

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF CORK CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY, 26th JUNE, 2006.

- PRESENT** An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir D. Clune in the chair and subsequently An tArdmhéara, Comhairleoir M. Ahern in the chair
- NORTH EAST** Comhairleoirí M. Quill, T. Brosnan, J. Kelleher, D. Murphy, A. Spillane.
- NORTH CENTRAL** Comhairleoirí M. Barry, C. Clancy, G. O’Flynn, D. Wallace.
- NORTH WEST** Comhairleoirí J. O’Brien, D. McCarthy, M. O’Connell, T. Fitzgerald.
- SOUTH EAST** Comhairleoirí D. Counihan, C. O’Leary, D. O’Flynn, T. Shannon.
- SOUTH CENTRAL** Comhairleoirí C. O’Connell, C. Lynch, S. Martin, T. O’Driscoll, D. Cregan.
- SOUTH WEST** Comhairleoirí J. Buttimer, F. Dennehy, M. Shields, B. Bermingham.
- APOLOGIES** Comhairleoirí P. Gosch, C. Burke, J. Corr.
- ALSO PRESENT** Mr. J. Gavin, City Manager.
Mr. D. O’Mahony, Director of Services, Corporate Affairs.
Mr. J. Kennelly, Director of Services, Recreation, Amenity & Culture.
Ms. N. Mulcahy, A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs.
Ms. J. Gazely, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Affairs.
Ms. P. Hourihan Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Affairs.
Ms. C. Foley, A/Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Affairs.

An tArdmhéara recited the opening prayer.

1. **ELECTION OF AN tARDMHÉARA**

An tArdmhéara D. Clune addressed the meeting:-

This time last year I stood before you at the beginning of my term as Lord Mayor, aware of the history of those who held the position before me and anticipating the year which lay ahead of me not so much with a plan but certainly with a theme of how I envisaged the year progressing. The first piece of advice I will give to my colleague and incoming Lord Mayor, Cllr. Michael Ahern is that however ready you think you are, nothing prepares you for the maelstrom of events, openings,

dedications and representations you will make as Lord Mayor. It has certainly been one of the most exhausting and rewarding years of my political life.

It was a privilege for me as Lord Mayor to be elected to my role in the middle of one of the most exciting years in our City's history. By the end of the year over one million people, seven times the City's population, attended official Cork 2005 events as local and international audiences turned out to experience the Cork 2005 programme. Visitors from across the globe converged on our City to experience not just the events in the Cork 2005 schedule but to experience first hand the unique welcome that Cork gives to its visitors.

There were so many highlights and everybody will have their own particular favourite event or best memory. For me the most memorable events have been those that involved celebrations on our streets. The Opening Ceremony, St. Patrick's Day Festival, Ocean to the City Race, Céilí Mór, the Merchant of Venice, the wonderful Solas Festival. It was great to see the City providing such entertainment for young and old alike and for families and communities.

The legacy from 2005 will be very important and I am very pleased that Cork City Council has increased its grant under the arts programme by 50% this year. Cork City Council has also given a specific financial commitment to particular projects that aim to ensure the legacy of 2005 lives on.

2005 also saw Cork City Council recognised for the excellence of the service it provides for the public. During the year the City Council won six prestigious National awards. It won the top award as Local Authority of the Year under the award scheme organised by the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland. At the same event Cork City Council won the Partnership with Business Award for its "Connect Cork" Broadband initiative and Cork 2005 won in the Arts Category. Cork City Council's website www.corkcity.ie won Best Public Sector Website - Local category in the Golden Spider Irish Internet Awards. Cork City Council's Lifetime Lab was also short-listed in the same category.

Less than a month ago we conferred the Freedom of the City of Cork on the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese. I am reminded of her inauguration speech on at the beginning of her second term, the particular phrase she used in describing her theme:

"Community cannot be created by government and it doesn't happen by coincidence. We make it happen ourselves by unselfishly committing our talents, our money and that precious commodity, time, to the service of each other"

Cork's community and voluntary organisations can be proud that the work they do, much of it unacknowledged, has improved the fabric of City life beyond measure and if by hosting or addressing some of their events during the year I

have brought a little more attention to their work, then I can feel proud that I have achieved something on their behalf. Earlier this year I presided over the launch of a Social Inclusion DVD produced by Cork City Council's Community and Enterprise Directorate. Social inclusion is rooted in the historical nature of the Council's work. Cork City Council has a long history of social inclusion practices, even though they were never named as such. In the past four years, with the inception of the Social Inclusion Unit, greater funding and economic resources, and new National Policies, Cork City Council has challenged itself to begin a process of innovation in relation to social inclusion, which looks at long-term answers to the challenges it faces. Long-term solutions take time and effort: there are no quick fixes in this business. However, the small steps taken have required extra amounts of efforts from Cork City Council staff.

If the success or prosperity of a City can be measured by the number of cranes in its skyline, then Cork is in the middle of one of the most unprecedented periods of growth in its history. Within a few short months the majority of Cork City Council staff will be in place in our marvellous new civic offices alongside us here this evening. The Kinsale Road Roundabout will be fully operational, eliminating one of the most persistent bottlenecks in our city's traffic. The next major challenge, indeed opportunity, for the City will be the continued development of the Docklands area. The Development of the Docklands is one of the core elements contained in the [Cork Area Strategic Plan](#) (C.A.S.P.). Through high quality contemporary design and a varied mix of uses which will reflect the inherent quality of the Docklands setting, the aim is that a new Urban Quarter will grow, uniting the Docks area in the City Centre in a seamless weave of top class planning and design to give Cork a waterfront compatible to the best on view anywhere in the world.

Under the plan, the area will be re-vitalized and effectively reborn. It will be people and amenity centered with as many as 6,000 new homes, and will be a highly attractive location for commercial uses with potential for some 6 million sq.ft. of non-residential space for offices, educational institutions, retail outlets as well as culture and leisure facilities on the North and South Docks. There will be new parks, walking routes for pedestrians, moorings for pleasure crafts, a boating marina and a recreational environment throughout the scheme, reflecting the high standards of the entire Project.

Regarding my year in office, I want to thank the secretarial staff, Lorraine and Rachel and more recently Catherine and Tanya for putting up with me over the past year. A thank you also to Jordan Bracken, the Lord Mayor's driver, for the endless hours of waiting. To all of Denis O' Mahony's team at Corporate Affairs, including especially the portering staff, I pay a special tribute. We are often unfavorably compared to the private sector. Well, I can tell you that I have never come across a more capable, dedicated and accommodating bunch of people in my life in the public or private sector. Thank you all.

I also want to pay tribute to the entire staff of the Council. Often in difficult circumstances, they continue to deliver, day in day out, 365 days of the year. I am proud of you all and the dedication that you represent.

I want to thank the Gardaí, the Armed Forces and the Navy, the various Sporting organisations, the local radio stations, the press and media, especially the Examiner and Echo, for their support during the year. I also want to acknowledge the immense contribution to the City made by the Cork Chamber of Commerce (now re-branded as Cork Chamber), to its retired Chief Executive who is still incredibly active in the business community Michael Geary, and to thank also the members of the Cork Business Association.

My final word of thanks goes to Joe Gavin, City Manager. I was supported by his good advice and counsel on more than one occasion and I want to thank him on a personal note for that support. It has been a privilege and an honour to work so closely with Joe over the past year and I look forward to working with him over the remaining term of the Council.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as your Lord Mayor. I wish Cllr Michael Ahern well for the coming year and look forward to continuing to serve the people of Cork as a councillor in the coming year.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh

An tArdmhéara D. Clune requested nominations for the office of Ardmhéara:

Comhairleoir J. Kelleher proposed and Comhairleoir D. Cregan seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir M. Ahern.

Comhairleoir C. O' Leary proposed and Comhairleoir C. O'Connell seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir C. O' Connell.

A vote was called for where there appeared as follows:-

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR M. AHERN:

Comhairleoirí M. Quill, T. Brosnan, J. Kelleher, D. Murphy, C. Clancy, G. O'Flynn, D. Wallace, D. McCarthy, M. O' Connell, T. Fitzgerald, D. Clune, D. Counihan, D. O' Flynn, T. Shannon, C. Lynch, S. Martin, T. O' Driscoll, D. Cregan, J. Buttimer, F. Dennehy, M. Shields, B. Bermingham, M. Ahern. (23)

FOR COMHAIRLEOIR C. O'CONNELL:

Comhairleoirí C. O' Leary, C. O'Connell. (2)

ABSTAINED: Comhairleoirí A. Spillane, J. O'Brien. (2)

An tArdmhéara D. Clune declared Comhairleoir M. Ahern elected to the office of Ardmhéara.

An tArdmhéara M. Ahern then addressed An Chomhairle:

In recent times Ireland has become one of the best places in the world in which to live. This city is one of the best places to live in Ireland. We are lucky to be the beneficiaries of this time.

A year in the life of a city is a very short time. In a year many things change. Many things start and many things finish but very few major projects start and finish within the same year.

The city keeps changing and if there is a theme to the things that I hope will progress during this year the best word to describe the theme would be expansion.

Expansion of the docklands
 Expansion of the city hall
 Expansion of employment opportunities
 Expansion of our roads network
 Expansion of our communications and marketing
 Expansion of our city boundary.
 Expansion of our litter free areas
 Expansion of our airport
 Expansion of ideas for city centre area
 Expansion of ideas for our western suburbs
 Expo 2010

I will talk very briefly about all of these. These may be the things that will dominate the mayoralty for the next year.

I would hope to lead the Council to progress the expansion of the Cork City Boundary. We need this. We need this to have sufficient land for social and affordable housing. We need it because we do not have sufficient land for industrial and commercial expansion. We need it because it would be fair. We in the city are, more and more, supplying the services for the quickly increasing numbers that are living outside of the city. Services provided by the city such as libraries, parks, swimming pools, sports facilities and fire services. We in the City Council pay for them but have no rate base in these areas to raise funds for the services that they use.

The last expansion of our city was in 1965. That was opposed despite the fact that two of the boundaries at that time were the Gaol cross and Denroche's cross. They look ridiculous now. The current expansion will also be opposed but the current boundaries will look just as ridiculous forty years from now.

Expansion of the docklands has gathered considerable momentum in the past few years with the completion of some studies to bring about its regeneration and development. I have no doubt that the expansion there, will, over perhaps a long number of years, transform Cork city and change it very much for the better.

I would hope, during the year, to focus on one aspect of the Docklands reports to date. I would like that these reports be analysed and very clear statements extracted to:

1. Identify what the next level of “leading edge, international employment is likely to be.

and

2. Determine what we need to do to generate that type of employment in the docklands area.

It would I believe be a missed opportunity if we do not use this last remaining land bank to set new employment in the city at a different level, driven upwards by such things as fourth level education and the research that it generates.

We will shortly have the completed new civic offices available to us and it is envisaged that all of the Council offices that are now scattered in many locations will be relocated in the expanded city hall. The savings on rent together with the sale of some buildings that we currently own are expected to pay for this consolidation of central services into one location.

The expansion of our airport is now complete and it will, I believe have a very positive impact on the life of our city. The funding of this expansion has been the subject of much discussion in the recent past and as Lord Mayor I am certainly prepared to join in the work to seek a suitable solution for Cork and its citizens.

The Airport expansion is one of the reasons why our roads network needs to be upgraded as many would agree that access from the airport to the city has been very slow for a number of years now. The grade separated interchange at the Kinsale Road roundabout will be in place in the coming year and it will, I believe, lead to a huge improvement in the traffic flow.

Preliminary work on similar grade separations at the Sarsfield Road and Bandon Road roundabouts has already begun and I look forward to progress on these also. I cannot leave the subject of road-works without mentioning traffic in the Bishopstown area. Everyone is agreed that it would be greatly improved if the proposed link road from the Curraheen dog track to CIT/Rossa Avenue was built. I will, in so far as I can, lobby for funds for this road during my year as Lord Mayor.

Most recent Lord Mayors have included the problem of litter in their first speech. I am no different. A clean city is a most desirable thing. I believe that we have come a long way, in this regard in the past ten years.

I am proposing that we designate one day in the next year, perhaps in April/May as "spring cleaning day". I would envisage that all communities would, on that day, become involved in giving just one hour or two to making their area a cleaner place.

I would love to involve the schools in this. It would perhaps have a double impact in that it should leave our city cleaner than it has ever been and perhaps focus the minds of young and old on the need to keep it clean.

The city centre, that part of the city which sits between the two channels of the Lee and known as the island is the heart of what we know as Cork. Here our totality converges to an area that we all love and have used throughout our lives to shop and sometimes maybe to strut and sample the spirit of our combined living experience.

This area is very important to each and every one of us and it is for that reason that I will be requesting that a local area plan be prepared for this. I feel that we should set down how we want it to develop. City centres generally are under attack from suburban shopping centres and I feel that a local area plan would concentrate the minds of all of us as to how to keep it vibrant and attractive to our city population. A local area plan would invite submissions from all our citizens and interested groups and would therefore give everyone who wishes an opportunity to input to the plan.

As a member for the south west ward I hope to welcome early in my mayoral year a local area plan for the Bishopstown. This will hopefully set out the future and stymie the excesses generated by leaving the planning to developers only.

I know that we have great pride in our city. I believe that those who come here and experience the city agree that this pride is not misplaced. Marketing the city will encourage more people to come here and in this regard the European City of Culture in the year 2005 was the greatest marketing event this city has ever experienced. But this city cannot stand still and bask in the glory of that year. We have to keep up the momentum of improving the city and communicating to the rest of the world what a great city we have.

Expo 2010 is our next chance to make a major impact internationally and planning of this will be taken to another level in the coming year.

Despite the progress of our city in recent years I am very much aware that many of our citizens are excluded from the fruits of our progress. We have many who, for a variety of reasons, live very difficult lives. We must always be aware that

hardship exists and use our increased wealth to generate programmes that will help to alleviate the social problems of 2006.

This was a great city long before we in this chamber arrived on the scene and it will survive as a great city long after we are gone.

I hope that my year in office will help to keep the momentum towards expansion of all that is good.

Is iontach an cathair ata againne agus ag deire an bhlian seo cughainn ta suil agam go mbeidh se beaganain nios fearr na mar a bhfuil se anois.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

2. **ELECTION OF LEAS ARDMHÉARA**

Nominations were requested for office of Leas Ardmhéara.

Comhairleoir C. Clancy proposed and Comhairleoir S. Martin seconded the nomination of Comhairleoir M. O'Connell.

As no further persons were nominated An tArdmhéara declared Comhairleoir M. O'Connell to be elected Leas Ardmhéara.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**ARDMHÉARA
CATHAOIRLEACH**