



PRÓTACAIL SHIBHIALTA CIVIC PROTOCOLS

December 2022

Civic Protocols

Purpose

The purpose of this document and protocols is to review and develop a suite of relevant Civic Protocols which will replace the adopted Civic Honours Protocol 2016 and provide general information and guidance for all Members, Management Team and employees.

Protocols General

While every effort is made in this document to cater for anticipated events it is likely that some occasions may present themselves outside of the current listed protocols. In such cases Elected Members and officials should respect the spirit of the protocols and the integrity of the office of the Cathaoirleach.

Councillors Code of Conduct and Ethical Framework

Councillors are obliged to adhere to the Code of Conduct of Councillors 2019. ([Link](#))

The legislative basis for this code is based on part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014), Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001 and the Health and Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Councillors make an annual Ethics Declaration every year and commit that they have read and will comply with the above code.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

A new Procedures and Privileges Committee, chaired by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, will be established by Longford County Council. The terms of reference of the Procedures and Privileges Committee, which will be approved by the full Council, will include responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and updating the Civic Protocols, as required. Breaches of the Civil Protocols will, if appropriate, be referred by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District to the Procedures and Privileges Committee for consideration.

Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council

Council Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

- Longford County Council shall have a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson who will be elected and hold office.
- They shall be known and officially referred to as Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach.
- The holders of the offices of Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach of Longford County Council shall as appropriate be styled in accordance with the Local Government Act 2001.
 - In Irish *Cathaoirleach Chontae an Longfoirt* and *Leas-Chathaoirleach Chontae an Longfoirt*.
 - In English *Cathaoirleach of the County of Longford* and *Leas-Chathaoirleach of the County of Longford*.
- The titles Cathaoirleach or Leas-Chathaoirleach shall not be replaced by the titles Mayor or Deputy Mayor respectively.
- The title Mayor may **only** be used in very exceptional circumstances when the Cathaoirleach is representing the Council on official visits abroad and is approved by the Corporate Policy Group.

Office of Cathaoirleach

- The elected Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council is the first citizen of County Longford and ranks second only to the President of Ireland for the purposes of protocol.
- The office of Cathaoirleach, the holder of that office and position of first citizen of County Longford, must be recognised as such at any event or function at which he/she is in attendance.
- The Cathaoirleach should at all times be treated with the courtesy and respect to which the office and the holder of the office are entitled.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council takes precedence at all meetings of the Council.
- Anything authorised or required by the Local Government Acts or otherwise by law to be done by, to or with the Cathaoirleach may where necessary be done by, to or with the Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Council.
- The Cathaoirleach may, where the Leas-Chathaoirleach is unavailable, nominate from among the other members of the Council.
- For official events and functions, if the Leas-Chathaoirleach is unavailable the Cathaoirleach will initially offer the opportunity to represent them at the function to the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District, depending on which area the event is being held in. If they are unavailable, the Cathaoirleach has the right to nominate another member of the Council. This should firstly be offered to the Leas-

Chathaoirleach from the relevant Municipal District and if they are not available to another Member from that Municipal District.

- A Council member, representing the Cathaoirleach at an official ceremony, function or event, shall be entitled to act in that capacity for such purpose.
- Where a casual vacancy occurs in the office of Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council as the case may be, the Leas-Chathaoirleach shall assume the responsibilities of the office pending the election of a Cathaoirleach.

Cathaoirleach Role and Responsibilities

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council is a major leader and influence in promoting the image and importance of County Longford in a local, regional, national and international context.
- The Cathaoirleach also helps in the promotion of the Council's Corporate objectives in the local community.
- The people of County Longford have high expectations and regard for their Cathaoirleach.
- Holding the office and being elected as Cathaoirleach is a very different role from being a Councillor. For those elected, the demands of holding the office of Cathaoirleach are unlike those of Councillor.
- There are different expectations, longer working hours, different restraints and it can often be physically and mentally challenging. However, it is also a hugely enjoyable and rewarding role.
- First and foremost, it is important to remember that the position of Cathaoirleach requires being apolitical which means taking an unbiased position in regard to political matters; being politically neutral; without political attitudes, content, or bias.
- During their Cathaoirleach year, the Cathaoirleach should reduce his or her political profile. The Cathaoirleach needs to display their even-handedness in political matters during the year. It would be inappropriate for the Cathaoirleach to be associated with a contentious issue which confuses roles. The Cathaoirleach must also maintain this apolitical role when chairing Council Meetings.
- The year in office may lead the Cathaoirleach to consider how Municipal District business can be kept up to date while they fulfil their role as Cathaoirleach. The Cathaoirleach should discuss this with his/her Group Leader and/or fellow Municipal District Councillors.
- The Cathaoirleach, and in his/her absence, the Leas-Chathaoirleach, will have the following roles and functions:
 - Chairing Council Meetings
 - Ceremonial and Representational Role

Council Meetings

The Cathaoirleach will

- Preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively, paying due regard to the legal provisions in relation to Council meetings and the rights of Councillors and the interest of the Community.
- Uphold and promote the purposes of the Standing Orders, and to interpret the Standing Orders, when necessary.
- Promote public involvement in the Council's activities.
- Be the conscience of the Council (moral sense of right and wrong).

Ceremonial Responsibilities

The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council

- Represents the Council and County Longford during his/her term of office at such civic and ceremonial functions as he/she determines appropriate.
- As the First Citizen of County Longford, performs an ambassadorial role both inside and outside Longford.
- Promotes County Longford in a positive and professional manner.
- Promotes public involvement in the Council's activities.
- Acts as a link between the Council and various groups and organisations.

Chain of Office

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council wears the Council Chain of Office on all occasions where he/she is representing the Council and County Longford in an official capacity.
- The wearing of the Council Chain of Office acknowledges the responsibilities, authority and dignity attached to the Office of Cathaoirleach of the County.
- It is also a recognition of the status of the holder of the position as First Citizen of County Longford.
- The Cathaoirleach has a right to wear the Council Chain of Office at any official events in County Longford when acting in an official capacity.
- Refer to the separate Protocol on Chain of Office.

Leas-Chathaoirleach Role and Responsibilities

- At the request of the Cathaoirleach, the Leas-Chathaoirleach will deputise for the Cathaoirleach when the Cathaoirleach is unable to fulfil the duties of that role.
- Assume all the roles and responsibilities of the Cathaoirleach as detailed above during such periods.
- When requested by the Cathaoirleach, the Leas-Chathaoirleach will support the Cathaoirleach at official events hosted by the Council.
- Carry out the duties of the office in a professional and transparent manner and in accordance with the legal requirements and adopted protocols.

Municipal Districts

- Elected Members of the County Council, elected for the local electoral areas situated in a Municipal District of the county, collectively comprise the Council membership for that Municipal District and collectively shall be known as the Municipal District Members.
- In each Municipal District, the Municipal District members shall elect a Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach.
- They shall be known and officially referred to as Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach.
- The holders of the offices of Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach of each Municipal District shall as appropriate be styled in accordance with the Local Government Act 2001.
 - In Irish *Cathaoirleach Cheantar Bardasach.....* and *Leas-Chathaoirleach Cheantar Bardasach.....* followed by the name of the Municipal District in Irish.
 - In English *Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of.....* and *Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Municipal District of.....* followed by the name of the Municipal District in English.
- The Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District takes precedence at all meetings of the Municipal District.
- When attending events in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District, the Cathaoirleach represents the Elected Members and citizens of that Municipal District.
- The titles Cathaoirleach or Leas-Chathaoirleach shall not be replaced by the titles Mayor or Deputy Mayor respectively.

Precedence

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council shall have precedence in all places in Longford, except when the President of Ireland is present.
- The Cathaoirleach may not be able to attend every function to which he/she is invited or there could be some functions that overlap.
- The Cathaoirleach, in the first instance, will offer a function which he/she cannot attend to the Leas-Chathaoirleach. The Leas-Chathaoirleach would then attend on the Cathaoirleach's behalf.
- Where the Leas-Chathaoirleach is unavailable the Cathaoirleach will initially offer the opportunity to represent them at the function to the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District, depending on which area the event is being held in.
- If Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District is unavailable, the Cathaoirleach has the right to nominate another member of the Council. This should firstly be offered to the Leas-Chathaoirleach from the relevant Municipal District and if they are not available to another Member from that Municipal District. In such instances, the Chain of Office to be worn by the deputising Member would be the local Municipal District Chain.

- Where another Member of the Council is deputising, or otherwise representing the Cathaoirleach at an event, he/she should be accorded the precedence of the Cathaoirleach.
- If the Cathaoirleach is required to speak at any function, the initial invitation from the organisation or group should confirm this. Except for the Host's introduction, the Cathaoirleach should be the first speaker.
- At any event where the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council is in attendance, normally only the Cathaoirleach would wear a Chain of Office for the event. Refer to the separate Protocol on Chain of Office.

Chain of Office

Protocol

Council Chain of Office

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council wears the Council Chain of Office on all occasions where he/she is representing the Council and County Longford in an official capacity.
- The wearing of the Council Chain of Office acknowledges the responsibilities, authority and dignity attached to the office of Cathaoirleach of the County.
- The Cathaoirleach has a right to wear the Council Chain of Office at any official events in County Longford when acting in an official capacity.
- During the Cathaoirleach’s term of office the Council Chain of Office will **only** be worn at Council events and other official functions and when carrying out official duties.
- Such official duties are defined as:
 - Meetings of the Council.
 - Attendance at Civic Events organised by the Council.
 - Attendance at Official Events where an official invitation is issued to the Cathaoirleach by the event’s organiser in advance.
 - Attendance at events in the County in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council.
 - Attendance at events organised by other Councils and the Cathaoirleach is invited to wear their Council chain.
- The Council Chain of Office should not normally be worn at events or functions outside the County.
- The County Chain of Office may be worn outside the County if
 - The Cathaoirleach is invited to attend a national launch or national official event in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council

or

 - On occasions where permission is granted by the Cathaoirleach of the County being visited.

or

 - The Cathaoirleach is invited to attend an official overseas event in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council. Such overseas events are considered and approved by the Corporate Policy Group.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council shall be responsible for the safe and secure keeping of the Council Chain of Office, during their term of office.
- The Council Chain of Office must be returned by the Cathaoirleach at the end of their term of office.

- The above protocols on wearing of the Council Chain applies when the Leas-Chathaoirleach is deputising for the Cathaoirleach.

Leas-Chathaoirleach Council Chain of Office

- The Leas-Chathaoirleach wears the Leas-Chathaoirleach Council Chain of Office on all occasions where he/she is deputising for the Cathaoirleach of the Council and representing County Longford in an official capacity.
- The Leas-Chathaoirleach shall be responsible for the safe and secure keeping of the Leas-Chathaoirleach Chain of Office, during their term of office.
- The Leas-Chathaoirleach Council Chain of Office must be returned by the Leas-Chathaoirleach at the end of their term of office.

Municipal District Chain of Office

- The wearing of the Municipal District Chain acknowledges the responsibilities of the Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District.
- Municipal District Chains of Office may only be worn within their respective Municipal District at official duties of the Municipal District.
- Municipal District official duties are defined as:
 - Municipal District Meetings.
 - Attendance at Civic Events organised by the Municipal District.
 - Attendance at events in the Municipal District in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District.
 - Attendance at an official overseas event in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District. Such overseas events are considered and approved by the Corporate Policy Group.
- At official receptions and events organised at Municipal District level, the Municipal District Cathaoirleach, may wear his/her chain of office in addition to the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council if they are in attendance.
- At County level, it is recognised that exceptional circumstances may present where it is appropriate for the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and the Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District to wear their chains of office at the same function or event. The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and Chief Executive will agree in advance of the function or event if this is appropriate.
- The above protocols on wearing of the Municipal District Chain applies when the Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Municipal District is deputising for the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District.
- The Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District is responsible for making the Municipal District Chain of Office available and presenting it to the Leas-Chathaoirleach in advance of any event at which they are deputising for them.
- The Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District shall be responsible for the safe and secure keeping of the Municipal District Chain of Office, during their term of office.
- The Municipal District Chain of Office must be returned by the Municipal District Cathaoirleach at the end of their term of office.

Attendance by Elected Members as Guests at Official Events

Protocol

Invitations to Events

- An invitation to the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council to attend at Official Events must be in writing, on official headed paper, and sent by an authorised person of the organisation hosting the event.
- The Cathaoirleach is the first citizen of County Longford and should be accorded full respect as the first citizen of the county taking precedence over all others with the exception of the President of Ireland. He/she is followed by the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District as appropriate. This situation prevails in the presence of a Member of Government.
- Organisations who invite the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council to attend their functions/events are advised to follow the procedures as outlined below so that the office of the Cathaoirleach is appropriately acknowledged. These guidelines are taken as applying also to the Leas-Chathaoirleach or person deputising for the Cathaoirleach, where appropriate.
- It is essential that every invitation is routed through the Meetings Administrator.
- The Cathaoirleach may be approached in person, by letter, over the phone, by representatives of an organisation asking him/her to attend a function. In this instance, it is recommended the Cathaoirleach refers the person to the Meetings Administrator, who can advise on the availability of the Cathaoirleach and inform them of the County Council protocols. This will prevent the possibility of a clash of functions and helps greatly to plan the Cathaoirleach's Civic Year.
- The Cathaoirleach should not accept any invitations verbally. In order to protect the integrity of the Office of the Cathaoirleach, it is essential that Corporate Services has details of the functions that the Cathaoirleach will be attending.
- Invitations to attend functions and events in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council must be referred to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration.
- In the event of urgency, a decision will be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and the decision will be advised to the Corporate Policy Group by the Chief Executive.
- The Cathaoirleach should not attend commercial functions where his/her name might be inappropriately used for advertising purposes.
- An invitation to the Cathaoirleach to attend an event or function should be issued to the Meetings Administrator, Longford County Council, three weeks in advance and should include the following:
 - Title and purpose of the event.
 - Date, time, expected duration and venue.
 - Cathaoirleach's role at the event.

- To facilitate this, an Event Invitation Form is available to groups/organisations on the Council's website.
- If the Cathaoirleach is unable to attend, he /she will be represented by the Leas-Chathaoirleach.
- If the Leas Chathaoirleach is unable to attend, the Cathaoirleach would then offer the function to the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District, depending on which area the event is being held in.
- Where Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District is unavailable, the Cathaoirleach has the right to nominate another member of the Council. This should firstly be offered to the Leas-Chathaoirleach from the relevant Municipal District and if they are not available to another Member from that Municipal District. In such instances, the Chain of Office to be worn by the deputising Member would be the local Municipal District Chain.
- Where it is requested or proposed that the Cathaoirleach attend an event or participate in a visit and where such attendance/participation requires additional Council resources (financial, human or organisational), the Corporate Policy Group, Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive will jointly consider such requests/proposals.
- The Meetings Administrator will confirm attendance with the organisers.

Pre-Event Information

- The following information should be sent to the Meetings Administrator at least one week before the event.
 - The running order, including all elements of the event and the order of speakers.
 - Contact details of organiser.
 - Details of the start and finish time.
 - Key guests attending the event.
 - Background information on the project/event.
 - Details of photographs to be taken and/or presence of media.
 - Details of reception/refreshments as appropriate.
 - If the purpose of the event is to launch a book/brochure a copy of the item should be provided in advance.
- If a hosting organisation is issuing a press release, a copy should be forwarded to the Council's Communications Office in advance. If requested by the hosting organisation, the Cathaoirleach may supply a quote to be included in the press release.
- Photos from the event, which include the Cathaoirleach, must be provided to the Council's Communications Office, by email.
- Any photographs and videos taken shall have regard to the Council's Data Protection Guidance on photography at events.

At the Event

- A member of the organising committee, ideally the Chairperson, should be assigned to welcome the Cathaoirleach on arrival, escort him/her to the event and introduce

him/her as necessary. The Cathaoirleach will generally arrive by car and a convenient parking space should be identified/reserved beforehand by the host.

- The Cathaoirleach should be seated in a prominent position, in accordance with the position as first citizen of the county.
- In any formal introductions at the function, the Cathaoirleach should be introduced as follows: An Comhairleoir (name), Cathaoirleach Comhairle Chontae an Longfoirt or if preferred: Councillor (name), Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council.
- The only circumstance in which the Cathaoirleach is not mentioned first in a list of introductions is when the President of Ireland is in attendance. The President as first citizen of the country takes precedence in that case.
- At the conclusion of the function, the Cathaoirleach should be escorted to his/her car by the host or his/her representative.

Invitations to Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District

- The Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District may be invited to attend functions or events in their Municipal District and this protocol should also be applied to such invitations.
- Where invitations are received by Elected Members in their capacity as Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District, the Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District represents the citizens of the Municipal District.
- Invitations to a Cathaoirleach of a Municipal District by organisations to attend events which are outside the Municipal District, must be referred for consideration by the Corporate Policy Group.
- In the event of urgency, a decision will be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and the decision will be advised to the Corporate Policy Group by the Chief Executive.

Speeches

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council takes precedence over all others at events and functions in the county.
- Where there is a formal list of speakers, the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council should speak first after any introductory address. If a different order is necessary, the order should be agreed in advance with the Cathaoirleach. Where the Cathaoirleach is not required to speak, the organising body shall ensure that the presence of the Cathaoirleach, as first citizen of the county, is appropriately acknowledged during any introductory address.
- Depending upon the nature of the function it may also be appropriate to invite the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District. In such circumstances and where appropriate, the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District may be invited to speak, and only after the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council.
- The Chief Executive or his/her representative if invited will always be asked to speak after the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and, if appropriate, the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District.
- The order of speaking, outlined above, prevails in the presence of a Member of Government.

Civic Honours

Protocols

Legislative Basis

- Section 74 of the Local Government Act 2001.
- Schedule 3 Reserved Functions Schedule 14A Part 2.
- The Council may confer a civic honour on a distinguished person in such manner as it may determine including the admission of the person to the honorary freedom of its administrative area – County Longford.
- A decision of the Council to confer a civic honour on a person is a reserved function.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council may propose a person for a civic honour under Section 74 (1)(b).
- Prior to the Council agreeing to pass a resolution to confer civic honour or the hosting of a civic reception, due consideration should always be given to ‘An Rud is annamh is iontach’ – ‘What is seldom is wonderful’.
- Longford County Council is and remains the local authority that undertakes this reserved function notwithstanding the 2014 legislative provision relating to reserved functions.
- The Council will maintain a record of civic honours.
- A list of individuals conferred with the Honorary Freedom of the County will be displayed in a prominent place in Áras an Chontae.

Protocol – Honorary Freedom of County Longford

- The decision to confer Honorary Freedom of County Longford is a reserved function of Longford County Council.
- The conferring of the Honorary Freedom of County Longford is a civic honour that can be conferred by the members of the Council on an individual on behalf of the people of County Longford.
- Any person conferred with this civic honour will receive the Honorary Freedom of the County.
- Honorary Freedom of the County shall be an honorary description only, to recognise the contribution of the recipient to the county and shall not confer any rights or impose any liabilities upon the recipient.
- Without prejudice to Section 74 (1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2001, the award of Honorary Freedom of the County may not normally be made by the Council more than once in a five-year period.
- In deciding to confer the Honorary Freedom of the County, the Members of the Council must have due regard to the need to protect the integrity and significance of the conferring of the Honorary Freedom of the County and must meet the maxim that “what is seldom is wonderful”.

- The Honorary Freedom of the County may only be conferred in recognition of the most significant and momentous of achievements, or in recognition of the most outstanding of contributions made to civil society by an individual. In general, only achievements that are of the most significant national, provincial or county importance or contributions that are outstanding at national, provincial or county level will reach such standard.
- The Honorary Freedom of County Longford may be granted, in accordance with the following procedure, to:
 - Natives of, or persons with strong identifiable and long-established connections with, Longford who have brought credit to Longford by their contribution to the common good.
 - Distinguished persons who, from a National or International perspective, have made an exceptional or unique contribution to the common good.
- A proposal to confer the Honorary Freedom of the County on an individual may be made by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or jointly by any five Members of the Council.
- Any such proposal must be submitted to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration.
- The Corporate Policy Group, after consideration of the proposal, will submit same to an 'In Committee' Council Meeting.
- Any discussion prior to Council formal resolution is to be considered **and remain confidential** in order to avoid embarrassment to either the potential recipient or the Council.
- Following a positive recommendation at the 'In Committee' Council Meeting, a confidential enquiry with the proposed recipient is made by the Meetings Administrator to establish if the Honorary Freedom of the County will be accepted.
- On receipt of a positive response from the proposed recipient, the Cathaoirleach will formally put the Resolution to grant the Honorary Freedom to an Ordinary Meeting of Longford County Council for formal resolution.
- The grant of the award of Honorary Freedom will be by way of a Cathaoirleach's Notice of Motion, naming the relevant person and the reasons why such award should be conferred. The motion will be proposed and agreed by the County Council and a resolution must be passed.
- In order for such a Motion to be passed it will be necessary for at least three quarters of the Members present at the Council Meeting to vote in favour of the Motion.
- Following the adoption of the Cathaoirleach's Notice of Motion to confer the award, a Civic Reception will be arranged to present the civic honour on the recipient who will sign a roll of honour and be presented with a certificate of the Honorary Freedom of County Longford.
- This Certificate will be presented by the Cathaoirleach.
- The Civic Reception programme may include musical entertainment, poetry, speech, drama or other artistic activity.
- If there are compelling reasons why the recipient cannot attend an awarding ceremony for the Honorary Freedom of the County may be conferred in absentia.
- A list of those conferred with the Honorary Freedom of the County will be displayed in a prominent place in Áras an Chontae.

Protocol – Cathaoirleach’s Annual Awards

- There are many groups, organisations and individuals who achieve significant success at county or national level through their achievements in sporting, cultural, academic, scientific, political, creative, innovation, or other areas. They bring honour and pride to their native county and in such instances the Council will recognise their achievement at the Cathaoirleach’s Annual Awards Ceremony.
- Each Municipal District Cathaoirleach may submit only one nominee on behalf of his/her Municipal District to the Meetings Administrator.
- Any proposal must be presented to and approved by Municipal District Members at an ‘In Committee’ Municipal District Meeting.
- Any discussion at this Municipal District meeting is to be considered **and remain confidential** in order to avoid embarrassment to either the potential recipient or the Municipal District.
- In addition to the nominees from the Municipal Districts the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council may nominate only one group, organisation or individual who will receive their overall Cathaoirleach Award.
- All nominations are submitted to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration.
- Following the Corporate Policy Group recommendation, a confidential enquiry is made with the proposed recipients by the Meetings Administrator to establish if the awards will be accepted.
- On receipt of a positive response from the proposed recipients, the Cathaoirleach will formally put the Resolution to grant the Cathaoirleach Awards to an Ordinary Meeting of Longford County Council for formal resolution.
- The grant of the Cathaoirleach Awards will be by way of Cathaoirleach’s Notice of Motion, naming the relevant recipients and the reasons why such awards should be conferred. The motion will be proposed and agreed by the County Council and a resolution must be passed.
- Following the adoption of the Cathaoirleach’s Notice of Motion to confer the awards, a Civic Reception will be arranged to present the Annual Cathaoirleach Awards to the recipients who will be presented with an Award Certificate.
- The Civic Reception programme may include musical entertainment, poetry, speech, drama or other artistic activity.
- If there are compelling reasons why a recipient cannot attend an awarding ceremony the award may be conferred in absentia.
- The recipients of the awards will be presented with a certificate.

Protocol – Civic Events

- As the first citizen of County Longford, the Cathaoirleach always ranks first within the county at all official occasions or functions.
- The Cathaoirleach will appoint the Leas-Chathaoirleach or a representative Councillor to attend the function if he/she cannot attend.

- The purpose of a civic event is to:
 - Recognise individuals and groups for local/national/international achievement.
 - Officially open or launch a project of the County Council.
 - Officially launch a programme, festival or other event run by the Council or a community in the county.
 - Welcome dignitaries, guests or groups to the county.
- Civic events and receptions are subject to the limits of the Budget assigned.
- Longford County Council is and remains the local authority that undertakes this reserved function notwithstanding the 2014 legislative provision relating to reserved functions.
- To ensure a uniform and transparent approach in conferring civic honours in accordance with the LG Act 2001 (Section 74), the following agreed protocols in relation to Civic Events will apply.

Protocol – Civic Receptions

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, or his/her selected deputy, is the representative of Longford County Council at all Civic Receptions.
- Civic Receptions are awarded in recognition of a significant and momentous achievement or set of achievements by an individual/group or organisation at national level or international level. According, this high accolade is at the disposal of Longford County Council and in conferring a civic honour through a Civic Reception, regard should be had for the significance and very exceptional nature of the achievement. Due consideration should always be given to ‘An Rud is annamh is iontach’ – ‘What is seldom is wonderful’
- Civic Honours in the form of a Civic Reception are conferred by reserved function of the Council in accordance with the provisions of Section 74 of the Local Government Act 2001, following consideration and recommendation by the Corporate Policy Group and approval by the Council.
- Any Elected Member wishing to propose a formal Civic Reception for any group or individual must forward a written request to the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, copied to the Meetings Administrator, who will raise the matter for consideration by the Corporate Policy Group.
- Where a Civic Event is being proposed to commemorate a deceased individual, it is considered appropriate that such events will only take place where the person is deceased for at least three years and in consultation and agreement with the next of kin of the deceased.
- The Corporate Policy Group will consider all proposals from members or the Cathaoirleach for a Civic Reception at their meetings in April, July, and October of each year. The Corporate Policy Group will consider budgetary provisions.
- The Corporate Policy Group will recommend on the appropriate level of honour that should be conferred in any particular case and by whom i.e. Council or Municipal District level.
- The Corporate Policy Group will submit its recommendation for Civic Receptions to the full Council for approval at the next available meeting of the Council.

- Recommendations for Civic Recognition to be conferred at Municipal District level will be submitted to the relevant Municipal District for consideration at their next available meeting.
- It is considered appropriate that a limit of two Civic Receptions at Council level per year will normally apply in addition to the Annual Cathaoirleach awards, subject to adequate funding being provided for same.
- The Cathaoirleach presides at all Civic Receptions and official events and carries out official openings/launches in the absence of a special invited guest. In his/her absence, the Leas-Chathaoirleach will carry out these functions.
- If the Leas Chathaoirleach is unable to attend, the Cathaoirleach has the right to nominate another member of the Council.

Protocol – Municipal District Civic Recognition

- Municipal District Civic Recognition events acknowledge local sporting, cultural, academic, scientific, political, creative and innovative achievements.
- Achievements in the Municipal District area are recognised by the presentation of a Certificate of Achievement or a Certificate of Recognition.
- Civic Recognition will be awarded to individuals, groups or organisations that succeed or achieve merit at local, county or national level through their achievements in sporting, cultural, academic, scientific, political, creative, innovation or other endeavour. Such people bring honour and pride to their native parish and district and in such instances, the Council will recognise their achievement at Municipal District level.
- Recommendations for Civic Recognition may be referred from the Corporate Policy Group to the relevant Municipal District.
- Members of the Municipal District may propose groups, organisations and individuals for receipt of a Certificate of Civic Achievement/Recognition through a Notice of Motion submitted in advance of the Municipal District Meeting.
- If approved the Municipal District will recognise their achievement by the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District presenting a Certificate of Civic Achievement/Recognition as appropriate to the groups or individuals involved.
- It is considered appropriate that a limit of two Civic Recognition receptions at Municipal District level per year will normally apply, subject to adequate funding being provided for same.
- Civic Recognition awards ceremonies will be held at the end of Municipal District meetings.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council will be invited to attend.
- The Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District presents the Certificate of Achievement or a Certificate of Recognition. In his/her absence, the Municipal District Leas-Chathaoirleach will carry out this function.

Protocol – Official Welcome

- There are occasions when something less formal than a Civic Reception would be appropriate to mark the visit by distinguished individuals or groups to the county.

- In such cases, it is recommended that the Council will extend an Official Welcome to such persons, and will present an appropriate memento of the occasion, by either the County Council or the relevant Municipal District dependant on the status of the visit.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and the Chief Executive will decide who attends the Official Welcome and at what level the Official Welcome should be extended, i.e. County or Municipal District level.
- Official Welcomes may be extended at regular intervals, as the need arises.
- The Official Welcome will take the following format:
 - Official Welcome by the Cathaoirleach.
 - Welcome Contributions by the Elected Members.
 - Welcome by the Chief Executive.
 - Invitation by the Cathaoirleach to the guest to respond.
 - Presentation of Gift/Scroll by the Cathaoirleach.
 - Photo Opportunity.
 - The opportunity for the welcomed guest and party to avail of refreshments in an adjoining room, or the opportunity to meet with officials of the Council and/or outside agencies/groups.
 - The opportunity to the welcomed guest and party to visit a place(s) of interest accompanied by the relevant official(s) of the Council.
- Ambassadors or other dignitaries wishing to visit the county and meet with the Cathaoirleach, Chief Executive and officials should write to the Chief Executive's office requesting the visit and outlining the purpose of the visit. This request will then be considered by the Corporate Policy Group. The Chief Executive's office will confirm arrangements with the relevant parties.

Protocol – Congratulations

- The following are the protocols that will apply in the event of any Member of Longford County Council wishing to have congratulations extended to an individual, group or organisation in relation to any achievement attained or honour that has been bestowed.
- Where a Member of the Council or Municipal District or any group of Members wishes to have the congratulations of the Council **or** Municipal District extended, the Member or Members must discuss the relevant matter with the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or relevant Municipal District in advance of the meeting.
- The Member or Members must then submit their written request to the relevant Cathaoirleach, and copied to the Meetings Administrator, prior to commencement of the Meeting.
- At the commencement of the Meeting the Cathaoirleach will read the requests that were received.
- The fact that the Council/Municipal District has extended its congratulations for any reason will be recorded in the minutes of the Meeting without reference being made to the Member or Members who submitted the request.
- Appropriate Congratulatory letters will be issued by the Meetings Administrator.

Official Openings Protocol

Introduction

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, as the first citizen, is the Longford County Council representative at all Official Openings.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, or his/her deputy, is the representative of Longford County Council at all official openings of all **nationally funded** projects and events taking place in the county.
- The Cathaoirleach of the respective Municipal District, or his/her deputy, will represent the Municipal District at official openings and launches of **locally funded** projects, launches and events taking place in their Municipal District area.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, or his/her deputy, is the representative of Longford County Council at **National Launches**.

Press and Media

- Press releases for all Official Openings and Launches should be prepared and issued in compliance with Longford County Council's Publicity Protocol.
- As part of the central coordination role, Communication Office will have lead responsibility for all press and media aspects.

Precedence at Nationally Funded Projects

- Arrangements for project openings and events, for example sod turning, should be notified to the relevant Departments at least six weeks in advance of the proposed date for such event. This also includes any official or unofficial openings of stages of the project.
- Where it is a condition of funding, the relevant Minister, or a nominee of the relevant Minister's choosing, shall take precedence at any project opening or other similar event and this shall be reflected in any ceremonial plaque, stone or other marker placed to commemorate or mark the event.
- If the relevant Minister or their nominee is unavailable for any project opening or other similar event, the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council takes precedence over all others and in all places in Longford. This situation prevails in the presence of other Members of Government.
- Where the Cathaoirleach is not available to attend to perform the official opening, the Leas-Chathaoirleach will be asked by the Cathaoirleach to officiate.
- Where the Leas-Chathaoirleach is unavailable the Cathaoirleach will initially offer the opportunity to represent them at the function to the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District, depending on which area the Official Opening is being held in.
- If Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District is unavailable, the Cathaoirleach has the right to nominate another member of the Council. This should firstly be offered to the Leas-Chathaoirleach from the relevant Municipal District and if they are not available to another Member from that Municipal District. In such instances, the Chain of Office to be worn by the deputising Member would be the local Municipal District Chain.

Responsibility

- Individual Council sections may be the event sponsor and will work in cooperation with the Corporate Services section in the planning and execution of Official Openings.
- In consultation with Corporate Services, Official Openings are the responsibility of the Director of Services with responsibility for the delivery of the particular service in question. The Director may choose to delegate this responsibility to the relevant Senior Officer(s) and in such situations will advise Corporate Services of their decision and the details of the relevant Senior Officer(s). For example:
 - Opening of a housing scheme: Housing
 - Opening of a bridge or a road: Roads
 - Opening of a playground: Community
 - Opening of a fire station: Emergency Services

Operational Aspects

- In all cases, and prior to setting a date for any Official Opening, the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, Chief Executive, the relevant Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District, Directors of Services and Corporate Services are to be consulted by the relevant Director or their nominee to agree the date. This should happen **at least six weeks** in advance of any official opening or other similar activity.
- Any invitation issued on behalf of the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council must be forwarded to Corporate Services for approval in advance of circulation to invitees.

Plaque

- In cases where a Minister is due to attend an official opening, any plaque or invitation for an official opening will be in joint names of the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and the Minister present on the day.
- The relevant Director or their nominee will consult with the Cathaoirleach on the wording to appear on the plaque.
- For nationally funded projects and where it is a condition of funding, the relevant Minister or their nominee, takes precedence and this shall be reflected in any ceremonial plaque, stone or other marker placed to commemorate or mark the event.
- For locally funded projects, the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council will reserve the discretion to decide as to the name(s) and, if relevant, the order to appear on the plaque.
- The relevant and most up to date branding guidelines and logos from Government Departments must be complied with.

Order of Speeches

- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council will always deliver the welcome and opening address.

- It may also be appropriate to invite the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District to the Official Opening. In such circumstances and where appropriate, the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District may be invited to speak, and only after the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council.
- If there is a Minister of Government in attendance, he/she shall be invited to speak after the Cathaoirleach or the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District.
- The Chief Executive or their representative will always be invited to speak after the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and, if appropriate, the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District or Minister of Government.
- No other person will be invited to speak without prior consultation and agreement with the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and Chief Executive. This must be done in advance of the official opening.
- Where a representative from the project sponsor or community is invited to speak, they must recognise the contribution of the Local Authority and Government Department(s) and Agencies for the support in delivering the project.
- Speeches will be coordinated by the relevant section in consultation with the Communications Office.

Ecumenical Blessing

- The agreed custom and practice in Longford County Council to invite members of the clergy of the main denominations to participate in official openings. This practice is in keeping with the Council's tradition of having an ecumenical blessing to pray for the safety of all those who will either cross a new bridge, drive on a new road, play in a new playground or enjoy shelter and security of a new home.
- It is intended to continue with this custom and practice and maintain this tradition unless the Members of Longford County Council approve otherwise.

Locally Funded Projects

- Official openings and launches of locally funded projects are the responsibility of the Director of Services with responsibility for the delivery of the particular service or project. The Director may choose to delegate this responsibility to the relevant Senior Officer(s).
- Responsibility for organising official openings or events for community led and delivered projects, for example CLÁR, rests with the relevant community group or organisation.
- Communities in receipt of funding for projects or services must recognise the contribution of the Local Authority and the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District must be represented at all associated events such as launches or official openings.
- The Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, or his/her deputy, as the first citizen, is the Longford County Council representative at all Official Openings and Launches of locally funded projects.
- The Cathaoirleach of the respective Municipal District, or his/her deputy, will represent the Municipal District.

- Any invitation, issued on behalf of the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District, for an official opening or launch must be forwarded to Corporate Services for approval in advance of circulation to invitees.

Contract Signings Protocol

Responsibility

- Contract Signings are the responsibility of the Director of Services with responsibility for the delivery of the project. The Director may choose to delegate this responsibility with the relevant Senior Officer(s).

Representation

- The Chief Executive and the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council will attend contract signings for all large-scale contracts. The Director of Services with responsibility for the delivery of the project in question will also attend.
- Representatives from the relevant parties to the contract will be invited to attend and this will be coordinated by the relevant Director or their representative.
- In cases where the project is being delivered within a Municipal District, the Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District and Members of the Municipal District will be invited to attend the contract signing.
- In cases where the project covers more than one Municipal Districts, the Cathaoirleach and Members of the Municipal Districts will be invited to attend the contract signing.

Press and Media

- Press releases should be prepared and issued in compliance with Longford County Council's Publicity Protocol.
- As part of the central coordination role, Communication Office will have lead responsibility for all press and media aspects.

Funerals and Guards of Honour Protocol

Introduction

- Recognising that it is appropriate for the Council be represented at certain funerals and removals to honour the deceased person, the following protocol has been developed to ensure that the wishes of the family are considered and respected and reflect the solemnity of the occasion.
- It is important that Members and employees honour the protocol in a respectful and compassionate manner.

Attendance at Funerals

- The Council shall be represented at the following funerals/removal of the remains from a funeral home, with the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or his/her Deputy wearing the Chain of Office:
 - Current member of the Council.
 - Former Cathaoirleach or former member of the County Council and the former Longford and Granard Town Councils.
 - Current member of the Oireachtas, from County Longford, who represented the constituency of Longford/Westmeath.
 - Former member of the Oireachtas, from County Longford, who represented the constituency of Longford/Westmeath.

Guard of Honour

- Following a decision of the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council to arrange a Guard of Honour, the Meetings Administrator will make a sensitive confidential enquiry to the family of the deceased to establish if they have any objection.
- On receipt of a positive response, the Meetings Administrator will notify the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive.
- The Meetings Administrator will make the formal arrangements for the Guard of Honour with the Funeral Director and will notify the confirmed arrangements to the Elected Members by text, together with guidance on the formation of the Guard of Honour.
- Employees will be informed by email of the arrangements for the Guard of Honour, where appropriate.
- Persons participating in the Guard of Honour will be arranged in two lines. The left-hand side will be led by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or her /his representative and the right-hand side by the Chief Executive or his/her representative. Participants will be spaced one metre apart.
- Where employees of the Council participate in the Guard of Honour, they will line up behind the Elected Members.
- On the day the Meetings Administrator, or their representative, will assist in coordinating the Guard of Honour.

- The only chain of office worn at Guards of Honour is the County Council chain worn by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or their representative.

Books of Condolence

- Books of Condolences shall only be opened with approval of the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and Chief Executive in respect of the following:
 - Death of the current President of Ireland.
 - Death of a current or former Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or Municipal District.
 - Death of a current or former Member of the Council.
 - Death of a current member of the Oireachtas, from County Longford, who represented the constituency of Longford/Westmeath.
 - Death of a current employee.
 - National or local tragedies of a significant nature.
 - European or global tragedies of a significant nature with Longford connections.
 - Death of a well-known celebrity/personality with close ties to Longford.
 - Any death/event deemed appropriate by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and Chief Executive.
- Any proposal by a Member to open a Book of Condolence for a recently deceased person must first be presented in writing to the Cathaoirleach, for consideration. The Member must copy this notification to the Meetings Administrator who will bring it to attention of Chief Executive.
- Any discussion is to be handled in a sensitive and confidential manner in order to avoid embarrassment to either the family of the deceased or the Council.

Flags Protocol

The National Flag

- The National Flag, if flown alone at Council buildings, should be respected and in a prominent position.
- It should never touch the ground even when being raised and or lowered.
- It should be flown outside Áras an Chontae for visits by Uachtárain na hÉireann, an Taoiseach and/or Government Ministers and other dignitaries or as directed by the Chief Executive.
- If flying on a pole with one other flag it must be the left-hand side and higher than the other flag.
- If flying with two other flags it must be in the centre and higher than the other two flags.
- The placing of the flag should ensure the Green section is always to the flagpole.
- Where requested at national level **or** when deemed appropriate by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and Chief Executive, the National Flag may be lowered to half-mast as a mark of respect.
- Further guidance with regard to protocols in respect of the [National Flag](#) are available for the Department of the Taoiseach, The Protocol Section, Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2, (01) 6194000, Fax: (01) 6789791, e-mail: protocol@taoiseach.irlgov.ie.
- The National Flag shall be flown from the Civic Offices on the following occasions:
 - St. Patrick's Day.
 - Easter Sunday.
 - Easter Monday.
 - The National Day of Commemoration on the Sunday closest to 11th July (the date of the Anglo-Irish Truce in 1921).
 - The occasion of a Civic Reception for a Church or State Dignitary.
 - The National Flag is flown on the occasion of other significant national and local events such as festivals and commemorations.
- The National Flag shall be flown at half-mast at the Council's office, on the following occasions and the next Council Meeting shall stand adjourned for 5 minutes or a Minutes silence shall be observed as a mark of respect (as deemed appropriate by the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive):
 - The death of a national or international figure.
 - The death of his holiness the Pope.
 - The Primate of All Ireland.
 - The President of Ireland.
 - The Papal Nuncio.
 - Archbishop of the Province.
 - The Bishop of the Diocese or equivalent senior Clergymen in other Faiths.

- A Member of the Council.
- An employee of the Council.
- Any occasion deemed appropriate by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or the Chief Executive.
- The following Flags will only be allowed to be flown at the Council's Offices:
 - National Flag of Ireland.
 - The National Flag of a visiting Dignitary.
 - EU Flag.
 - County Flag.
 - Any request for other flags must be submitted to the Corporate Policy Group for their consideration and approval
 - The National Flag shall be flown in accordance with the protocol as issued by the Protocol Section of the Department of the Taoiseach.

Longford County Council Flag

- The formal Longford County Council flag with crest should be used when considered appropriate by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and Chief Executive.

Lighting of Council Buildings Protocol

Introduction

- The lighting of Council Buildings is increasingly being used to raise public awareness or promote particular causes or events. These range from international events, such as for St. Patrick's Day to national or local causes or campaigns.
- Longford County Council is often requested to participate in such initiatives and the purpose of this Protocol is to set out a procedure for external groups to make a request to the Council and to establish criteria and a process for assessing such requests.

Applications to Light-up Buildings

- External groups wishing to light any Council Building should make a formal application to do so.
- Requests should be submitted at least four weeks in advance of the proposed date of the event by emailing meetingsadministrator@longfordcoco.ie.

Criteria

- In assessing a request, Longford County Council will consider, amongst others, the following issues:
 - Objectives and relevance of the campaign/initiative/event.
 - Nature and objectives of the organisation making the request.
 - Feasibility of the proposal, including the cost and resource implications for the Council.
- The Council will not
 - Support any campaign that is political in nature.
 - Permit its buildings to be used for initiatives that are contrary to the Council's objectives or for campaigns that have a narrow focus and unlikely to command popular support.

Decision Making Process

- Proposals will be considered by the Chief Executive and the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, who will make a recommendation to the Corporate Policy Group for final decision.
- In the event of urgency, a decision will be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and decision will be advised to the Corporate Policy Group by the Chief Executive.

Attendance by Elected Members as Guests at Official Overseas Events

Protocol

Invitations to Official Overseas Events

- An invitation to the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council to attend at Official Overseas Events must be in writing, on official headed paper, and sent by an authorised person of the organisation hosting the event.
- It is essential that all such invitations are routed through the Meetings Administrator.
- Organisations who invite the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council to attend their functions/events are advised to follow the procedures as outlined above.
- The Cathaoirleach will normally be accompanied by the Chief Executive or his/her nominee at official overseas events.
- These procedures also apply to Elected Members and officials attending awards events overseas. Longford County Council will be represented by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, accompanied by the Chief Executive or his/her nominee.
- Attendance and attendees at official overseas functions and events must be referred to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration and approval.
- In the event of urgency, a decision will be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and the decision will be advised to the Corporate Policy Group by the Chief Executive.
- If the Cathaoirleach is unable to attend, he /she will be represented by the Leas-Chathaoirleach.
- If the Leas Chathaoirleach is unable to attend, the Cathaoirleach would then offer the function to a Cathaoirleach from one of the Municipal Districts. Where none are available to attend, the Cathaoirleach has the right to nominate another member of the Council.
- Invitations to twinning events overseas, and funding for same, will be considered and must be approved by the Corporate Policy Group. Longford County Council will be represented by the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council or Cathaoirleach of the relevant Municipal District, accompanied by the Chief Executive or relevant Director of Service.
- The Meetings Administrator will confirm attendance with the organisers.
- Flights for official overseas events must be booked centrally through Corporate Services.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray, seconded by Councillor Paul Ross, the members unanimously agreed to adopt the Civic Protocols at a meeting of Longford County Council held on the 14 December 2022.