

The Cathaoirleach welcomed all present in the public gallery to the meeting. It was an honour serve as Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council over the past twelve months. During the year I attended functions all over the county and indeed the country. At many events I experienced first hand the support that Kerry County Council provides to communities and what it means to local communities when the Cathaoirleach attends their event. At presentations and awards I have met with people that have benefitted from the work of the Local Enterprise Office and who have gained confidence and experience to progress their businesses. The highlight of the year was the visit to the US during which I saw the importance of travelling abroad to seek opportunities for the county and meeting with many influential diaspora who are interested in delivering for the county.

The Cathaoirleach thanked his wife and family for their support during the year. He also thanked the Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen for his assistance during the year. He thanked the Chief Executive, Management and all Council staff for their support and assistance during his term as Cathaoirleach. The Cathaoirleach thanked members for affording him the opportunity to serve as Cathaoirleach for the past 12 months. He wished the incoming Cathaoirleach every success.

All members commended the Cathaoirleach on an excellent year in office during which he represented the county with dignity and respect at home and abroad. They wished him well in his role as Cathaoirleach of Killarney Municipal District for the 2018-2019 term.

On behalf of management and staff the Chief Executive thanked the Cathaoirleach for his commitment during his term of office in a year which saw large work programmes and the Development Contribution Scheme put in place. He had an exceptional year and represented the county with distinction.

18.06.25.01 Election of Cathaoirleach

On behalf of his colleagues Cllr. J.J. Culloty PROPOSED Cllr. N. Foley for the position of Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council. Cllr. Foley was elected to Tralee Town Council in 1994 and to Kerry County Council in 2004. She has the capability to lead the county over the next 12 months and it is an honour and privilege to propose her for Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. M. O'Shea SECONDED this proposal.

As there were no other proposals Cllr. Sheahan declared Cllr. N. Foley elected Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council for 2018-2019.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. N. Foley took the Chair and read the following statement into the record of the meeting.

“A Dhaoíne uailse go léir is onóir mhór domsa a bheith tofa mar Chathaoirleach ar Chomhairle Contae Chiarra, agus mar Mhéara Chiarraí.

Ba mhaith liom ar dtús mo bhúiochas a ghabháil le Comhaltaí na Comhairle Contae as a gcuid tachaíochta inniu, agus as an deis a thabhairt dom oibriú ar son muintir Chiarraí sa bhliain atá amach roimháinn

Chief Executive, fellow Councillors, Directors of Service, staff of Kerry County Council, members of the press, family and friends.

It is both an honour and a privilege for me to have been elected Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council and Mayor of Kerry today. I am humbled by the confidence expressed in me by you my colleagues in supporting my nomination for this role and I thank each one of you most sincerely. To be Major of Kerry and first citizen of the County is, without doubt, the single greatest honour of my political career to date and one which I will work assiduously to both deserve and reflect positively over the coming year.

At this point I would like to express my sincere thanks to the outgoing Cathaoirleach and Mayor Cllr. John Sheahan for his stewardship and leadership of the Council over this past year. John has been an impeccable Chairperson, fair and impartial with an innate generosity and graciousness that brought so much to the role. He has represented us both at home and abroad with distinction and brought both honour and integrity to the role of Mayor of Kerry. Thank you, John. I would also like to acknowledge the role of Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen as Deputy Mayor. Patrick was a willing and able support to John throughout the year and I would like to thank him for his service. Go raibh maith agat, Patrick.

I would like very specially to welcome all those in the public gallery today. I welcome in particular family and friends who have joined me for this special occasion. My sister (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) and her husband (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) and family, my sister (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) and husband (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) and family and my brother (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) and his wife (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) and family. I also welcome my uncle and God Father (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) and his wife (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*). A particularly warm welcome to my mother (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*). The matriarch of us all she is a huge support to me and indeed advocate on my behalf. The wisest of owls she is possessed of the sharpest political brain of anyone I know. I am blessed to call her my mother and indeed my mentor and today's celebrations are all the more enriched and ennobled by her presence here. To my husband (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*) a big thank you. I would not be taking on this role without his wisdom, good will and support. He stands not just beside me but behind me and before me in all that I do. He is a tireless and enthusiastic

champion of all that I endeavour to achieve. I am forever grateful for his unstinting and unwavering support.

I would like to make mention too of the one person who is not here today and that is my Dad, (*Name withheld for data protection purposes. A paper copy of the unedited minutes is available on request*). As a family we carry the pain of his passing every day. He was in every sense our guiding light, a pivotal and central presence in all our lives. Although a National politician representing the constituency of North Kerry in Dáil Éireann for a long, long number of years those who knew him best knew that a part of his heart always belonged to this Local Authority. It was a source of immense pride to him that he served as Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council on two occasions and it is a matter of some pride to me that now some twenty-five years since he last held that role I now succeed him in that same capacity today. I remember him with pride, gratitude and affection this afternoon and I have no doubt he is on my shoulder as he is every day, the only difference is that shy, retiring smile of his is just that little bit broader today.

I am very conscious that the position of Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council and Mayor of Kerry is a role which relatively few people, particularly women, have held since Kerry County Council was first established in 1899. In fact, I am only the 4th woman to hold this position in the 120 year history of this Local Authority. How fitting then that as this year 2018 marks one hundred years of Irish women's suffrage a woman should hold the position of first citizen of this County. I am honoured to be that woman and accept the honour in the name of the thousands of women whose contribution to the rich tapestry of Irish history is immense, yet oftentimes, confined to the shadows, forgotten, or worse again, airbrushed altogether from historical records. This is not unique to Ireland, in fact, I believe, it was the English writer Virginia Woolf who once remarked that "for the most of history, anonymous was a woman". In 2018, in this part of the world, at least, we have an opportunity to right that injustice and readjust somewhat the lens through which we view our history. Irish women have, in the past, and continue today, to make both an invaluable incalculable contribution to the unfolding story that is Ireland. Today I remember them, honour them and celebrate them.

"I am Kerry like my mother before me
and my mother's mother and her man
I am Kerry and proud of my name."

Magical lines from the pen of the great Kerry poet Sigerson Clifford. This County has a quality of life and a quality of place that is both inspiring and unique. The human history of our County is dramatic and rich with both glory and defeat in equal measure. Kerry is a majestic County, one rich in culture, Community, Sport, Politics and business. As the premier tourism County in the Country we wear our status lightly but with immense and immeasurable pride. Notwithstanding our great successes we are not without our challenges Chief amongst which is our peripherality both in terms of geography and often in terms of Government investment levels. And so, truth be told, we in Kerry have always known and have had to know the value of self-reliance, the need to stand on our own two feet, make the best of what we have/and indeed what we don't have/ and compensate for it with energy, enthusiasm and entrepreneurial spirit. Consequently, fostered from an

early age Kerry men and women have an innate sense of focus, determination, self-awareness and indeed self confidence

In fact, I believe, it was the late great John B. Keane who said “A Kerryman with an inferiority complex is one who believes he is just as good as everyone else” And although John B.’s remarks are testament to his deliciously wicked sense of humour there is an underlying truth to the words. Experience has taught us here in the Kingdom that we must be confident and capable in marking our own success and carving out our own niche in the world. And so here in Kerry supported by the initiative and leadership of Kerry County Council there thrives a climate that encourages community engagement and nurtures entrepreneurial spirit and enterprising endeavour.

It is no surprise then that the Kerry Business Brand is known worldwide. Our County is host to some of the best known international business names like Liebherr, Fexco and Kerry Group to name but a few. The Kerry Tourism Brand is renowned across the globe with top international attractions like the Lakes of Killarney, The Dingle Peninsula, The Ring of Kerry and the International Rose of Tralee Festival. The County is also a hub of local enterprise and business activity with hundreds of small and medium enterprises.

One in five students in Kerry study business and entrepreneurship – this is more, by a long distance, than anywhere else in Ireland. In this regard, it is a huge blessing to us that we are home to a first class IT offering opportunities in Business, Tourism, Engineering, Construction, Science and Computing. This Local Authority also plays a pivotal role in promoting business and economic development in this County. The appointment of an economic Development Officer on the County underpins the Councils commitment to Business Development and expansion in the County. As Mayor I will seek to grow and enhance our economic and business role and further develop critical linkages with the Institute of Technology Tralee, The Kerry Technology Park and indeed grow our local, National and international business portfolio in the County.

Roads and Infrastructure are of course, essential to the development of the county and I hope that over the next year we see continued progress particularly in relation to access routes, both land and air into the County. As Cathaoirleach, I will do all that I can to lobby central government for increased resources and to work with our Oireachtas and European representatives on funding streams for infrastructure across the Board.

The delivery of the Councils €62 million housing programme is also a priority. Apart from the construction and purchase of more homes for those on the waiting list, I would like to see much more investment in grant supports for those requiring essential repairs to their homes. Sometimes a small amount of money can go a long way in making someone’s home and indeed daily life more comfortable particularly if they are elderly or if they have mobility issues.

Throughout my term as Mayor I will seek to advance the issues that are most critical to the advancement of our County and most pertinent to the comfort and quality of life of our citizens. I will endeavour to support all initiatives that best promote the Economic Development of the County. And I will particularly seek to shine a light on outstanding efforts of communities and community activists the

length and breadth of County Kerry who are working tirelessly day in day out to best serve and shape this Kingdom we call home.

In conclusion, to draw again on the wisdom of John B. Keane he tells us to be born in Kerry is both a “gift” and “an awesome responsibility”. I believe to be Mayor of Kerry it is even more so. I graciously accept the gift and with absolute humility embrace both the opportunity and awesome responsibility of being Mayor of Kerry. And in the words of Sigerson Clifford

For always I am Kerry
And proud of my name”

All members congratulated the Cathaoirleach on her election. It is a very proud day for her and her family. They wished her every success for the coming year.

On behalf of management and staff the Chief Executive congratulated the Cathaoirleach and her family on her election. She assured her of the full support and commitment of staff during her term as Cathaoirleach.

17.06.25.02 Election of Leas Cathaoirleach

Cllr. N. Kelleher PROPOSED Cllr. J.J. Culloty for the position of Leas Cathaoirleach. Cllr. Culloty was co-opted to Kerry County Council in 2011, was re-elected in 2014 and has served as Cathaoirleach of Killarney Municipal District.

Cllr. J. Moloney SECONDED this proposal.

The Cathaoirleach declared Cllr. J.J. Culloty elected Leas Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council and she congratulated him on his election.

The meeting concluded at 12.55 pm.

Brenda Conway
Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council