

A Chomhairleoirí, a Bhainisteor na Cathrach, Daoine uaisle agus a chaírde go leir -

I invite you to join with me this year – “Mo blian Speisialta” [My special year] as we honour the past, appreciate the present and look to the future with confidence.

Ta Failte Romhat - I'd like to welcome

- A Mheara agus Bhainisteor Contae Chorcaí your presence is historic and indicative of the excellent relations between City and County.
- A Theachtaí Dála – Bernard Allen, Deirdre Clune – Kathleen Ciaran Lynch we remember with fondness Sammy Allen.
- Seanadóir Buttimer.
- CEO, City of Cork VEC and the Port of Cork
- Former Lord Mayor/s Pearse Wyse, Dan Wallace, Toddy O’Sullivan, Frank Nash.
- Former City Councillors, Dan Morrissy, I would very much like to salute you all to-night and to thank Lord Mayor Counihan for his initiative in acknowledging your contribution with a most enjoyable reception.
- Former Lady Mayoress Mrs Mary O’Leary delighted to see you, we remember Lord Mayor Sean O’ Leary with great affection.
- Former City Manager Mr. Jack Higgins and Former City Engineer Mr. Liam Fitzgerald your achievements have stood the test of time.
- Michael O’Regan, a great Corkonian, who has attended all Lord Mayor elections for the past 40 years a great achievement which will be acknowledged soon.
- Agus, arís, a chaírde go leir
- My friend, Labour Councillor Jim Moher from The London Borough of Brent thanks for the effort Jim.
- Family, Relatives & Friends from Newfoundland Dunstable Cork City North, South, East and Westside and a long way from Tipperary.
- My 93 year old Uncle, Sony.
- We might all, at this moment, picture our loved ones, present and departed, who are with us tonight, though not in person.

May I thank

1. My Proposer Councillor Jim Corr and Seconder Councillor Tom O’ Driscoll.
2. My Party Colleagues in Fine Gael for this opportunity to be first citizen for 2008-09.
3. Councillors thank you for your confidence in me tonight?
4. Residents in SW-ward, Bishopstown-Model Farm Road, Glasheen, Togher, who have elected me over the years.
5. Residents in NW-ward including Knocknaheeny parts of Churchfield, Farranree and Blackpool to Dublin Hill- who in 1979 first elected me to Cork City Council.
6. Elma, Family and Friends for your support and encouragement over the years.

In our collective experience, we like to remember the history of our families and our City. In this context then, I assume office, following in the footsteps of renowned Mayors since 1273 and Lord Mayors since 1900 including Lord Mayors McCurtain and MacSwiney 1920.

The title Lord Mayor was granted to Dublin in 1665 and Belfast in 1892. The Charter giving the title 'Lord Mayor to the first citizen of Cork - was granted in July 1900, to Mayor Daniel Hegarty (1849-1914) who is mentioned in the text of the Charter.

At the Mayoral election in January 1901 Edward FitzGerald was the first to be actually elected as Lord Mayor. It was his idea to have the Great Exhibition of 1902. FitzGerald Park is named after him. I'm delighted to welcome to the meeting, the first elected Lord Mayor of Cork, Edward Fitzgerald's son Jack and Peter, his grandson.

Tonight is nostalgic mar bhí mo athair ina Ard Mheara daichead blian ó shoin it is the 40th anniversary of John Bermingham's election in 1968. The Election was won with the support of the Labour party and with Independent Councillors Jago and Goldberg giving my Father the night, following Pearse Wyse as Lord Mayor. We give Pearse - all our best wishes.

1979 then was a special year for me, being first elected to Cork City Council with Lord Mayor Counihan, Denis Cregan and Mairin Quill.

- A note of sadness when we remember, – Councillors Pat Kerrigan, Jimmy Kennelly, Sean Beausang and Con O' Connell.
- James A. Corr was the first Lord Mayor I served with and is to-day the father of the house. Well done Jim.
- Since then Cork, has had Lord Mayors of differing creeds, and political persuasions in my time.
- We remember with affection the late Hugh Coveney - Liam Burke - Jerry O'Sullivan - Thomas Brosnan - Chrissie Ahern

- 1979 James A. Corr
- 1980 Toddy O'Sullivan
- 1981 Paud Black
- 1982 Hugh Coveney.
- 1983 John Dennehy
- 1984 Liam Burke
- 1985 Dan Wallace
- 1986 Jerry O'Sullivan
- 1987 Thomas Brosnan
- 1988 Bernard Allen
- 1989 Chrissie Ahern

- 1990 Frank Nash
- 1991 Denis Cregan
- 1992 Micheál Martin
- 1993 John Murray
- 1994 Tim Falvey
- 1995 Joe O'Callaghan
- 1996 James A. Corr
- 1997 Dave McCarthy
- 1998 Joe O'Flynn
- 1999 Damian Wallace
- 2000 P.J. Hourican
- 2001 Tom O'Driscoll
- 2002 John Kelleher
- 2003 Colm Burke
- 2004 Sean Martin
- 2005 Deirdre Clune
- 2006 Michael Ahern

• We send to our very good friend Denis Cregan all our best wishes. If Jim is the father of the house then Denis is its heart and soul. I regret very much His unavoidable absence to-night, a great colleague.

• I understand Mairin has publicly announced her retirement at the end of this year. On behalf of Council I wish to thank and acknowledge the enormous contribution, Councillor, former Deputy and Senator Mairin Quill has made to the development of Cork over the years.

It just so happens that I followed Lord Mayor Counihan into the office of Leas Ardmhéara in 2000 and now again in 2008 following him into the office as Ard mheara of this Historic Port City of Cork. A great act to follow.

May I thank the outgoing Ardmhéara and Lady Mayoress Breda for a year of hard work in which the Mayoralty's great tradition was upheld and enhanced in a most dignified manner- as it was by my predecessors during this council.

Comhairleoiri- aris, gura a mile maith agaibh. Ta atas mor orm bheith im Ard Mheara do Cathair Corcaigh sa Bhlian seo. Ta me-ag obair mar Comhairleoir sa Cathair ar feadh triocha blian anuas agus mar sinn - ta gliondar croi orm onocht And because of this my heath is full of joy tonight. Is onóir-iontach é seo domsa It is a wonderful honour for me. Ta suil agam go mbeigh mo obair mar Ard mheara so blian seo chughainn I hope my work as Ard mheara this year torthúil ar son ár gCathair áilinn agus stairiúl, seo ar bhruach na laoi seo ar bhruach na laoi

Will be fruitful for this Beautiful historic City by the banks of the Lee. Where we sported and played, Neath the green leafy shade. On the banks of my-own lovely lee” more of that in Highfield Rugby Club, all are welcome.

Chorcaí Cathrach agus Contae, (Cork City and County) offering a high quality lifestyle- environmentally attractive surrounded by near one fifth of the national coastline, with misty mountains, rolling countryside, extensive walking and cycling trails, meandering rivers, lakes and areas of natural beauty and spectacular scenery,

Mingling with a dynamic City, vibrant market towns and traditional villages outwardly looking and expressive where you can kiss the Blarney Stone and never stop chattering.

Within this county, the City of Cork rests in a region called Metropolitan Cork, and area which includes Ballincollig, Blarney, Glanmire, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Cobh and Carrigaline.

Metro-Cork is the driver of economic activity. It must increase this roll dramatically creating wealth and well being for us all.

It must grow as a centre of excellence for many industries. National and Internationally Traded Services Financial Services Pharmaceutical and Medical Device companies.

It must produce a skilled workforce

- University College Cork and the Cork Institute of Technology are world class leading third level institutions.
- We wish the Cork Institute of Technology every success in their Endeavour to obtain Technological University Status.
- The Training Agency FAS, has one of the finest training facility in the EU.
- The Vocational Education Committees have many excellent industrial and commercial further education courses linking to the world of work and third level institutions.

Metro-Cork is growing a well balanced infrastructure connecting with the rest of the world with, broadband, increasing air and sea links, road, rail and bus networks enabling us to communicate export import thrive and prosper.

Cork Airport is Munster's principal International gateway and growing.

The Port of Cork Company in Cork’s beautiful harbor is crucial to the well being of the region. We are impressed and pleased with the increased commercial activity and increased visits of passenger liners in recent years.

I hope to continue the ceremony known as “*Throwing the Dart*”, - the Lord Mayor throws a [dart](#) into [Cork Harbour](#) at its boundaries, to symbolise the city's control over the port. This tradition was first recorded in 1759, although it is probably older.

Cork Roads have received substantial investment developing highly efficient new ring roads. We wait with great expectations amongst others

- The completion of the Cork-Dublin Motorway
- The Northern Ring Route.
- The Bishopstown west link–Southern Ring Road to CIT and Model Farm Road.

Cork Rail transportation have greatly improved with new trains and increased journeys to Dublin we wait with great expectation the re-opening of the commuter Rail line Cork - Midleton and onwards to Youghal.

As Metro-Cork develops and grows, one of the key challenges it now faces is public transport meeting the needs of commuters, new residents, shoppers and office-workers and decreasing the number of private cars entering and circling the City. The effect of this will be to encourage many more people to the services of the City including Retail.

In the meantime announcements on

- Car Sharing is made
- City Centre Bicycle Taxi's is due
- Council will consider a “Bus Friday” to pilot and target those not needing their cars for work, It will encourage people out of their cars and on to Buses to and from town on Fridays and hopefully everyday with Bus Eireann ensuring Bus Reliability-Security-Cleanliness- Quick Access–Ticket integration and
- the Gardai ensuring “free flow”
- Cork City Council considering Bus /Taxi Lanes on a 7am/7pm basis and the Pedestrianisation of Patrick Street with access for Bus,Taxi and loading

Within Metro-Cork then, there is a growing consciousness amongst people, of - an identity as one region and unity of purpose.

With a potential of over 275,000 people the size of Belfast now living and commuting to work and leisure within and to & from the City as a daily occurrence full co-operation between both local authorities is essential.

Henceforth integrated planning shared projects and macro thinking along the lines of the joint Retail, Housing, Transportation Strategy and the Cork Area Strategic

Plan [CASP] is what people in Metro-Cork expect and deserve.

I hope School Principals will facilitate the study of these reports and plans - in plain English within the School Curriculum.

To give effect to this reality Metro-Cork needs a Political authority to ensure direction and results.

“Cork City Council within Metro-Cork is a responsive and innovative local authority which provides a diverse range of quality services to its citizens.

I would sincerely thank and congratulate, An Bannisteoir, Mr Joe Gavin, who follows in the footsteps, in my time, of Mr. Joe McHugh, Tom Rice, and Jack Higgins, and since his arrival in 2000 transformed the City in his typical quiet but determined way.

City Manager, I seek your positive and practical support to give the office of Lord Mayor the necessary resources needed for the office to be highly effective in this modern world.

To you, your Directors and Staff I'm very much looking forward to working with you.

As this is the final year of Council 2004-2009, it is appropriate to reflect on what might or should have been to celebrate our successes and look forward with a vision of confidence.

Our aspirations inspire us to do a lot more and this process is underway in the new City development Plan 2009-2014

Climate change is now on the top of Councils agenda. Cork City Council is one of the foremost local authorities in the country in terms of providing alternative sources of energy and reduction in carbon footprint.

The heart of the City has sustained continuous Urban renewal and development.

- It is attractive – its centre is compact, it's easily walked with widened and ramped accessible footpaths for all to use.
- Its river has had significant investment with a new drainage system enhancing the potential for major recreational activities both on and off its banks.
- The streetscape, predestination, paving, lighting and street furniture are modern and dramatic.
- Love or hate them Patrick Street lighting with its décor flags and bunting gives Cork an increased uniqueness and is a tourist attraction in itself.
- The word “Grand” in the Grand Parade can from this moment with pride be restated.

- I encourage our Metro-Bands to make full use of this exciting new public realm to bring into being- a truly Musical City echoing to the Sound of Music throughout the year.

Currently the City's population is under 120,000 residents. The council's objective is to grow this to 150,000 over the coming years in part achievable with Cork City's eastward extension to the docklands. Good news at any time, Great news during a slowdown when employment trends are beginning to move down. I appeal to our National Public Representatives to ensure that the necessary incentives are put in place now to allow us to get on with the job.

I congratulate Howard Holdings for their leadership and risk taking in being the first applicant for dockland developments. We look forward to others following.

I salute the private sector, including their highly skilled workforce, involvement and contribution to Cork's economy, Urban Renewal and its people down the years.

Currently Owen O'Callaghan Company and Dunnes Stores are changing the face of the City Centre.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the late Mr. Ben Dunne Senior for his contribution to Cork's Urban and Social Development. A significant figure in the Social History of Cork.

The Suburbs are also renewing

- Back pool is transformed to the delight of my uncle..
- Mahon is transformed...
- Knocknaheeny's master plan is nearing completion.
- Bishopstown is about to move.

As the City and its economy moves Cork City Council is proactive in ensuring Social Inclusion with its strategy 2008-2011 - for all our Citizens to share in the delights and benefits in living in the City.

Libraries an essential quality of life, and inclusion service has increased activities with Research, Music, Plays, Poetry, Book reading, Storey telling and Education Classes. Our newest library in Bishopstown is just a fabulous facility, Mahon is next.

Cork City Council is working in partnership with Community and Voluntary organizations in designing, developing and managing community based Childcare Facilities in the Glen-Togher-Knocknaheeny-Ban duff and Farranree areas.

Large amounts of creativity, time, and money are expended upon the arts and culture, to the delight of many. In a modern inclusive society, all our citizens should have the opportunities to access cultural events over time

I am pleased to announce, with the Arts Office and Social inclusion unit the Lord Mayor's Cultural Access Programme.

Subject to Council, this programme will aim to provide opportunities for Citizens least connected and with loneliness and isolation impacting on their lives, to attend cultural events

Cork City Council in partnership within the voluntary sector will in a highly confidential manner

1. invite Citizens, to identify the arts forms, concerts and events they are most interested in and
2. provide support to attend
3. Going some way toward ensuring equality of access to the Arts over time, enhancing Inclusion in our City.

I have, long been personally committed to Community education and training

I would like to further enhance Cork, as a City of lifelong Learning where opportunities are accessible to all people whatever their age, ability, interest and economic circumstances enabling a more enjoyable use of our leisure time, helping to interact with others and enhancing employment prospects, contributing significantly to inclusion in Society.

The City of Cork VEC-its Chairperson Councillor Jim Corr, its CEO Mr Ted Owens provides comprehensive educational services.

1. Second Level to Further Education Colleges linking to work and 3rd level education.
2. Adult Community and Basic Education with highly skilled Organisers, Tutors working well beyond the call of duty and with significant Volunteer participation providing free of charge Group and 1:1 tuition.
3. Participating groups also include Family Resource Centres-Community Development Projects-Older -Disability, Traveller and the new communities. In this context,
4. May I thank all Volunteers who give time and effort to so many services in our City. I'm so looking forward to meeting with you during the year.
5. The Cork College of Commerce is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2008. It is appropriate that the City celebrates this occasion with them and Chairperson Councillor Tim Brosnan and Principal Mr Gerry O'Dwyer.

Other active bodies associated with Lifelong Learning

1. The Cork Adult Education Council, - who for over 30 years has organised the Annual Adult Education and Training Exhibition in City-
2. Cope Foundation and Scoil Bernadette has a wide lifelong educational provision benefiting greatly all who participate. - There are so many other groups I hope to visit during the year.

Following on Cork City Council's efforts including Tidy Districts, Lord Mayor Counihan's work in strengthening Communities and Councillor Chris O'Leary's work on organising Cork Volunteers, and many other initiatives

"It's Our City" will be a strong theme this year, seeking a more active Civic society in engaging Corkonians in local affairs with new ideas on

- Creating a greater feeling of belonging and a stronger sense of shared ownership, by all Cork people, across the various sections of the community (private, public voluntary, new-old-and youth-)
- Deepening local democracy with the hope of increasing turnout in forthcoming local elections striving for a minimum of 80%.

Subject to Council, the theme "It's Our City" will use signage and promotional materials to remind people that "It's Our City" and prompt them to look after it in a host of ways with prompts such as:

Be It, Corkonians are known as a people with a friendly disposition so let's stay friendly-humorous-patient and nice especially in our cars. Bin It, protecting the environment-Litter, cigarette ends, chewing gum, take-away packaging. Littering and cigarette throwing from vehicles a no no. Clean it, Shop fronts, arcades, car parks, doorways, buildings, bins

Design it, Buildings, Shop front improvements scheme, design/architectural guidelines.

Maintain it, Buildings, surfaces, signs, shop fronts, lighting, car parks, and street furniture

Paint it, Woodwork, doors, bollards, fences, bins, benches

Plant it "Cork in Bloom"- "Blooming Cork" will ask communities & business to increase the quality of their areas. CCC parks department, who are doing such an excellent job in beautifying the public realm including the main entrances to the City, will assist.

Remove it-Wheelie bins, Advertising boards, eyesores, refuse, graffiti

Repair it-Broken windows, signs, fences, walls, gates

Secure it, Congratulations to our Gardai Siochana who are doing a magnificent job keeping us safe.

I would hope that a strong emphasis will continue, on Cork City Councils By-Law, prohibiting drinking on the Streets.

We wish the newly formed Joint Policing Committee under Cllr Dara Murphy's Chairmanship every success in working for a Crime Free Cork.

We will call on Schools-Pupils and Students and Community groups to engage in "Design out Crime projects" throughout the year with Council's consent and assistance.

Enjoy it, Corkonians enjoy Cork, using its Leisure, Recreational and Cultural amenities to the fullest.

Cork has a vibrant cultural lifestyle all aspects of Arts and Creativity are expressed in a variety and growing list of venues events and festivals.

Cork as a Sporting City has every type of Sports and leisure activities to suit people of all ages.

Hurling is synonymous with Cork and the late Christy Ring is our Hero.

I propose to ask Council to acknowledge the 30th anniversary of his death on 2nd March 2009 ([12 October 1920](#) - [2 March 1979](#)), and to combine it with the GAA's 125th [1884] anniversary of the founding of Cumann Lúthchleas Gael. What a celebration of the Lives of Christy Ring, Michael Cusack and the GAA they loved and founded.

Finally, the Theme of Remembrance will express the collective History of the City and its people's in remembering, acknowledging and celebrating our past in a variety of ways as the year unfolds. For instance, I am mindful of the ongoing connection between the Lord Mayor's office and the Defence Forces of today which has been visibly embodied in the visits of former Lord Mayors Damian Wallace and Sean Martin to Lebanon and Liberia

- Lord Mayor Deirdre Clune- engaged in the remembrance ceremonies for Thomas Kent in May 2006.

- Both Lord Mayors - Tomas Mac Curtain and Terence Mc Swiney were Commanding Officers of the First Brigade of the Irish Volunteers.

And so as the sun sets, it is appropriate that “we shall remember them”.

The 50th anniversary of Irish involvement with the United Nations peacekeeping missions since 1958 and the exceptional contribution made by Irish soldiers to Peace on our Planet.

1. The 90th Anniversary of the ending of the Great War -1918 when 29,000 Cork City and County men, many originally members of the Irish Volunteers participated. 3000 died, four VC,s [Victoria Cross] were awarded during World War One.
2. I know that a Roll of Honour is being compiled by the City and County VECs and a call will go out soon for information of persons to be included.

Councillors, The title 'Lord Mayor' is customary, of great age, and bestowed by charter. In the Latin of the thirteenth century 'dominus major' is found, and in 1414 in English, the term 'Lord Mair' exists. In the coming year I would welcome greater usage of its “Irish title” – Ardmhéara.

Go raith míle maith agaibh.