

**Minutes of the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce and Industry CLG held at Butler House Kilkenny on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

**Present:** Abbas Ghadimi, Aisling MacDonald, Ann Mulrooney, Anne Barber, Arina Arlukova, Brian Keyes, Bryan Skehan, Catie Beth Bowman, Celine O'Reilly, Deborah Broaders, Declan Murphy, Emma Ma, Gary Graham, Jason Dempsey, Joan Butler, John Grace, John Hurley, Kevin O'Connor, Liam Oxley, Lorraine Hayden, Marion Acreman, Mary Brennan, Owen Sweeney, Róisín McQuillan, Sally Leadbetter, Svetlana Milcheva, Tom Sloyan, Valerie O'Sullivan, Valerie Ryan, Vicky Comerford, William Norton

**Apologies:** John Masterson, Salina Janzan, Gavin Dixon, Helen & Thomas Clarke, Deirdre Shine, Colin Ahern, Michael Brannigan, Gordon Murphy, Paschal Bergin, Ella Dunphy, Brendan Roberts, Brendan Cullen, Claire McInerney Brown, Martin Costello, Tim Butler, Noel Buckley, Tom O'Connor

**1. President's Address**

Brian Keyes addressed the members, saying it was a pleasure to serve as President of the Chamber during the past two years. He said it was a privilege to work closely with such talented people on the Board for the betterment of business in Kilkenny and ultimately for the community as a whole. He paid tribute to the incoming president Anne Barber, the new treasurer Deborah Broaders, Secretary Owen Sweeney, outgoing PRO John Masterson, former treasurer Gordon Murphy and the entire board for their support and commitment to Kilkenny Chamber, and to both John Hurley and Róisín McQuillan in the office. He said that John, as CEO, is always willing to engage and drive forward the Kilkenny business agenda locally, and also regionally and nationally.

**2. Minutes of Previous AGM**

Having been circulated prior to this meeting, the minutes were taken as read and adopted.

Proposed: Valerie O'Sullivan      Seconded: Jason Dempsey

**3. Adoption of Report and Audited Accounts**

Hon Treasurer Deborah Broaders presented the accounts, which showed a small surplus for the year. She thanked O'Neill Foley Accountants for their work on this their first year as Auditors, and also De Loughry O'Gorman who had facilitated the smooth handover.

The Accounts were adopted. Proposed: Mary Brennan      Seconded: Joan Butler

CEO John Hurley noted the particular challenging times facing all businesses following the Covid Pandemic, the Ukrainian invasion and the cost of living crisis and said that the Chamber was no less affected by these.

**4. Election of Auditors 2024-2025**

John Hurley put it to the meeting that O'Neill Foley be retained for the year 2024. Proposed Willie Norton, Seconded: Kevin O'Connor

**5. Dissolution of the 2023-2024 Board**

The Board of the Chamber for 2023-2024 stood down, in accordance with the Constitution.

## **6. Election of President**

Anne Barber was proposed by Abbas Ghadimi and seconded by Valerie O'Sullivan. There being no other proposals Anne Barber was deemed elected as President of Kilkenny Chamber 2024-2025.

## **7. Election of Officers for 2024-2025**

The following officers were proposed by Valerie Ryan, seconded by Aisling MacDonald

Vice President: Claire McInerney Brown

Hon Secretary / Company Secretary: Owen Sweeney

Hon. Treasurer: Deborah Broaders

Hon. Assistant Treasurer: Mary Brennan

PR Officer: Sally Leadbetter

## **8. Election of Ordinary Members 2024-2025**

The following Directors were proposed by Valerie Ryan, seconded by Aisling MacDonald

Marion Acreman, Colin Ahern, Paschal Bergin, Joan Butler, Margaret Clancy, Jason Dempsey, Gavin Dixon, Gary Graham, Lorraine Hayden, Brian Keyes, Ann Mulrooney, Tom O'Connor

## **9. New President's Address**

Anne Barber began her address by paying tribute to outgoing President Brian Keyes, who has combined his active role in the Chamber with a busy job in Iconic Media and who was always available to give his insight and advice.

She welcomed the five new members to the Board, saying it is very exciting to bring fresh ideas and a new perspective is always healthy. She thanked the outgoing board members, Michael Brannigan, Deirdre Shine, Gordon Murphy, Martin Costello and John Masterson for their dedication and contributions to the Chamber over the length of their directorships.

Reflecting on her experience of coming to live in Kilkenny and setting up her new business, Anne said it was her sincere wish that everyone who lives in Kilkenny or arrives from elsewhere should find the same spirit of openness and opportunity that she found.

She pledged to engage with the members and to listen to their ideas and bring them to the Board for consideration.

During the course of her speech, the President announced a Chamber Projects Fund with the aim to utilise the Chamber's resources, both financial and other, to support and enable the delivery of positive initiatives for Kilkenny that would otherwise not happen.

She also announced the move of the highly successful Kilkenny Gift Voucher project to a digital model in the coming months, and while this will require considerable investment of time, money and resources, the Chamber sees huge potential for growth of the scheme over the coming years.

The Chamber will continue to support local initiatives such as Yulefest and will explore opportunities to further expand its Christmas Lights provision. She took the opportunity to give credit to Marian Flannery and her hard-working team for bringing Yulefest to life in 2023 and said that as a city centre business owner she could see firsthand the benefits and the joy that such events bring to the city.

In ending her speech, the President paid tribute to the small but dedicated office staff, CEO John Hurley and Business Development Officer Róisín McQuillan.

## **10. Close of Meeting**

In bringing the AGM to a close, John Hurley brought to the attention of the meeting the Chamber's 2024 Local Election Manifesto which sets out its high-level ambitions and vision for Ireland's future social, economic and environmental development, which has a direct impact on business growth and competitiveness across the country. He said that the Chamber calls on elected councillors to work with Kilkenny Chamber and with businesses in Kilkenny city and county in progressing these goals and objectives over the next five-year term.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.