

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY  
COUNCIL HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2023 IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD**

C/203/23

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs L. Blaney, Cathaoirleach, K. Bradley, C. Brogan, P. Canning, T. Conaghan, D. Coyle, G. Crawford, N. Crossan, L. Doherty, R. Donaghey, M. Farren, M. Harley, N. Jordan, J. Kavanagh, D. M. Kelly, N. Kennedy, M. Mc Bride, M. Mc Clafferty, M. McDermott, N. Mc Garvey, P. Mc Garvey, P. Mc Gowan, J. Mc Guinness, G. Mc Monagle, J. Murray, M. Naughton, J. O'Donnell, and J. S O' Fearraigh and B Sweeny.  
*Online:* T. Crossan, G. Doherty, M. C. Mac Giolla Easbuig, M. T. Gallagher, M. Mc Mahon, and A. Molloy.

C/204/23

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE**

John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive, Eamonn Brown, A/Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services/Meetings Administrator, Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services, Tanya Kee, A/Head of Finance, Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services, Bryan Cannon, A/Director of Roads & Transportation, Michael Mc Garvey, Director of Water & Environment, Frances Friel, Communications Officer Seán O' Daimhin, Rannóg na Gaeltachta, Róise Ní Laifeartaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer.

C/205/23

**OUTGOING CATHAOIRLEACH'S ADDRESS**

The outgoing Cathaoirleach, Cllr Blaney thanked all his colleagues for putting their trust in him, and those in his own grouping who had supported his nomination in what had been a busy and productive year. He paid tribute to the outgoing Leas – Chathaoirleach, Cllr Naughton for his help and assistance, together with the Municipal District Chairs all of whom had shared the workload.

He thanked the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team for their support and guidance over the past year. It was, he noted, a year of many highs including the awarding of the Freedom of the County to Paul Mc Ginley, the holding of the Legends Tournament in Downings, and the Famine Memorial Commemoration in Milford to name a few.

He alluded also to the tragic events that had taken place in Creeslough, and the sad loss of Private Sean Rooney in December 2022.

Continuing, he said, that it was imperative that the Diaspora were valued and acknowledged and advised of the need to support events which fostered this appreciation.

He extended thanks to all the staff in Donegal County Council who had helped during his time in office.

Cllr Blaney thanked his partner, Noelle, his daughter Caoimhe, his mother Margaret and all his family for their help and support over the past year.

Members from the various groupings thanked the outgoing Cathaoirleach for his excellent work, which had been carried out with honour and diligence. Tribute was paid to his stewardship of the meetings and the fairness and impartiality with which he had treated his colleagues. There was acknowledgement also of his work with the Diaspora and the way he had represented the county abroad.

The Chief Executive on behalf of the Senior Management Team and staff of Donegal County Council congratulated him on the competent manner in which he had carried out his duties, including his able representation at a wide range of meetings and events. He had, he said, treated his colleagues and the staff with fairness and respect, all of which contributed to his success as Cathaoirleach.

C/206/23

### **ELECTION OF THE CATHAOIRLEACH**

Cllr Blaney at this juncture invited nominations for the office of Cathaoirleach.

Cllr Kavanagh proposed that Cllr Martin Harley serve as Cathaoirleach for the coming year 2023-2024. He said that Cllr Harley had first been elected to Donegal County Council in 2009 and had served on two occasions as Cathaoirleach of the Lifford/Stranorlar Municipal District. It was noted that he had also served as Chairman of the Donegal Education & Training Board in 2018-2019, as past Chairman of the Balor Theatre and was currently Treasurer of the Donegal Vintners Association. Cllr Harley, he said, was extremely active in his local community and would bring considerable experience to the position, having acted as leader of his own grouping since 2019. He was also someone, he added, who worked well across the political divide.

He said that today was a proud day for the Harley family but also tinged with sadness that Cllr Harley's daughter the late Kym Harley and his former Director of Elections the late Mary Doherty were no longer with us.

It was, he said, an honour and a privilege to propose Cllr Harley for the position of Cathaoirleach.

The proposal was jointly seconded by Cllrs Mc Guinness and Cllr Sweeny who advised that Cllr Harley was a most suitable candidate for the role and that as an accomplished business and family man with a longstanding political career he would bring honour and respect to the role.

As there were no other proposals Cllr Martin Harley was elected Cathaoirleach for 2023 -2024

Cllr Blaney handed over the Chain of Office and wished Cllr Harley well in the year ahead.

Cllr Harley took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C/207/23

**ELECTION OF THE LEAS-CATHAOIRLEACH**

Cllr Harley proceeded to invite nominations for the office of Leas-Cathaoirleach

Cllr Murray proposed, seconded by Cllr O' Fearraigh the position of Leas-Cathaoirleach be taken by Cllr Gerry Mc Monagle.

It was noted that Cllr Mc Monagle had previously served as Cathaoirleach and as Chair of the Regional Health Forum West and was at present Chair of the Donegal County Council Joint Policing Committee. All of these it was acknowledged were positions of responsibility making him a suitable candidate for the role.

As there were other proposals Cllr Mc Monagle was deemed elected Leas-Cathaoirleach for 2023-2024.

Cllr Naughton handed over the Chain of Office and wished Cllr Mc Monagle well in the year ahead.

He thanked his proposer and seconder and assured Cllr Harley of his full support.

C/208/23

**CATHAOIRLEACH'S ADDRESS**

Members congratulated Cllr Harley on his election and pledged their support for the coming year.

The Chief Executive assured Cllr Harley that he would have the full support and commitment of the staff and management of Donegal County Council. He welcomed Cllr Harley's wife Denise and children, Natalie, Hannah and Gavyn to the meeting.

There was acknowledgement also that Deputy Joe Mc Hugh, former Deputy Dinny Mc Ginley and former Cllr John Boyle were in attendance.

Concluding the Chief Executive said that he was also looking forward to working with the Leas-Cathaoirleach Cllr Gerry Mc Monagle.

Cllr Harley addressed the meeting and thanked all who were in attendance. He thanked Cllrs Blaney and Naughton for their excellent work over the past year. He was, he said looking forward to working with Cllr Mc Monagle and highlighted the fact that this Council as a power sharing body was about people and not individuals.

He welcomed Mr Liam Mc Dermott, Donegal Association in Dublin, Mr Dave Gallagher together with Deputy Joe Mc Hugh, former Deputy Dinny Mc Ginley and former Cllr John Boyle all of whose presence in the chamber was warmly welcomed.

The Cathaoirleach said that he was looking forward to working with the Chief Executive and all the staff of Donegal County Council.

This, he stated, was a very special day and his election as first citizen a great honour. It was also, he added, a day that was tinged with sadness and he continued by paying tribute to his late daughter Kym, who had been one of his most passionate supporters. It was also a day, he said in which to remember the late Mary Doherty his former Director of Elections who had passed away last year.

He said that his priorities for the coming year would be:

- To ensure that the Mica issue was kept on the agenda and that efforts continued to work towards a definitive settlement.
- To work with the Health Service Executive on the promotion and prioritisation of Men's Health and Mental Health issues.
- The promotion of educational apprenticeships in conjunction with the Donegal Education & Training Board.
- Work to enhance and promote the tourism product which is an all-important asset for Donegal.

He thanked his proposer and seconders for putting their trust in him. Concluding he paid tribute to the late Cllr Bernard Mc Guinness and said it was his ambition over the coming year to make him proud.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Cathaoirleach

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Dated