most likely will not again wear the Mayoral Chain. I'm saying it because Killarney Municipal District is very special place not just to us but to many all over the world.

To those who will follow as Mayors during this term, I can assure you that you will have my absolute support and deep respect as our Number One person. Municipal meetings should only be a very minor part of your important role. Insist on the primacy of the Municipal District Council and on your leadership of that Body.

I firmly believe that the time has come for each Municipal District to have its own Budget where we, the elected persons, determine how money is spent and where. Until that becomes a reality, we are only subsisting as minnows.

Killarney Municipal District Council is a great place with wonderfully committed people. We need to have the authority, the honesty and finance to be its leaders. If we fail, a high price will be paid for a long time to come. There are enough critics already. We are deeply challenged to restore Killarney to its rightful pedestal as a place of quality, welcome and superb service.

The Fine Gael and Labour Government with the tacit support of Fianna Fáil and possibly others did a dastardly deed when they stripped us of the right to legally use the term Mayor and have our own meaningful Budget. The allegedly sacred Principle of Subsidiarity has been desecrated and we are in a diminished place as a result. An area that sends tens of millions of Euro to the

central exchequer annually deserves respect and a reasonable degree of autonomy.

My plea must be heard or else we will continue to diminish and become increasingly irrelevant. That's not what we are about. That's not what we want and that most certainly is not what the greater Killarney Municipal District needs. We need the economic wherewithal, the political independence and freedom to do what is best for our towns, villages and countryside.

I want from the depths of my heart to say a huge thank you to the outdoor Council Staff for their magnificent work past and ongoing commitment especially during this time of Covid 19. Ladies and Gentlemen you are superb enhancers of our special place.

I thank you Manager for your time, energy and guidance. You have a huge role to play in the future of this Municipal Council. Kathleen said to thank you for your unfailing courtesy.

A very especial thank you to Máiréad Galvin our infallible guide and permanent Guardian Angel.

And so, we arrive alive and I hope optimistic at the end of a strange year where our country proved that we can, when we focus on what's important, perform superbly well.

I see a bright and prosperous future for our Municipal District where the District Council led by the Mayor, Councillors and great Officials will ensure a bright new future for a place famed in song and story, a place fully deserving of our full, focused and dedicated commitment.

I wish all of you and all the people that we collectively represent, health and happiness.

Guim rath agus séan oraibh go léir."

Cllr. B. Cronin congratulated and complimented Cathaoirleach Gleeson and his wife, Kathleen on his Term in Office and said it was a privilege to be his Leas-Chathaoirleach. He noted that the Cathaoirleach had carried out his duties with dignity and respect. He wished Cathaoirleach Gleeson well in the future.

Cllr. D. Grady thanked Cathaoirleach Gleeson for his term as Cathaoirleach and noted that he had always been honest and fair. He referred to the Cathaoirleach's speech and agreed that respect for the Mayoral Chain was very important.

Cllr. M. Moloney congratulated the Cathaoirleach on his past year and noted that he had been fair as Chair and gave all Members due time to speak. She agreed that respect for the Chair was important and expressed her regret at

how Cathaoirleach Gleeson was treated by the St. Patrick's Day Committee. She wished the Cathaoirleach and his wife, Kathleen the best for the future.

Cllr. N. O'Callaghan said he was proud of the Cathaoirleach during his term of office and noted how he had always handled himself with dignity and purpose and instilled in everyone a love for Killarney. He expressed his disappointment that the position of Cathaoirleach has not been treated with the respect it deserves. He said that the protocol was that when the Mayor of Kerry was wearing the Chain, no other Chain should be worn. A group of 80 - 90 people from Carolina re-visit Killarney every year as a result of their meeting with Cathaoirleach Gleeson as had been referred to in his speech. He hoped that the Municipal District office could work with Twinning Committees to promote Killarney. Cllr. O'Callaghan stated that the 7 Members had been elected by the public but felt that at times the Members are forgotten. Cllr. O'Callaghan congratulated the Cathaoirleach on his year and passed on his regards to his wife, Kathleen.

Cllr. N. Kelleher commended the Cathaoirleach on his year and noted that he had always carried himself with dignity and had respect for the purpose of debate and Councillors giving their opinion. He stated that the Cathaoirleach always spoke with dignity, purpose and persuasion. He agreed with the sentiments expressed by the Cathaoirleach in relation to the power and influence that the Members have in their own MD areas being very much constrained. Cllr. Kelleher concluded by wishing Cathaoirleach Gleeson and his wife, Kathleen health and happiness.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae complimented Cathaoirleach Gleeson as being the most eloquent contributor that she had ever seen in any Chamber. Cllr. Healy-Rae agreed that the power of Elected Members was being diminished. She noted that all the Members were elected and asked that in the final year of this Council, it would be only fair if one of the 3 remaining Councillors could hold the role of Cathaoirleach. Cllr. Healy-Rae noted that Cathaoirleach Gleeson always represented the area with a great deal of integrity and responsibility and always gave each Member a fair time to speak. Cllr. Healy-Rae wished the Cathaoirleach and his wife, Kathleen many happy and healthy years.

20.06.26.01 Election of Cathaoirleach

Cathaoirleach Gleeson thanked his colleagues. He recalled that in 2004 in one week he had 2 special privileges: the first was welcoming home Sam Maguire on the Monday night and the second that week was when the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese and her husband, Martin visited Killarney. She was the only person who took precedence over the Mayor. The Taoiseach, if present, would walk in behind the Mayor. This demonstrated the importance with which the position of Mayor was held.

The Cathaoirleach hoped that his successor would be in a position to serve uninterrupted for 12 months and hoped that there would not be a re-bound of Covid-19. Cathaoirleach Gleeson remembered former Councillor, PJ Cronin who was his colleague for a number of years and was a friend who had a deep commitment to his area. The Cathaoirleach said he was very proud to know him and was very sad when he passed away so suddenly. His son, Brendan has since served in Kerry County Council with enormous commitment which he inherited from his father.

Cllr. M. Gleeson Proposed that Cllr. B. Cronin be elected as Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. N. Kelleher Seconded the Proposal.

Cllr. D. Grady Proposed that Cllr. N. O'Callaghan be elected as Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae Seconded the Proposal.

Cllr. Grady stated that Cllr. O'Callaghan has been a Member of Killarney Town Council for two terms and held position of Mayor. Cllr. O'Callaghan is a businessman and a Killarney man. His father, Dermot served for many years in the Town Council. He noted that Cllr. O'Callaghan was an excellent Mayor and Councillor.

Mr. P. Corkery referred to Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2001 and noted that as two people had been nominated for position of Cathaoirleach, a vote would be taken.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Cllr. Cronin: Cllrs. Cronin, Gleeson, Kelleher, Moloney (4)

For Cllr. O'Callaghan: Cllrs. Grady, Healy-Rae, O'Callaghan (3)

Not Voting: None (0)

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, deemed Cllr. B. Cronin to be elected Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Killarney.

Cathaoirleach. B. Cronin took the Chair and thanked Cllr. M. Gleeson for Proposing him, Cllr. N. Kelleher for Seconding the Proposal and Cllr. M. Moloney for voting for him. He said he was deeply honoured and humbled to be given another opportunity as Cathaoirleach and it was a tremendous honour for his family. He said he would do his utmost to be fair and honourable and promote Killarney in the best possible fashion. He said he could discuss roads and services but there was a far more important situation facing Killarney Municipal District. He stated that as a result of Covid-19, this is a time of great

uncertainty and the MD faces a huge challenge. Everyone is under pressure and in particular, in this MD, it is the hospitality and retail sectors that are facing the biggest challenge in their history. A number of reports have confirmed that Kerry is worst hit because of its reliance on tourism. Killarney is a major tourist destination and has been badly affected. The Cathaoirleach said he was convinced that Killarney and its area has the expertise, knowledge, skill set, investment, dedication, ability and tourism product to rise to this challenge. Killarney has so many attributes in its favour such as beauty and a hospitality sector that can cater for anything because it was built on and developed and nurtured and grown. He extended an open invitation to any person that was considering taking a break in Ireland and asked that they come to Killarney and sample what it has to offer. This Local Authority will do everything possible to make the streets and footpaths as safe and comfortable for families to enjoy. The Cathaoirleach asked that people would shop, eat and socialise in Killarney and enjoy their stay and feel comfortable and welcomed. He stated that there had enough negativity over the past 4 months and it was now important that the town and Municipal District be portrayed as best as it can be. It is critically important for the business sector that the town be portrayed in the most positive light. He asked that the MD comes together to work in a unified force to assist in bringing town and MD area back to where it should be, i.e. the capital of tourism. Cathaoirleach Cronin stated that each Councillor present put their names on a ballot paper and the public decided that they would be their public representatives. The Elected Members are responsible and duty bound to run Killarney and are responsible to highlight issues to management and engineers.

In reference to St. Patrick's Day, Cathaoirleach Cronin said that the issues of the past will not be cause a problem going forward and outlined his commitment to rectifying that. He said that it was the responsibility of the Cathaoirleach to honour what the title stands for.

The Cathaoirleach stated he would be fair and honest with everyone as he had operated that way all his life. He requested the co-operation from the Members in this regard. The Cathaoirleach acknowledged the tremendous work of all frontline staff in the Municipal District. He wished to record the condolences of Killarney MD to families who have lost loved ones during this Pandemic. He said that people must learn to live safely with Covid. This in turn will assist and protect employers and the business sector. The Cathaoirleach confirmed he would work on this with Management.

Cllr. N. O'Callaghan congratulated Cathaoirleach Cronin and his family. He said the Cathaoirleach was honest and acknowledged that whilst differences of opinion do arise, they are left at the table. He said that he was disappointed that a discussion had to be had in relation to the role of the Chair. Decisions about Killarney should be discussed with the Mayor and Councillors first. Cllr. O'Callaghan wished Cathaoirleach Cronin the best of luck and offered his support to him.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae congratulated Cathaoirleach Cronin and noted it was a great honour and that the Cathaoirleach would respect the role. She said this was the most challenging time that we will ever encounter in this District.

Cllr. D. Grady offered his congratulations to Cathaoirleach Cronin and noted that he would be fair. He confirmed he would work closely with the Cathaoirleach. Cllr. Grady said he was disappointed at how the position of Cathaoirleach has been treated in the past 6 years but was certain that Cathaoirleach Cronin would remedy this.

Cllr. M. Moloney congratulated Cathaoirleach Cronin on his election and welcomed his son to the meeting and noted it was a great honour and privilege. Cllr. Moloney offered her full support to the Cathaoirleach in the coming year.

Cllr. N. Kelleher noted that Cathaoirleach Cronin was passionate for the people he represented. He stated that the MD area was a better place due to the passionate debate that often takes place in the Chamber and the Cathaoirleach had that in abundance. He stated that Cllr. Gleeson had set a high standard as Cathaoirleach and it would be a challenging year ahead but he was confident that with Cathaoirleach Cronin's leadership and with Management and the Members, the Municipal District would see its way through this crisis.

Cllr. M. Gleeson said that he was confident that Cathaoirleach Cronin would give his full commitment for the greater good of the community and that at times this may not always be appreciated. He noted that with the support of the MD Team that progress will be made to build a better world for everyone.

20.06.26.02 Election of Leas-Chathaoirleach

Cllr. B. Cronin PROPOSED that Cllr. M. Moloney be elected Leas-Chathaoirleach.

This Proposal was SECONDED by Cllr. N. Kelleher.

Cllr. N. O'Callaghan PROPOSED that Cllr. M. Healy-Rae be elected Leas-Chathaoirleach.

This Proposal was SECONDED by Cllr. D. Grady.

Mr. P. Corkery referred to Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2001 and noted that as two people had been nominated for position of Leas-Chathaoirleach, a vote would be taken.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For Cllr. Moloney: Cllrs. Cronin, Gleeson, Kelleher, Moloney (4)

For Cllr. O'Callaghan: Cllrs. Grady, Healy-Rae, O'Callaghan (3)

Not Voting: None (0)

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, deemed Cllr. M. Molony to be elected Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Killarney.

Ms. A. McAllen, on behalf of herself and the Municipal District Team, congratulated the outgoing Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Gleeson for his and Mrs. Gleeson's kind comments. Ms. McAllen looked forward to working with Cathaoirleach B. Cronin and noted this would be their second time working together. She noted it would be a challenging year for Killarney Municipal District and the County but would look forward to achieving high standards for the town of Killarney.

20.06.26.03 Any Other business

Ms. A. McAllen advised that Killarney MD Office would re-open on Monday, 29th June taking into account public health advice. Social distance will need to be maintained and the matter will be kept under review. Ms. McAllen advised that alternative means to carry out business will be promoted in an effort to prevent unnecessary journeys to the Town Hall. Examples of such include the use of online facilities and making payments via the telephone. She confirmed that the Cash Office will be opened and that some changes will be implemented in regard to queue management and keeping same to a minimum. Motor Taxation customers will be put in contact with offices in Tralee or advised of online facility.

Ms. McAllen referred to the Mobility Plan for Killarney and reiterated that these were temporary measures. She advised that bollards had been ordered as there was a need to create distance. Temporary bollards and cones are in place to ensure that when the town re-opens, the streets are mapped out as outlined in the Mobility Plan. These bollards are a temporary version until the new bollards are delivered.

Mr. J. Ahern confirmed that the new bollards are expected to arrive in a week's time.

Cllr. N. O'Callaghan stated he was not in favour of another bollard being provided in Killarney as he did not like them.

Ms. McAllen said there has to be segregation between the footpaths and the carriageway to protect the pedestrians but stated that it would be planned in

aesthetic way and confirmed that the new bollards are the most visually appealing ones available.

Ms. E. O'Donoghue advised that planters would be added to break up the bollards.

Ms. McAllen advised that she had reviewed the proposal to provide free parking in the Rock Road Car Park and agreed to offer the first 2 hours of parking free which would enable people who work in town to park there, thus freeing up space in the town. This matter will be kept under review.

Cllr. N. Kelleher stated that 2 hours was not sufficient and this car park should be free for 10 weeks. In relation to the temporary measures, Cllr. Kelleher asked that nothing would be done until the new bollards were delivered. He asked that the MD Office would call to business premises as the implementation measures are being rolled out.

Cllr. M. Moloney referred to car parking and said it should be provided free in either the Glebe or New Street car parks for a couple of hours in the morning. In referring to the bollards, Cllr. Moloney stated that planters would be preferable as dividers.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae asked that the provision of free parking be re-examined as it could be promoted and advertised. In relation to the Mobility Plan, Cllr. Healy-Rae said that she had received many calls from business people stating they lost customers as there was no place to pull in opposite their premises. The traffic cones have created an upset. In an effort to eliminate much of the frustration, Cllr. Healy-Rae asked that when measures are being implemented outside of a business premises, that the owners be advised of this.

In response to a query from Cllr. D. Grady, Ms. McAllen stated that hand sanitiser would be provided in the Town Hall and advised that screens were also in place.

Cllr. D. Grady referred to the public consultation recently undertaken by Ms. E. O'Donoghue and noted that many people were against the measures that would be implemented on High Street. These people are the rate payers.

Cathaoirleach B. Cronin, in referring to the provision of traffic cones, asked the MD Office to think ahead to ascertain how the business sector would react to same. He agreed that the MD was duty bound to implement the Mobility Plan in an effort to make people feel confident and safe and noted that these were temporary measures.

Ms. A. McAllen confirmed that the cones had been put in place to make the town safe and would be in place until the high quality bollards arrived. She confirmed that if there any further developments, the MD Team will firstly contact the Members and businesses where any adjustments are planned. In

relation to free parking in Rock Road Car Park, Ms. McAllen referred to the issue of budget exposure that affects the entire County, which the Chief Executive recently raised with the Members, particularly in relation to car park income. She agreed to keep Rock Road under review.

In response to a query from Cllr. N. Kelleher, Ms. E. O'Donoghue confirmed that she had spoken with a number of resident permit holders and a letter had also been drafted to issue to them. A number of permit holders have agreed to park in High Street.

20.06.26.05 Agree date for next Killarney Municipal District Meeting

It was unanimously agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 8th July at 12.00pm in Killarney Sports & Leisure Centre. It was noted that in compliance with public health guidelines, the meeting would have a time constraint of 2 hours.

Cathaoirleach B. Cronin asked for the co-operation of the Members in adhering to the 2 hour time and to deal with their business in an efficient manner.

The Meeting concluded at 14.55.

Cathaoirleach of Killarney M.D.

Mr. P. Corkery
Meetings Administrator