

Acceptance Speech:

Fellow Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen, (Irish as well)

I dtús báire, ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le mo chomhchomhairleoirí a vótáil ar mo shon tráthnóna. Is onóir ollmhór é gur roghnaíodh mé mar Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath, an cathair iontach cois Life, mo chathair féin. Táim fíorbhródúil as Baile Átha Cliath agus teastaíonn uaim go mbeadh mo chathair bródúil asam le linn mo thréimhse mar chéad saoránach. Déanfaidh mé mo dhícheall ar son na cathrach. Ní neart go cur le chéile agus oibreoidh mé i lámh a chéile le mo chomhchomhairleoirí, oifigigh agus foireann na Comhairle ar mhaith le saoránaigh Bhaile Átha Cliath.

Tá moladh ag dul do mo sheanchairde sa Chomhairle Christy Burke agus Cieran Perry a chuir m'ainm chun cinn mar Ardmhéara . Ba mhaith liom buíochas a rá freisin le mo chomhchomhairleoirí sa Ghrúpa Neamhspleách as ucht mé a roghnú mar iarrthóir.

I want to thank my fellow councillors for electing me and entrusting me with the Mayorship of my City for the coming year. Thanks to my long time friend Christy Burke for nominating me and to Cieran Perry for seconding my nomination. I would also like to thank my fellow independent for selecting me as our Group nominee. The success of Ardmheara MacDonchada has been mentioned by many here this evening but I want to add my personal thanks to him for a job well done. In this Council we have been fortunate to have had four outstanding Lord Mayors , Cllrs, Christy Burke, Criona Ní Dhalaigh, Brendan Carr and of course, Mícheál MacDonchada. Fortunate for Dublin but not for me as I have four very hard acts to follow.

Of course, I would not be here but for the support and help of friends and family, some unfortunately no longer here with us. My late father, Dermot, instilled in me a love of family, of Dublin, of our proud history and of Ireland and everything Irish. He would have been so proud tonight and I will raise a glass to him and my deceased family members as well my dear friends, the late Christy Lawler, Maurice Timmins and John Bennet who all played a significant part in my political and personal life.

My Mam, Pauline, is here this evening with my Aunty Rosaleen. I am very grateful for all she has done for me and all the support and encouragement she has given me over the years. She gave me good values, good work ethic and consideration for others and continues to do so. I still do what my mammy tells me!

I am fortunate to be married to Joyce who has given me support and love for the past 30 plus years, as well as four sons, Aidan, Stephen, Emmet and Daragh. I know I would not be in this position tonight but for Joyce's support, understanding and tolerance.

There are many issues facing this great City but also many opportunities too. I hope to use the office of Lord Mayor to highlight the positives and potential for Dublin. I will continue to be involved in projects and issues which are important to me but I can assure you all, that representing Dublin in a positive, inclusive and meaningful way will be the overriding priority of my term of office. I want to speak briefly on some of the issues we face and some of the positives we can achieve:

#### MOORE STREET BATTLEFIELD SITE:

As you are all aware the Moore Street Battlefield Site has long been an issue which I have been involved in. I wish to confirm this evening that I intend to continue the Lord Mayor Moore Street Forum, set up by Ardmheara Criona Ni Dalaigh during her tenure. I am delighted that Cllr. Mícheál MacDonchada has agreed to co-chair the forum with me for the year,

The site known as Dublin Central (or the Carleton site) has been one of the City's missed opportunities for regeneration. During my tenure, I hope a new planning application for the site will start to move forward. The existing planning application for the site is clearly out of character. I am pleased that the new owner of the site is willing to develop an appropriate vision for this historic area. They are committed to work with me and the City Council to ensure that a best in class project emerges to positively enhance this part of Dublin and ensure that the historic Moore Street market survives and indeed flourishes as well as recognising and preserving the hugely important historic element within the site.

I look forward to making progress on this important development.

#### DUBLIN PORT

Dublin City emerged from the Liffey and its port, and Dublin Port remains a vital economic driver of the City economy. The importance of Dublin Port is recognised in our own Development plan and Dublin Port is now planning the second major capital project from the Dublin Port Masterplan. This project (MP2) will enable Dublin Port to maximise the efficient use of land adjacent to river berths and to facilitate the efficient operation of key aspects of port operations. Importantly, the project also signals the Dublin Port Company's acceptance once and for all that there will be no further infills into Dublin Bay. I acknowledge the efforts made in recent years to reintegrate the Port with the City and, in this context, I have worked with Dublin Port Chief Executive Eamonn O'Reilly, Chair, Lucy McCaffrey and Communications Manager Charlie Murphy to explore a suitable Community Gain initiative to be delivered in tandem with the MP2 Project.

Dublin Port has agreed to create a City Farm on land owned by them adjacent to the port. Dublin City Council's Parks' Department have also been involved in this process and I hope to formally announce details of this exciting community gain initiative during my term of office. This will be the first City Farm in the country and will be fully supported by me.

#### TRANSPORT.

There are many challenges facing Dublin and with the expansion of DART, the Luas Cross City completion, roll out of new bus corridors and the Metro North proposals, transport is another area requiring attention, agreement and progress.

I want to see my year in office as a positive one for transport in Dublin. I have in the past expressed concern at the loss of car parking spaces and revenue from the Luas Cross City, but I of course recognise that trams and buses have a positive role to play in tackling congestion in the city.

I also want to see improvements in walking and cycling in my year of office. They have an important role to play in keeping the city moving, not to mention the positive health aspects

of such activities. It is crucial that projects such as the Royal Canal Cycle Route and the Liffey Cycle Route are implemented, but plans such as these should not unduly inconvenience the motorist, and any design must ensure that traffic is not diverted into adjoining residential areas. I intend working closely with my colleague Cllr. Ciaran Cuffe who chairs the Transport Strategic Policy Committee to achieve this.

We have also agreed to look at new and innovative measures to make it safer, easier and more attractive for children to cycle to school.

## MAGDELENE WOMEN.

Earlier this month, Ardmheara Mícheál MacDonncha hosted a dinner in the Mansion House as part of the 'Dublin Honours Magdalenes' events and the turnout of the people of Dublin to welcome the women was both moving and inspiring. The following day I had the enormous privilege of attending a 'Dublin Honours Magdalenes' event in the City West Hotel. While there I had the opportunity to talk with many of the surviving women who had been incarcerated in the various different Magdalene Laundries that existed throughout our State.

I listened to their life experiences. They were incredibly sad, and really brought home to me the cruelty of that system of incarceration that blighted many of our communities, including my own in the North Inner City, communities which existed in the shadow of what was the Gloucester St Laundry, a street now named after one of the signatories to the 1916 Proclamation, Sean MacDermott. It should not be lost on us that it has taken us over 100 years to even begin, as those brave men and women of 1916 envisioned, "to cherish all of the children of the nation equally".

As I listened to the surviving women of the Magdalene Laundries, I became aware of how essential it is that their experiences are acknowledged and memorialised in a substantial way.

As such, during my time as Lord Mayor, I will seek to ensure that a substantial Commemorative Memorial placed at the site of the former Magdalene Laundry on Sean McDermott Street.

To achieve this aim, it is my intention to initiate immediately, a Lord Mayors working group that will be tasked with delivering a vision for this site that places this Commemorative Memorial to the victims, and survivors of these Magdalene Laundries, at the very heart of the North Inner City.

My constituency colleague Cllr. Gary Gannon has engaged in a very positive and meaningful way with the Magdalene women and he has agreed to liaise with them and co-ordinate this working group for me. I will ask the working group to report back before the September City Council meeting at which the Magdalene laundry site disposal will be discussed. My constituency colleagues Cllrs. Christy Burke, Cllr. Ray McAdam and Cllr. Gaye Fagan as well as Cllr. Tina McVeigh have also agreed to partake in this important process.

## HISTORY

I have a keen interest in History and the removal of History as a core subject for the Junior Certificate is, to my mind, an appalling decision by our Government. Our esteemed President, Michael D Higgins expressed how many of us feel about this when he said recently:

“I share your deep and profound concern with the new junior cycle, in which history is now no longer a core subject. A knowledge and understanding of history is intrinsic to our shared citizenship. To be without such knowledge is to be to be permanently burdened with a lack of perspective, empathy and wisdom. Moreover, to be without historical training, the careful and necessary capability to filter and critically interpret a variety of sources, is to leave citizens desperately ill-equipped to confront a world in which information is increasingly disseminated without historical perspective or even regard for the truth.”

Luckily, there are many proud and active local history groups in our City as evidenced by the major success of the 1916 Rising Celebrations, particularly the events organised at local level.

I will actively and openly support any history initiatives in the City and already I am involved in projects ranging from the development of the 300 year old Jewish Cemetery in Fairview as an interpretive centre, a research project, in collaboration with the Hamish Maxwell-Stewart from University of Hobart, on the 4,500 women transported from Grangegorman (then a female prison) to Tasmania, the subsequent history of Grangegorman as a psychiatric hospital, events to mark the 1919 Election when women voted for the first time, the election of Countess Markievicz at that election, the subsequent First Dáil held in the Mansion House and the start of the War of Independence on the same day.

I have encouraged the Executive in the Council to consider acquiring the property at 55 Amiens Street which was formerly a tobacconist operated by the Proclamation signatory Thomas Clarke. If acquired, this could be a significant location for cultural and artistic purposes in the North Inner City Area. I welcome the fact that the City Council has now agreed in principle to acquire this important property.

## EYES OF THE WORLD ON DUBLIN

Many significant events will take place in Dublin in the coming year and with the eyes of the world on the City we will be presented with many opportunities to “show off” our great city. There are rumours of a Royal Visit in July which will get a lot attention given the Celebrity status of the latest Mrs. Windsor.

Obviously the visit of Pope Francis for the World meeting of Families in August will attract worldwide media attention and I look forward to meeting and greeting His Holiness both on a personal level and on behalf of the people of Dublin.

In September it may not quite be the eyes of the world that will be on Dublin but the green eyes of the rest of the country will be on us as our Gaelic Footballers go for the four in a row.

December will see Dublin's convention centre host the Draw for the 2020 European Soccer Championships, the finals of which Dublin is co-hosting. This is a great chance to showcase our City.

December will also mark the centenary of the 1919 General election at which, as I mentioned, not only did women vote but a woman was elected, and I get some enjoyment when reading British parliamentary History as they try to come to terms with the fact the Countess Markievicz and was the first women elected to the House of Commons.

January 21<sup>st</sup> 1919 is a significant date in Irish History which I intend to commemorate/celebrate appropriately. The First Dáil took place in the Mansion House on that date and on the same day, the Soloheadbeg Ambush effectively signalled the start of the War of Independence, a struggle in which my family were heavily and proudly involved. Both events deserve to be suitably commemorated and I will ensure that both will be marked in an appropriate fashion.

March 29<sup>th</sup> 2019 is, apparently, the date on which Britain leaves the EU, unprepared and dragging part of our country into the abyss with them against the wishes of our fellow countrymen However, we should be positive and look at the opportunities for Dublin if Brexit goes ahead. I intend to focus on the potential of Brexit for Dublin.

#### CONCLUSION:

There are many other issues facing the City and any input I can have as Lord Mayor in progressing issues such as housing provision, whether through the City Council developing its own vacant sites (which could provide up to 2,000 housing units), promoting over the shop living or buying up vacant properties, I will enthusiastically become involved in. As green and brown sites/land available to Dublin City Council for Social/Affordable Housing run out over the coming years we need to consider the re-zoning of some older Industrial Estates at different locations in the City and the development of the significant tracts of land in the ownership of other State Agencies such as HSE, OPW, CIE, and DIT.

I will also fully support the continuing work of Michael Stone and his team in implementing the recommendations of the Mulvey Report, which is a vital plan for the social and economic regeneration of the North East Inner City.

I will also work to realise the ambitious objectives of The Re-imagine Dublin One project which seeks to secure the future of the city's north side commercial core, making it a go to destination for both Dubliners and visitors to our City. I believe that this renewed vision will facilitate and accelerate private sector investment in the district, restoring Dublin One to its rightful place as the attractive and vibrant heart of the city.

Dublin is a great City. It is a modern, welcoming, living and cosmopolitan City. This Council is effectively the Government of the City we are not just another Local authority, this is the Capital City of Ireland, and we must strive to ensure that Dublin City gets the investment it deserves and a larger slice of the National Pot. The fact that of the €80m collected in LPT in Dublin, we are left with only €4m for services has been highlighted by me in the Finance SPC and by the Chair of the SPC Cllr. Ruairi McGinley when he spoke recently at the

Oireachtas Hosing Committee set up to review Local Property Tax. We will continue to highlight this blatant Central Government discrimination against Dublin.

We must also strive to ensure it remains a safe, family friendly and child friendly city. Everyone living in the City should feel part of the City and have a sense of belonging. I want to reach out to those who may feel marginalised or disconnected from the city, whatever the reason, be it homelessness, loneliness, health issues or the myriad of other reasons why someone may feel isolated and alone. A united City can only be good for all citizens.

Dublin should also strive to live up to the name of being a "Fair City" where a living wage is the minimum, where zero hour contracts do not exist and all citizens can expect to be treated as equals and with respect and dignity.

Cathair lán le bród í Baile Átha Cliath toisc an méid atá bainte amach le céad bliain anuas, ach tá neart eile le déanamh. Tá cathair den scoth againn, le daoine den scoth, agus beidh todhchaí den scoth againn má oibrimid le chéile.

I was born and reared in this great City. I am a proud Dubliner and I want Dublin to be proud of me!

An Baile Bocht Abú agus Baile Átha Cliath Abú!

Go raibh míle maith agaibh uile.