

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA nGALL

Oifig Riarthóir na
gCruinnithe
Aras an Chontae
LEIFEAR
21 Meitheamh, 2022

FÓGRA CRUINNITHE

DO GACH BHALL DEN CHOMHAIRLE

A Chara

Beidh Cruinniú Blaintúil de Chomhairle Contae Dhún na nGall ar siúl Dé Luain, 27u Meitheamh 2022, ag **3.00 in Ionad Fóillíochta an Aura, Salach an Ghráin, Leitir Ceanainn.**

Ta clár an chruinnithe leis seo.

Mise, le meas

Pádraig Ó Laifearthaigh
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Office of Meetings Administrator
County House
Lifford
21st June, 2022

NOTICE OF MEETING

TO EACH MEMBER OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Dear Councillor

The Annual General Meeting of Donegal County Council will be held on Monday 27th June 2022, at **3.00pm in the Aura Leisure Centre, Sallaghagrane, Letterkenny.**

The agenda for the meeting is attached.

Yours sincerely

Patsy Lafferty
Meetings Administrator

AGENDA

1. Election of Cathaoirleach.
2. Election of Leas - Cathaoirleach.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY
COUNCIL HELD ON 27th JUNE 2022 IN THE AURA LEISURE CENTRE
LETTERKENNY**

C/242/22

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs L. Blaney, Cathaoirleach, 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, N. Jordan, D. M. Kelly, N. Kennedy, F. Mc Brearty Jnr, M. Mc Bride, M. Mc Clafferty, M. McDermott, I. McGarvey, N. Mc Garvey, P. Mc Gowan, M. Mc Mahon, G. Mc Monagle, A. Molloy, J. Murray, M. Naughton, J. O'Donnell, and J. S O' Fearraigh. Mr Charlie Mc Conalogue, T.D, Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Senator Niall Blaney.

Online: J. Kavanagh, J. Mc Guinness.

C/243/22

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Micheál C Mac Giolla Easbuig and Cllr Barry Sweeny who were unable to attend the meeting.

C/244/22

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services/Meetings Administrator, Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services, R Gibson, Head of Finance, Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services, Bryan Cannon, A/Director of Roads & Transportation, Michael Mc Garvey, A/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/245/22

OUTGOING CATHAOIRLEACH'S ADDRESS

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the families and friends of Cllr Liam Blaney and Cllr Michéal Naughton, members of the public, and all who were taking part online to the meeting.

It was a day he said for the incoming Cathaoirleach. He paid tribute to the members of his own party who had nominated him to the position in 2021 and to all involved in the power sharing agreement which had allowed this to happen. The support provided by the agreement had been of enormous benefit to him in his role as Cathaoirleach, he added, in what had been a challenging but productive year.

At this juncture he called on Cllr Mc Brearty to desist from interrupting the meeting and to respect what was a serious democratic forum.

Cllr Murray thanked members for the honour bestowed on him in June 2021 and said that it had been a great privilege to serve the people of Donegal as their first citizen. Thanks, was also extended to the Chief Executive, Senior Management Team, and the staff of Donegal County Council for their assistance over the past year.

He alluded to a number of the issues that had been prioritised in 2021-to 2022 term.

It was noted that every effort had been made to make mica the number 1 priority issue in 2021/2022. There had been considerable discussion on the matter, he said, and the Council had been united in calling for 100% redress. He had, he said, together with the Leas-Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mc Dermott and the Mica Campaign Group met with the Housing Agency Department officials and Minister Darragh O' Brien's Special Advisor to put forward the case for fair and equitable mica redress.

He said that he had been immensely proud to speak at the Protest Meeting in Dublin in October 2021 and for the opportunity to show that the campaign had the support of all the people of Donegal. He paid tribute to Paddy Diver and Michael Doherty who he said had energised the campaign. It was imperative, he added, that all deleterious materials, together with the foundations were included in the new scheme, together with the removal of the cap and the inclusion of all affected structures.

He thanked the Leas-Cathaoirleach, Cllr Mc Dermott for his assistance, friendship, and support over the past year and acknowledged the fact that an excellent cross-party working relationship had existed. He said that Cllr McDermott had undertaken the role with enthusiasm and had been a great support in what had been a team effort for the good of the County.

It had been a great honour to represent the people of Donegal, he said, both at home and abroad and an enlightening and powerful experience to see just how strong community spirit was in the county. He alluded also to the power of the Diaspora and the excellent work being done to attract investment to Donegal.

Highlights, he noted, included:

- The opportunity to showcase Donegal during the Irish Legends Tour which had attracted a global audience. This, he added, fitted in nicely with the announcement that the R&A 129th Amateur Golf Championship was due to be held in Ballyliffin Golf Club in 2024.
- The hosting of a public meeting in Bunrana which set out the Council's vision for the town
- The securing of €20 million funding under the RRDF Fund for the development of Bunrana.
- The opportunity to present the initial concept for the new Leisure in Bunrana was warmly welcomed.
- The awarding of civic honours to all those involved in the restoration of Swan Park.

Concluding he thanked all who had supported him in any way over the year which had been tougher than expected. He was, he said, particularly

grateful for the support and strength that he had received from across the political divide.

He thanked his family and in particular his wife Sabrina for their unfailing support. He offered his congratulations to the incoming Cathaoirleach and assured him of his support going forward.

Members from the various political groupings paid tribute to Cllr Murray acknowledging the excellent and capable manner, in which he had represented the Council both at home and abroad over the past year. It was noted that despite the various challenges that it had been a good year and one in which significant capital investment had come into the county. They alluded to the pride and dignity that he had brought to the role and wished him well in the future.

Cllr N Crossan in his capacity as Chair of the Association of Local Government noted that there had been occasions in the past year where members had been the victims of bullying. He asked that every effort be made to ensure the adequate protections were in place for the Elected Members.

Cllr Mc Dermott said that he had been honoured to serve as Leas-Cathaoirleach. He acknowledged that there had been a close working relationship with the Cathaoirleach's office and said that he was very appreciative of the fact that he had been given the opportunity to attend a number of events locally and to represent the Cathaoirleach at a number of events county-wide. He referred to the earlier comments made by the Cathaoirleach on the mica issue and the fact that considerable work had yet to be done.

Cllr Mc Brearty voiced strong concern at the manner in which Section 31 had been used against him. He said that 21 days from now the Chief Executive, the Director of Service and the 32 members who supported his suspension and sanction would be afforded the opportunity of dealing with his defence and counter action claim.

The Chief Executive thanked Cllr Murray for the integrity and professionalism that he had brought to the role and complimented him on his ability to listen to others in an unassuming way. He acknowledged the deep sense of cross-party engagement that had existed under his leadership.

Tribute was also paid to Cllr Mc Dermott and the excellent working relationship that had existed between himself and the Cathaoirleach.

C/246/22

ELECTION OF THE CATHAOIRLEACH

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

Cllr Coyle proposed that Cllr Liam Blaney serve as Cathaoirleach for the coming year 2022-2023. He welcomed Cllr Blaney's mother Margaret, his daughter Caoimhe, his partner Noelle and the extended Blaney family circle to the meeting. The Blaney name he said was synonymous with politics for almost a century, not only in Donegal, but in the Dáil, Seanad and in the European Parliament.

He said that he had been co-opted in 2003 to Donegal County Council and re-elected at each subsequent local election. As someone who worked hard for his constituents and represented a rural area of the county, he said that he was well placed to articulate the challenges that existed.

Cllr Blaney, he stated, had over the years been involved with a range of projects which had benefitted the local community. These ranged from the successful introduction of the Swilly Ferry Service to the development of the car park at Portsalon, the regeneration of Rathmullan and Ramelton and access to the Great Arch in Fanad.

He alluded to the fact that he had served on numerous Donegal County Council committees over the years. It was noted that he had also represented Donegal County Council on the Donegal Education & Training Board and the Health Service Executive Committees. Cllr Blaney, he contended, was a no-nonsense person with a steely determination and a sense of fair play which would serve him well as Cathaoirleach.

Cllr I Mc Garvey seconded the proposal and said that the year ahead would be an all-consuming one, but that Cllr Blaney's political acumen prepared him well for the challenges that lay ahead.

Cllr Mc Brearty called for a recorded vote. It was established however that there were no other proposals and thus Cllr Blaney was unanimously elected Cathaoirleach for 2022-2023.

Cllr Murray handed over the Chain of Office. He wished Cllr Blaney well and offered his support and assistance in the year ahead.

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

C/247/22

ELECTION OF THE LEAS-CATHAOIRLEACH

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

Cllr Canning proposed, seconded by Cllr Molloy that the position of Leas-Cathaoirleach be taken by Cllr Michéal Naughton.

As there were other proposals Cllr Naughton was thus deemed elected Leas-Cathaoirleach for 2022-2023.

CATHAOIRLEACH'S ADDRESS

Cllr Blaney thanked his proposer and seconder and all who had supported his nomination. He was, he said, honoured and humbled to be elected and would serve the people of Donegal to the best of his ability.

He alluded to the fact that he came from a family which was proud of its republican background which stretched back to the foundation of the state. This support would, he stated, be immensely important over the coming year. It was his intention, he said, as Cathaoirleach to facilitate the members of Donegal County Council in delivering for the people that they served. He said that it was important that Council employees were supported, and, on that issue, he would hold the Executive to account.

He alluded to the fact that some staff struggled with issues of vulnerability in the workplace and stressed the importance of ensuring that the workforce were able to carry out their duties in a safe manner and in an environment which was fit for purpose. He thus called on the Chief Executive to write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage requesting that a charter be drawn up with the aim of ensuring that council employees are treated with respect and dignity in the workplace. He outlined the following priorities for his year in office:

- Further realisation of the untapped tourism potential that exists in the county.
- Increased tourism facilities to cater for the increased tourist footfall associate with the success of the Wild Atlantic Way.
- Concentrated focus on the regeneration of town centres.
- Prioritisation of the Rural Regeneration Development Fund Programme in Milford.
- To ensure that the opportunities that exist nationally in terms of social and voluntary housing are all availed of.
- Mica issue needs to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion and repairs and rebuilding needs to commence as soon as possible to alleviate the stress and frustration felt by homeowners and to provide much needed hope to those living in crumbling homes.

Cllr Naughton welcomed Minister Mc Conalogue and Senator Blaney to the meeting and said that he would strive to do his best for the people of Donegal and promised to ensure that Donegal was kept to the forefront at local and national level. This, he advised, could be done with co-operation and a dedicated team effort. There were challenges ahead, he said, in terms of Mica, the development of infrastructure and problems associated with the massive increase in the cost of living.

He acknowledged the support of his wife Annette, and children Erin and Cian Michéal and the people of South Donegal who had placed their trust in him as an elected member.

A vote of sympathy was then extended to the family of the late Fr. Brian Quinn, PP, Church of the Irish Martyrs, Ballyraine, Letterkenny.

Members congratulated Cllrs Blaney and Naughton on their election. The Chief Executive acknowledged the attendance of Minister Mc Conalogue and Senator Blaney at the meeting. He assured both members that they would have the full support of the executive and staff in Donegal County Council. Regarding the request for a charter, he would, he said, have this progressed through the Corporate Policy Group.

This concluded the business of the meeting.