

**MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED JULY MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY
COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2021 IN THE AURA LEISURE
CENTRE, LETTERKENNY**

C/151/21 MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs J Murray (Cathaoirleach), L Blaney, K Bradley, C Brogan, P Canning, T Conaghan, D Coyle, G Crawford, N Crossan, T Crossan, A Doherty, G Doherty, L Doherty, R Donaghey, M Farren, M T Gallagher, M Harley, D M Kelly, N Kennedy, M C Mac Giolla Easbuig, F Mc Brearty Jnr, M Mc Bride, M Mc Clafferty, M McDermott, I Mc Garvey, N Mc Garvey, P Mc Gowan, M McMahan, G Mc Monagle, A Molloy, M Naughton, and J S Ó Fearraigh.

Online

Cllrs J Kavanagh, N Jordan, B Sweeny

C/152/21 OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

John McLaughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty A/Director of Housing, Corporate and Culture / Meetings Administrator, Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services, Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services, Brendan O'Donnell, A/Director of Roads & Transportation, Michael Mc Garvey, A/Director Water & Environment, Róise Ní Laifeartaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

Online

Richard Gibson, Head of Finance.

**C/153/21 LEGAL ADVICE ON THE EMERGENCY MOTION AND REPORT IN
RELATION TO THE PURCHASE OF 5 HOUSES IN BUNCRANA**

Cllr Mc Monagle proposed, seconded by Cllr Gallagher that the meeting which had commenced in committee move to public session so that members could pay tribute to the late Cllr Bernard Mc Guinness. This was unanimously agreed.

C/154/21 TRIBUTE TO THE LATE CLLR BERNARD MC GUINNESS

The Cathaoirleach referred to the sad passing of Cllr Bernard Mc Guinness who had dutifully served the people of Inishowen for over 42 years. He was, he said, firstly an Inishowen man and then a Donegal man but always the consummate politician, who at all times respected the political differences of his opponents. His death, he said, was a tragic loss for his wife Jan, his daughters Maria and Jean together with his sons Johnny, Ross and Gregory and the extended Mc Guinness family circle. Bernard, he said, had been a man of his word who had worked tirelessly all his life for the people of his beloved Inishowen, and someone who had at all times strived to wear the county jersey. He asked that a formal letter of condolence be issued to the Mc Guinness family.

Cllr Harley acknowledged the personal loss felt by the Fine Gael party whom, he said, had lost a party stalwart and someone who had been the lynchpin of the Fine Gael organisation in North Inishowen for many years.

He extended sympathy to Bernard's wife Jan and the Mc Guinness family on their tragic loss. In light of this and as an acknowledgement of the service given by Bernard to public life in Donegal, he proposed that the meeting be adjourned.

Cllr Brogan seconded the proposal. He said that he had served with the late Cllr Mc Guinness on both the North West Region Cross Border Group and the Regional Health Forum West (previously the North Western Health Board) where his vast experience and wealth of knowledge had been invaluable. His death, he advised, was a great loss for Donegal County Council and his wise counsel would be sorely missed. It was appropriate, he said, that members had an opportunity to show their respect for the late Cllr Mc Guinness.

Cllr Gallagher acknowledged the role that Cllr McGuinness had played in securing and delivering the All Party agreement within Donegal County Council. She acknowledged the benefits that this had brought to the Council as a whole.

Cllr Donaghey informed the meeting that the late Cllr Mc Guinness had first been elected to Donegal County Council in 1979 and had been returned at every single election since then. He had, she confirmed, served as Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council and on a number of occasions had served as Cathaoirleach of the Inishowen Municipal District. It was noted that over the years, he had served with distinction on numerous committees including the North West Region Cross-border Group, ERNACT, Inishowen Partnership, the Regional Health Forum West (formerly North Western Health Board) and a range of tourism, fishery and agricultural committees. Bernard, she said, was more than just a politician, he was a publican, a farmer, a shopkeeper, a bee keeper and a dedicated family man who had embraced and adapted well to the technology associated with online meetings. It was fitting, she said that an adjournment took place as a mark of respect to a man who had dedicated so much of his life to serving the people of Donegal.

Cllr Mac Giolla Easbuig extended his condolences and sympathised with the Fine Gael and Inishowen members whom, he noted, had lost a trusted and loyal friend. He said that the late Cllr Mc Guinness on being elected chair of the Housing & Corporate Strategic Policy Committee had been most accommodating in ensuring that the relevant Irish language translation rights were put in place. He said that despite their different ideologies, he had great respect for the late Cllr Mc Guinness and his political acumen.

Cllr Mc Gowan said that Cllr Mc Guinness was passionate about politics and despite the political rivalries that existed was able to engage proactively with the members of all political groupings and had set a high example for all to follow.

Cllr N Crossan paid tribute to his skills as a raconteur and the fact that he could tell the same story again and again, yet always made it sound new and exciting. His work rate, he advised, was second to none and could never be equalled.

Cllr Kelly extended condolences to the Fine Gael members and to the staff in the Inishowen Municipal District.

Cllr Mc Dermott said that he wished to be associated with the comments made by the previous speakers and that Bernard's legacy was to be found all over North Inishowen and in the many local projects which he had been so proud to have been associated with. There had been, he said, many good days in Inishowen and on those occasions politics had always been left to the one side. He would, he confirmed, be sorely missed.

Cllr Coyle said that his work ethic had been second to none and that he had been privileged to serve on the Housing & Corporate Strategic Policy Committee with him.

Cllr Mc Bride paying tribute said that Cllr Mc Guinness's first concern had always been for the people of Inishowen and Donegal and that he had made this a priority all of his political career.

Cllr Canning said that it had been a pleasure to have been in his company and recalled a particular trip undertaken by Cllr Mc Guinness and number of fellow councillors.

Cllr Sweeny alluded to the fact that he was a great story teller and a man of considerable experience and knowledge whose common sense was prolific. He welcomed the fact that Cllr Mc Guinness had witnessed the restoration of the Fisheries Committee, a topic which was very close to his heart.

Cllr Mc Monagle said that Cllr Mc Guinness had been actively involved with Council's Mica Redress Committee and had progressed the issue with great energy and enthusiasm over the past months.

Cllr Crawford acknowledged the role that Bernard had played in securing ambulance services in Inishowen and the lifelong commitment given to this initiative.

Cllr Blaney extended sympathy to the Mc Guinness family and the wider Fine Gael family circle acknowledging his political expertise and his passion for the people of Donegal.

Cllr Mc Clafferty noted that Cllr Mc Guinness had at all times been a man of his word and always readily available to give advice when needed.

Cllr Kavanagh said that Bernard was a unique individual, someone who was always full of mischief with an infectious sense of humour who loved life and all the various aspects of political life. He was, he said, a good servant to the people of Inishowen, the people of Donegal and the Fine Gael party and that his interest in county and local politics had never waned. He was, he added, a remarkable man who would be sorely missed within the Fine Gael Party.

Cllr Farren said that he was an excellent public representative and had been more than helpful to him when elected to the Council 12 years ago. It had been an honour, he advised, to serve with a man of such great character.

Cllr G Doherty said that it was a testament to the trust in which he was held that Cllr Mc Guinness had retained his seat on the Council for over 42 years.

He was, he advised, a dedicated public representative who knew what the people wanted and had at all times strived to do his best for the people who had elected him.

Cllr Naughton said it was fitting that the meeting be adjourned in light of the service given by Cllr Mc Guinness to Donegal County Council over the years.

Cllr N Mc Garvey alluded to the fact that Cllr Mc Guinness had a great interest in rural Ireland and the fishing and agriculture industries in particular. He was a man, she said, who understood what the smaller projects meant to rural communities.

Cllr Bradley said that he was an excellent politician with a wealth of experience which he gladly shared with all his colleagues.

The Chief Executive on behalf of the management and staff of Donegal County Council extended sympathy to Cllr McGuinness's wife Jan and the extended McGuinness family circle. The tributes paid today, he said, were testament to the respect in which the late Cllr Mc Guinness had been held. He was, he contended, a committed individual who had his own style and way of doing things and whose presence in the room always commanded attention. A professional and astute politician he took part in various delegations and meetings with Government Ministers and officials and was conscious at all times of the need to deliver for the people of Donegal. He alluded also to his life-long work with the North West Region Cross Border Group

The Cathaoirleach noted that this was the first meeting of the Council to be streamed live. He asked that a recording of same together with a letter of condolence be forwarded to the Mc Guinness family on behalf of the members and staff of Donegal County Council.

The meeting was thus adjourned until the 6th October, 2021.