

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Offaly County Council

Held on 16 June 2025 at 3.30pm, in Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road,
Tullamore and via Teams

The Meetings Administrator carried out a roll call to confirm attendance.

Present

Cllr. Audrey Hennessy Kennedy, Cathaoirleach

Bryant, Ollie	Masterson, Aoife
Clendennen, Eleanor	McDonnell, Fergus
Cribbin, Noel	Moran, Frank
Egan, Hugh	Murray, Claire (SF)
Feighery, Neil	Murray, Shane
Fitzpatrick, Eddie	Murray-Smale, Claire (FF)
Harvey, Declan	O'Brien, Sean
Leahy, John	Ormond, Peter
Maher, Sean	Quinn, Liam

Apologies

None

Officials in Attendance

Ms. AM. Delaney, Chief Executive; Ms. C. Gleeson, A/D.O.F.; Ms. A. Dillon, D.O.S.; Mr. B. Lennon, A/D.O.S.; Mr. P. McLoughlin, D.O.S.; Mr. A. Murray D.O.S.; Mr. E. Fennell, S.E.O. Meetings Administrator; Ms. AM. Kelly, Administrative Officer; Ms. E. Sutton, C.O.

Cathaoirleach Address

Cllr. A. Hennessy Kennedy, Cathaoirleach, opened the Annual General Meeting by thanking the Members for their cooperation and support over the past six months. She stated that it had been an honour to serve as Cathaoirleach, and she acknowledged the commitment of the Members, and their dedication to serving County Offaly.

She extended her thanks to the Chief Executive, Ms. AM. Delaney; the Directors of Service; past and present Meetings Administrators, and all Council staff for their help and assistance. She also thanked Cllr. O. Bryant for his support as Leas Cathaoirleach, describing him as a true professional, and wished him continued success. She also acknowledged her family's support throughout.

Cllr. S. O'Brien thanked Cathaoirleach Cllr. A. Hennessy Kennedy for her leadership over a successful six-month term. He acknowledged the significance of her stepping into the role following the election of Deputy Tony McCormack to the Dáil.

Cllr. J. Leahy joined with Cllr. O'Brien in thanking Cathaoirleach Cllr. A. Hennessy Kennedy for the professionalism and confidence she demonstrated in representing the County, both nationally and internationally. He reflected on his own experience upon first being elected to the Council, noting that it takes time to adjust to the role, particularly when taking on the additional responsibilities of Cathaoirleach. He also acknowledged and congratulated Cllr. O. Bryant for his contribution in representing the County in his capacity as Leas Chathaoirleach.

The members joined with Cllr. J. Leahy in thanking the Cathaoirleach and Leas Chathaoirleach for their work and professionalism over the year.

1. Election of Cathaoirleach

The outgoing Cathaoirleach, Cllr. A. Hennessy Kennedy invited proposals for the election of Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council.

Cllr. P. Ormond proposed Cllr. John Leahy for the position of Cathaoirleach, highlighting his strong commitment to community work, energy, and his dedication as a councillor. He noted Cllr. Leahy's involvement as a community activist and his longstanding association with local GAA clubs. He also acknowledged his leadership as Chairperson of the Kilcormac Development Association. He highlighted the role he has played in securing grants as a Councillor and supporting fundraising efforts. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. S. O'Brien, noting Cllr. Leahy's deep roots in the community and his reputation as a dedicated Councillor.

Cllr. S. Maher proposed Cllr. Clare Murray for the position of Cathaoirleach, highlighting the importance of championing female representation in leadership roles. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. A. Masterson, who noted that it was time to support women and that Cllr. Murray's appointment would bring valuable perspective, particularly as she represents one of the more disadvantaged areas of Offaly.

As two nominees had been proposed for the position of Cathaoirleach, the Meetings Administrator called for a vote, the results of which are as follows:

A vote was called on the nomination of Cllr. Claire Murray for the role of Cathaoirleach as proposed by Cllr. S. Maher and seconded by Cllr. A. Masterson.

In favour: Cllrs S. Maher, A. Masterson, C. Murray. (Three Votes)

Against: Cllrs O. Bryant, E. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, H. Egan, N. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, D. Harvey, A. Hennessy Kennedy, J. Leahy, F. McDonnell, F. Moran, C. Murray-Smale, S. Murray, S. O'Brien, P. Ormond, L. Quinn. (Sixteen Votes)

Abstain: None

As the nomination was defeated, a vote was called on the nomination of Cllr. John Leahy for the role of Cathaoirleach as proposed by Cllr. P. Ormond and seconded by Cllr. S. O'Brien.

In favour: Cllrs O. Bryant, E. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, H. Egan, N. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, D. Harvey, A. Hennessy Kennedy, J. Leahy, F. McDonnell, F. Moran, C. Murray-Smale, S. Murray, S. O'Brien, P. Ormond, L. Quinn. (Sixteen Votes)

Against: Cllrs S. Maher, A. Masterson, C. Murray. (Three votes)

Abstain: None

As the nomination was successful, the Cathaoirleach Cllr. A. Hennessy Kennedy deemed Cllr. John Leahy to be elected as the new Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council. The Chain of Office was then passed over and Cllr. J. Leahy assumed the position of Cathaoirleach. He commenced his role by thanking his colleagues for their support on his nomination and thanked his proposer and seconder, Cllr. P. Ormond and Cllr. S. O'Brien.

Cllr. J. Leahy, Cathaoirleach, reflected on his 17 years in the Chamber, noting his participation in seven elections, including three General Elections. He expressed pride in his time with the Renua Party and acknowledged the challenges of political life. He thanked the Fianna Fáil group for their support in his election as Cathaoirleach and also expressed appreciation to Fine Gael members for their backing.

The Cathaoirleach outlined key objectives for his term, including housing targets, Housing Adaptation Grants, Road maintenance with a goal of extending road repair cycles. He proposed a special meeting on road safety later in the year. He noted the match funding challenges for Just Transition Fund projects. He highlighted the need for a Renewable Energy Dividend Fund, citing Offaly's significant contribution to wind energy, and called for engagement with energy companies and national policymakers. He acknowledged Cllr. Quinn and former Cllr. Eamon Dooley for their work in this area.

The Cathaoirleach thanked his parents, Bridie and Paul, for their support, noting that Paul was unable to attend today due to being unwell. He also expressed gratitude to his wife, Lavinia, and their children, Lee and Clodagh, for their patience and support. He welcomed family from Canada to the Chamber.

The Elected Members extended their congratulations and best wishes to Cllr. J. Leahy on his appointment as Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council.

2. Election of Leas Chathaoirleach

Cllr. J. Leahy, Cathaoirleach, sought nominations for the election of the Leas Chathaoirleach.

Cllr. D. Harvey proposed Cllr. Sean O'Brien for the position of Leas-Chathaoirleach, acknowledging him as a dedicated and respected Councillor who has served on Tullamore Municipal District for eighteen years and is actively involved in numerous groups. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. F. Moran, who commended Cllr. O'Brien's abilities as both a capable and committed community Councillor.

Cllr. L. Quinn proposed Cllr. Neil Feighery for the position of Leas-Chathaoirleach, highlighting his strong commitment to representing rural communities. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. N.

Cribbin, who acknowledged Cllr. Feighery's impressive performance in the Local Elections, noting that he was elected on the first count after topping the poll in the Tullamore area.

Cllr. A. Masterson proposed Cllr. Sean Maher for the position of Leas-Chathaoirleach, emphasising the importance of having representation from across the political spectrum. She stated that over many years, Cllr. Maher has been a strong advocate for those in the community who are often overlooked. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. C. Murray.

As three nominees had been proposed for the position of Leas Chathaoirleach, the Meetings Administrator called for a vote, the results of which are as follows;

A vote was called on the nomination of **Cllr. Sean Maher** for the role of Leas Chathaoirleach as proposed by Cllr. A. Masterson and seconded by Cllr. C. Murray.

In favour: S. Maher, A. Masterson, F. McDonnell, C. Murray. (Four votes)

Against: Cllrs. O. Bryant, Cllrs E. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, H. Egan, N. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, D. Harvey, A. Hennessy Kennedy, J. Leahy, F. Moran, C. Murray-Smale, S. Murray, S. O'Brien, P. Ormond, L. Quinn. (Fifteen votes)

Abstain: None

As the nomination was defeated, a vote was called on the nomination of **Cllr. Neil Feighery** for the role of Leas Chathaoirleach as proposed by Cllr. L. Quinn and seconded by Cllr. N. Cribbin.

In favour: Cllrs. E. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, H. Egan, N. Feighery, F. McDonnell, L. Quinn. (Six Votes)

Against: Cllrs O. Bryant, E. Fitzpatrick, D. Harvey, A. Hennessy Kennedy, J. Leahy, S. Maher, A. Masterson, F. Moran, C. Murray, C. Murray-Smale, S. Murray, S. O'Brien, P. Ormond. (Thirteen Votes)

Abstain: None

As the nomination was defeated, a vote was called on the nomination of **Cllr. Sean O'Brien** for the role of Leas Chathaoirleach as proposed by Cllr. D. Harvey and seconded by Cllr. F. Moran.

In favour: Cllrs. O. Bryant, E. Fitzpatrick, D. Harvey, A. Hennessy Kennedy, J. Leahy, F. Moran, C. Murray-Smale, S. Murray, S. O'Brien, P. Ormond. (Ten votes)

Against: Cllrs. E. Clendennen, N. Cribbin, H. Egan, N. Feighery, S. Maher, A. Masterson, F. McDonnell, C. Murray, L. Quinn. (Nine votes).

Abstain: None

As his nomination was successful, Cathaoirleach Cllr. J. Leahy deemed Cllr. Sean O'Brien to be elected as Leas Chathaoirleach of Offaly County Council.

Cllr. Sean O'Brien expressed his gratitude to his proposer, Cllr. D. Harvey, and seconder, Cllr. F. Moran. He noted the significance of two Independent Councillors being elected.

He acknowledged the substantial work ahead over the next 12 months and highlighted priorities which included the Just Transition Fund, Economic Development, Housing, and Business Infrastructure.

Ms. AM. Delaney, Chief Executive, welcomed the new Cathaoirleach, Cllr. J. Leahy, and Leas Chathaoirleach, Cllr. S. O'Brien, to the roles. She thanked the outgoing Cathaoirleach Cllr. A. Hennessy Kennedy, and Leas Chathaoirleach, Cllr. O. Bryant, for their courtesy and work during their term in the roles.

MINUTES CONFIRMED

CATHAOIRLEACH

RUNAÍ

21 July 2025

