

MINUTES OF AGM OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LETTERKENNY-MILFORD MEETING, HELD IN AURA LEISURE CENTRE, LETTERKENNY, ON 22 JUNE, 2021 AT 2:00 P.M.

MDL347/21 MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr. Liam Blaney
Cllr. Kevin Bradley
Cllr. Ciaran Brogan
Cllr. Donal Coyle
Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh
Cllr. Donal Kelly
Cllr. Michael Mc Bride
Cllr. Ian McGarvey
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle

MDL348/21 MEMBERS ONLINE

Cllr. John O'Donnell

MDL349/21 OFFICIALS PRESENT

Liam Ward, Director of Service
Patricia McIntyre, Area Manager, Housing & Corporate Services
Bernadine McGee, Staff Officer, Housing & Corporate Services
David McIlwaine, S.E.E. / Area Manager, Roads & Transportation
Francis Conaghan, Development Officer

The meeting was chaired by Cllr. Donal Coyle

The outgoing Mayor, Cllr. Donal Coyle welcomed the Members, Officials and Media to the Meeting and gave a special welcome to the Kavanagh family and supporters and those who were watching online.

Cllr. Coyle said the year had been a challenging one for everybody and he wished to reflect on those who had passed away because of Covid, it has been a sad time for families and loved ones who could not grieve in the normal way. It has been a tough time on young people, the elderly and on businesses. We are coming out of a long 15 months and everyone has shown great resilience and the majority have done what they were asked but we are not over the line yet. Everyone still needs to be careful to avoid further lockdowns. He noted that it is great to be back face to face after all the Zoom meetings. He hopes this is the start of holding future meetings and workshops face to face.

Cllr. Coyle referred to the experience of the introduction of Brexit in the past year which came into effect at the end of last year and is still evolving. There are many challenges ahead in particular for businesses and there is a lot of uncertainty around protocols.

Another issue which has affected a lot of families is Mica. Cllr. Coyle said he hopes that the Government will deliver a fair scheme so that owners are not out of pocket. It is a daunting situation to be in and is not fair on the owners when it is not of their making. A number of houses have to be demolished and others have to be restored. Owners are in turmoil with their houses cracking up around them. An equitable scheme is needed which is fair to everybody.

Cllr. Coyle acknowledged the close contact with the Chamber of Commerce, businesses rely on them and it is an important relationship. He commended the work of the Tidy Towns Committee; it has been a challenging time for all groups. It is great to see life back in the town and sports facilities etc. The half marathon and 10k went ahead although virtually. Everyone has adapted very well.

Cllr. Coyle noted that it has not been all bad news as there has been a lot of good news in the last few months. He commended Minister Charlie McConalogue on work he has done to get money into the County in particular the €18.1 million for the town centre regeneration. The Direct Provision Centre in the town has been welcomed by the majority and it is great to see the integration of the children in the schools and the adults in voluntary organisations. This has been a plus for the town which is more cosmopolitan than a lot of towns. He acknowledged the retention of Blue flags etc. for beaches and coastal facilities and money received for piers in the M.D. Money has also been received for tourism projects and through Active Travel grants. The opening of the Joe Bonner Road has taken place and the turning of the sod for the N56 four lane project. This all provides opportunities for businesses. There has been progress on the Ten T project and the Bonagee link is on stream and hopefully we can soon cross the river at his location. The status of Gaeltacht Service Town has recently been received for Letterkenny. He welcomed the ongoing work on the Letterkenny Town Plan which is coming to conclusion. There have been a number of workshops since February and the work is continuing.

Cllr. Coyle thanked the Media for their role which is important in delivering messages to the general public. He acknowledged the Staff in the Public Services Centre and their work which is second to none. They have got through the year and got on with business. He included Engineers, Supervisors, and workmen/women in this.

Cllr. Coyle thanked Liam Ward for his steady influence and acknowledged the sound advice given by him. He acknowledged Patricia McIntyre noting that she is the glue that keeps everything together in the PSC and is at the front of everything. He thanked his Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Liam Blaney, acknowledging that he didn't get the opportunity to wear the chain but thanked him for his help and advice and availability to sit in when required at meetings. He hoped that the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor would get more opportunities to represent the M.D. in the year ahead. He thanked the Members for their cooperation and respect for the Chair. It has not been easy with meetings online but acknowledged that this M.D. has to be hardest working one in the County doing their best for all the people in the M.D.

Cllr. Coyle referred to the special celebration this year of the 1500 anniversary of St. Colmcille. He was delighted to accept an invite from the subcommittee to attend the unveiling of a stone on the feast day. St. Colmcille was a shining light not just spiritually but also in a temporal realm. He had a get up and go attitude and that is a leaf we should all take. Challenges present opportunities and we need to work on them. Resilience has been shown all year, the shoulder was put to the wheel and we have done what needed to be done.

Cllr. Coyle noted that a lot of work has been done but there is still a lot more to do. He is happy with the work done and cooperation received from all the Members. It has been a honour and privilege to serve as Mayor for the past 12 months.

The Members in turn paid tribute to Cllr. Coyle in his role as Mayor and the manner in which he conducted the meetings.

Liam Ward said that on behalf of the Staff he wished to acknowledge Cllr. Coyle's year as Mayor and thanked him for the kind words. He has shown courtesy to the Staff in what has been a challenging year. He has steered the M.D. through all the meetings. Liam acknowledged his role in the migrant resettlement programme which has been a positive for the area and his role in obtaining URDF funding. The funding for the Market Square regeneration has been a significant commitment. The Minister of State, Jack Chambers, recently launched the Gaeltacht Plan in Letterkenny. Liam added that it has been a pleasure working with Cllr. Coyle and he acknowledged the role of Cllr. Blaney as Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. Coyle thanked Liam for his kind words.

MDL350/21 ELECTION OF MEARA/MAYOR

Cllr. Michael McBride proposed Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh as Meara/Mayor. Cllr. Ciaran Brogan seconded Cllr. McBride's proposal. No other proposals were presented and Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh was elected as Meara/Mayor.

Cllr. Kavanagh thanked everyone and noted that this is his second time in the Chair. He thanked Cllr. McBride and Cllr. Brogan for proposing and seconding him as Mayor. He acknowledged the Trojan work of the outgoing Mayor who had handled all the meetings well. He thanked the Council Staff at all levels including road maintenance staff, call centre staff, Patricia McIntyre, IT Staff, Liam Ward and the Chief Executive. He thanked the Media for their coverage of what happens at M.D. level as it is important to get the message out to the public.

Cllr. Kavanagh thanked his wife, Roisin, and his family for the support which allows him to take on this role. He congratulated Cllr. Gerry McMonagle who is taking on the role of Deputy Mayor. He hopes that in the next 12 months everyone will be able to get out to events and that businesses will be back fully functional. Everyone should support local businesses and shop local. There are exciting times ahead with URDF funding, large projects such as the Market Square, Old Courthouse, Church Lane Quarter, Lower Main Street etc. He acknowledged funding that had helped improvements in Rathmullan and Ramelton. He acknowledged the community groups for work they do and projects which have progressed.

Cllr. Kavanagh noted that the biggest challenge in the year ahead is Mica with the task of supporting families and putting pressure on the Government. Also Council tenants or those buying their homes from the Council need to be supported as well as people who have built second homes in the County supporting local communities. As a member of the Redress Committee he looks forward to working on this.

He would like to see a way of remembering those who have lost their lives to Covid and also to acknowledge the efforts of frontline workers during the pandemic. He would like to see progress on derelict sites and vacant houses. Also an initiative is needed around the importance of parks to the local communities and he acknowledged the work of David Donnelly and his team. The Casual Trading Byelaws are to be reviewed and he hopes this will realise the potential of this. He would like to see the play park in the Town Park fully functional again. He looks forward to receiving a delegation from Rudolstadt in October and he commended the work which has been done to keep this connection alive. He looks forward to developing the connection with West Dunbartonshire Council in Clydebank. He would like to see the most being made of remote working opportunities. He acknowledged the work of the Planning team on the Letterkenny Town Plan as this will provide a road map for the town.

Cllr. Kavanagh wished to dedicate the year ahead to his late brother, Páidín, who he lost in April. He had been a great support and influence to him.

The Members in turn congratulated Cllr. Kavanagh on his election as Mayor and wished him every success in the year ahead.

Liam Ward said he was delighted on behalf of the Staff to congratulate Cllr. Kavanagh on his election. He wished to concur with everything that the Members had said. There is a strong programme of work ahead for the next 12 months. He looks forward to working alongside him. The Regeneration Strategy and the Town Plan will be completed during Cllr. Kavanagh's time in office.

Cllr. Kavanagh advised that there was a request for a workshop on the Regeneration Strategy to be held with suggested dates of Friday 2nd July at 2pm or Monday 5th July at 9.30am. Friday 2nd July did not suit a couple of the

Members and there may be a SPC on Monday 5th July. Liam Ward agreed to check this out and get back to the Members.

MDL351/21 ELECTION OF LEAS MHEARA/DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr. Ciaran Brogan proposed Cllr. Gerry McMonagle as Leas Mheara/Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. Michael McBride seconded Cllr. Brogan's proposal. No other proposals were presented and Cllr. Gerry McMonagle was elected as Leas-Mheara/Deputy Mayor.

The Members in turn congratulated Cllr. McMonagle on his election to the position of Leas-Mheara/Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. McMonagle thanked Cllr. Brogan and Cllr. McBride for proposing and seconding him. He thanked everyone for their comments and best wishes and looks forward to working with Cllr. Kavanagh in the year ahead.

Liam Ward on his own behalf and that of the staff of Municipal District congratulated Cllr. McMonagle.

Cllr. Kavanagh thanked his family, brothers and friends for being there and also those who were watching online. He thanked those involved in setting up the room for the meeting today. He advised that the Workshop on Friday 25 June would now commence at 11.00 am instead of 10.00 am.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Mayor

Meetings Administrator