



# Kieran McCarthy

INDEPENDENT COUNCILLOR



*Building our community together*

**Local Elections, 7 June 2024**

[www.kieranmccarthy.ie](http://www.kieranmccarthy.ie)

[www.corkheritage.ie](http://www.corkheritage.ie)

## **Dia Dhuit!**

*I am running to continue my tenure in your community as an Independent councillor in the upcoming local elections.*

*I wish to thank people for their insights, help and courtesy in driving my work forward as a councillor and in particular in the past year as Lord Mayor of Cork.*

*I would now like to continue to build on your specific interests in the development of our area and the city. Inside this flyer you will find information on my advocacy work, my manifesto, my civic awareness, cultural and community work, and my Lord Mayor's work.*

*In the face of a very busy Lord Mayor's agenda I still hope to meet you in my canvassing coming up to the local elections. However, if I do not get a chance to meet you in person, my contact details are on this flyer, if you have any local issues or questions on my manifesto.*

## **Le gach ghuí**



## **Cork City South East Local Electoral Area, 2024**

The South East Local Electoral Area has many challenges such as affordability of houses, planning, sustainability of transport routes, the need for regeneration in old villages such as Douglas, Balinlough, Ballintemple, Blackrock and the need to keep enhancing and developing parkland, green space and walks for recreational needs from the South Docklands and Ballinlough to Mahon and Rochestown.

There are also exciting prospects in resolving such challenges. Top of the resolution mechanisms is finance, which must be leveraged by Cork City Council and given by government to develop Cork as Ireland's southern capital and a European regional city and climate resilient hub.

## KIERAN'S WORK

Cork City Council, 2009-2024

### ■ **Planning:**

Advocacy on regeneration of inner city, enterprise & business promotion of the city, dereliction, vacant shop units, revamp of Cork Docklands Plan, heritage incorporation and adequate place making.

### ■ **Housing:**

Advocacy for a fast turnaround of vacant social housing units, reducing homelessness via more effective deployment of funding across homeless agencies, and development of affordable housing.

### ■ **Roads and Sustainability:**

Advocacy on more communication links between National Transport Authority and local people, cycling initiatives in local schools, further traffic calming in our neighbourhoods, developing more efficient and on time bus networks, with more park and rides.

### ■ **Environment and Green:**

Advocacy on net carbon emissions, air quality, development of new City parks, and roll out of the urban tree strategy.

### ■ **Tourism, Events Arts, & Marketing:**

Advocacy on development of policy and creation of strategies to promote festivals, arts, heritage, tourism and cultural development in the city.

### ■ **Member of Southern Regional Assembly:**

Advocacy on the promotion of Cork's participation in the regional spatial strategy as part of the National Planning Framework.

### ■ **Member of Irish delegation with Department of Local Government to European Committee of the Regions:**

Advocacy on the promotion of Cork's participation in Interregional Co-operation programmes (Interreg), lobbying for urban funding for EU Regional Cities.

In January 2015 and January 2019, I was appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government to be an Irish member on the European Committee of the Regions. It is an opinion body of local authorities and regional assemblies from across the EU.

## Kieran's Manifesto

### 1 **Recreation & Amenity: I will promote and develop better facilities in the community.**

In the Cork City Development Plan it is important that we continue to devise services and plans for the south east local electoral area that will enhance the sporting and cultural facilities of our community. This includes the future of our old and new parks such as Marina Park and Tramore Valley Park with links to Douglas, improving and developing playgrounds, community centres, sports and youth facilities.



### 2 **Environment & Sustainability: I will push Cork City's challenge to become net zero in its carbon emissions.**

As Ireland's fastest growing city, Cork needs to lead the way with environmentally friendly urban living. It has embarked on such a journey by becoming one of the European Commission's 110 cities to become net zero in carbon emissions by 2030. I am proud to have been introduced to this opportunity through my work in the European Committee of the Regions and I asked the executive of Cork City Council to engage with it, notwithstanding the steep uphill task. Being two years into the programme there is much work to do across many sectors to create a climate resilient Cork City.

Such work covers diverse urban agenda topics such as local transport sustainability, sustainable land use, urban forestry management, nature and biodiversity, air quality, food, energy, waste production and management, integrated environmental management.

### 3 **Marketing the City Centre: I will promote a marketing plan for Cork.**

Marketing Cork is crucial to keep it vibrant and attractive. It has been a core part of my councillor work for many years. We need to keep capturing Cork's sense of place and continue to make it meaningful and personable to citizens.

### 4 **Local Government Reform: I will foster greater local government reform.**

We need to spend wisely, changing old habits and looking to more efficient and effective ways of doing things. There needs to be greater accountability and transparency in how local government departments communicate. I believe that I have influenced and challenged the complacency of local politics and government.

### 5 **Civic awareness, Culture & Community Work: I will encourage more community participation through the provision of community and school civic awareness programmes and events.**

Learning, education, citizenship engagement, participation empowerment and building community capacity are all concepts I have designed, curated and woven into my community initiatives as part of my councillor work. Giving free walking tours, writing articles in newspapers and working with schools remains the foundations of my work. I work with pupils across 25 schools in the City with the Discover Cork Schools' Heritage Project. I also work with young people through my investment of my councillor expenses and salary in creating annual youth projects such as McCarthy's Make a Model Boat Project alongside my work with adult communities such as the establishment of Cork City Musical Society.

*Kieran McCarthy*

# Civic Awareness, Culture & Community Work

## LOCAL HISTORY ADVOCATE

### ■ ***Our City, Our Town* column in the *Cork Independent* (September 1999-ongoing)**

Having begun in October 1999, my series, *Our City, Our Town*, is in its 25th year. It is a self-funded experience in researching and writing about the history of Cork City and its county. Over the years, the series has been concerned with the heritage of Cork City and the River Lee Valley, the story of technical education, regional history and Cork 100 years ago. Visit [www.corkheritage.ie](http://www.corkheritage.ie) for indices of the column.

### ■ **The Walking Tours**

Having begun as a city centre tour 30 years ago, in the last 15 years as part of my personal councillor work, I have developed suburban tours. The suburban tours are free to the public and are regularly given during the spring to autumn seasons of the year (self-funded). There are now 24 different tours of different neighbourhoods in the city. Audience attendances can vary from 40 to 120 people. My aim is to create for each neighbourhood of the city a tour to capture its development, history, sense of place and identity, and engage people in sharing their memories and stories.

### ■ **Discover Cork: Schools' Heritage Project (2003-present day)**

The Discover Cork: Schools' Heritage Project is entering its 23rd year. It encourages students to compile a project on any aspect of Cork history. It is about exploring and investigating local heritage in a constructive, active and fun way. Interested students can pick any topic on Cork's local history to research. Students produce a project using fieldwork, interviews, making models and short films of their area. On average, 25 City Schools enter every year with 800 students participating across primary and secondary level. The project is funded by Cork City Council.

### ■ **Publications**

I am the author of 31 local history books, much of them published by publishing houses in Ireland and the UK; the most recent one being *Cork: A Potted History*, published by Amberley Publishing (2024).

## COMMUNITY PROJECT ADVOCATE

### ■ **McCarthy's Make A Model Boat Project (2011-present day)**

It is the 14th year of this self-funded *McCarthy's Make a Model Boat Project*. All interested must make a model boat at home from recycled materials and bring it along for judging to The Lough on a date in early summer. The event is run in association with Meitheal Mara's Cork Harbour Festival. There are prizes for best models and the event is free to enter.

### ■ **Cork City Musical Society (2014-present day):**

In 2014, I founded and self-funded Cork City Musical Society as a tangent of my participation as an actor in theatre and performance. The creation of an amateur musical society brings together many strands but in particular focuses on the aspect of community building and the promotion of musical theatre amongst adults and the idea of inclusivity and self-development for all who wish to engage with it.



# Lord Mayor of Cork, 2023-24

It has been a great adventure since my term began in late June last year. As a chronicler of Cork's history, it is one thing researching Cork, but it is another when one becomes part of its story board, and become Cork's ambassador.

My days have been filled with meeting groups across many thematic communities in Cork – from sporting to general community groups to the business community. On average, there are seven to eight events to attend a day – so 35 to 40 events a week is easily the average. The diary is time-managed, curated and packed solid with meetings and opportunities.

During my tenure, the range of activities have been diverse, from representing the city in meeting President Michael D Higgins to playing a diplomatic role in hosting Ambassadors from various countries to being head of delegation of Cork's sister city twinning meetings with Shanghai and San Francisco local governments.

On the ground in Cork it has been important to me to promote local economic development, to highlight the City Council's work programmes from housing to roads mobility and parks works programmes, to highlighting the history and heritage of our city through the Council's decade of commemoration programmes, to highlighting arts and culture in the guise of the new urban sculpture trail or through the Community Heritage Concert and Christmas Gala Concert and Lord Mayor's Ball in aid of key charities in our city.

It has been fun and important to actively participate in and showcase festivals such as the Pride Festival and Cork International Film Festival and helping lead 2023 edition of the Dragon of Shandon and the St Patrick's Day Parade platforming the importance of climate action and projects such as community gardens and hosting charities. In truth, the list of activities is long. And sometimes, there also has been a song along the way.

The 118-school visit programme left me humbled, emotional, and exhausted from a rollercoaster of meeting so many young people on mass but also full of great memories for years to come. To meet the bones of over 35,000 dynamic young people or Cork's up and coming generation, complete with teachers and principals of city schools, is a very large project on democracy development.

I created a social media film series called #voicesofCork, which gives voice to some of the people I have met. My social media encompasses the hashtags #GotCork and #WeAreCork and #ProudOfCork, which is also my continued focus on all things positive that Cork people engage with and promote.

For me as well, showcasing the voices of different communities matter. All of the groups are everything that is great about our City – its sense of caring, its sense of place, its sense of pride, its sense of identity.

In the world in which we find ourselves, supporting each other matters more than ever before. Togetherness matters more so than ever before. These elements of Cork's DNA need to be minded carefully as the city moves forward into the future.

