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meath county council

Meath County Council

Protocol on Civic Events

(CS001/19)

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1. Purpose of a Civic Event

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.

2. Categories of Civic Events

Meath County Council will hold different civic events to distinguish between the level, scale and impact of the achievement being recognised and in order to maintain the value and honour associated with a civic award. The Council categorises such events as follows:

(a) 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 Meath 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.

(b) Civic Recognitions

Civic Recognition will be awarded to individuals, groups or organisations that succeed or achieve merit at local, county or national level through sporting, cultural, academic, scientific, political, 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.

(c) Corporate Events

Corporate Events are organised to appropriately mark a range of activities, including: to welcome and host visiting dignitaries and groups (such as Ambassadors, Twinning Groups); to launch projects, programmes, festival and other activities of the County Council; to support and promote events organised by communities and other stakeholders in County Meath.

3. Process for Holding a Civic Event

To ensure a transparent and consistent approach is maintained for the holding of civic events, the following agreed procedure will apply. This is in compliance with Section 74 of the Local Government Act 2001 (a local authority may confer a civic honour) and Part 2 of Schedule 14A of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (performance of reserved functions at Municipal District level):

Civic Receptions – These are accorded by the County Council, only, on behalf of the people of County Meath, following a recommendation by the Protocol Committee and consultations with the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services.

Civic Recognitions – These are accorded by a Municipal District in line with the criteria (set out in Section 4 of this protocol), on the basis of a written proposal from a member(s) of that Municipal District. Civic Recognitions agreed by a Municipal District will be forwarded to the Director of Corporate Affairs/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, for comment and in turn to the Protocol Committee for consideration and endorsement. Where the Protocol Committee fails to endorse a proposal, a civic recognition will not be awarded.

Corporate Events – Depending on the nature of an event, these are determined by the Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach, as appropriate.

All events will be coordinated by the Corporate Services Department in line with the agreed operational requirements, set out Appendix A of this protocol.

4. Number of Civic Events

To maintain the value and honour associated with civic awards the following limits will be placed on such events:

- (1) **Civic Receptions** – in exceptional circumstances and up to a maximum of two Civic Receptions per Council term.
- (2) **Civic Recognitions** – such Civic Recognitions will be awarded collectively at up to two civic events per MD per year. A maximum of four Civic Recognitions, exceeded in very exceptional circumstances, will be awarded per Municipal District per year.
- (3) **Corporate Events** – these may be held at more regular intervals, as required, and subject to adequate funding being available/provided for same.

The above are maximum limits and should not be read as targets.

Where a Civic Event is being proposed to commemorate a deceased individual(s), it is considered appropriate that such events will only take place where the person(s) has been deceased for at least three years and with the agreement and, in consultation, with the family of the deceased.

5. General Provision

This protocol has been developed with the objective of catering for all anticipated events. It is, however, likely that an occasion will present itself outside of the listed provisions. In such exceptional cases, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cathaoirleach, will make a proposal to the elected members, respecting the spirit of this protocol.

Appendix A: Civic Events - Operational Aspects

All events covered by this protocol will be coordinated by the Corporate Services Department. Other Council Departments may be an event sponsor and will work in cooperation with the Corporate Services Department in the planning and execution of Corporate Events.

All events will be planned and operate in line with the revised Protocol on the Office of An Cathaoirleach (January 2019). This protocol sets out a number of key organisational requirements, as follows:

Dates and Venues

The date and time of the event will be agreed with the Chief Executive and the Cathaoirleach and must meet the needs of the main guest (such as the person being honoured, a Minister or other distinguished guest).

The selection of a venue will be made by Corporate Services, based on what is most appropriate to the specific event being arranged. As a general rule all Civic Receptions will be held in Buvinda House, MCC Headquarters. Events awarding Civic Recognitions will be held, where possible, in Municipal District Offices or other suitable venues in the municipal district.

In selecting a venue, Corporate Services will have regard to the following requirements: stage and seating arrangements; the use of a sound system (microphones/speakers); use of video or projection; requirements for specialist lighting; potential use of props; use of logos and Council branding; health, safety and security considerations.

Mailing Lists and Guests

The event mailing list will be compiled by Corporate Services and will comply with data protection requirements.

The mailing list will be targeted in accordance with the purpose of the event and may include the following:

- Family members and guests of individual/group for Civic Reception;
- Family members in the case of individual recognition events;
- Group/Organisation members in the case of group recognition events;
- Councillors (on certain occasions invite partners);
- Members the Government and of the Oireachtas and MEPs representing Meath;
- Chief Executive and Management Team members;
- Individual staff members directly involved in projects (Only staff directly involved in the project should be invited to attend official functions scheduled during working hours);
- Community groups and other interests for Corporate Events;
- Others, as determined appropriate by Corporate Services.

Where an event involves a special guest/individual being honoured, Corporate Services will act as the single point of contact and dedicated line of communication for the event.

Invitations and Registration

Invitations will be issued by Corporate Services and may be printed or issued by email. The standard invitation will be used, which includes appropriate Council and other logos. The invitation will include an RSVP, to assist with event preparation. For some events, it may be necessary to operate a Registration Desk and the Council reserves the right to refuse admission to individuals not invited or not registered to attend.

Running Order, Speeches and Notices

Corporate Services will agree the event Running Order, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach, where appropriate.

In line with the Protocol on the office of An Cathaoirleach (January 2019), the Cathaoirleach presides at all Civic Receptions and Corporate events and carries out an official opening/launch in the absence of a special guest. In his/her absence, the Leas-Chathaoirleach will carry out these functions. As a general rule, the running order will be as follows: (1) Master of Ceremonies; (2) Cathaoirleach; (3) Chief Executive or Director of Services; (4) Dignitary/Special Guest.

For Civic Recognition events, the Cathaoirleach will be invited to attend and the running order will be as above. However, the MD Cathaoirleach will also speak and present the certificates of recognition to the recipients. In his/her absence, the MD Leas-Chathaoirleach will carry out this function.

Speeches will be coordinated by Corporate Services, where required. These should be requested, and written, well in advance to allow for preparation and so the speaker can make necessary changes and be familiar with the content. The text of the speech will be formatted to allow for ease of use during the event (large font, double spacing and printed on single pages). If a guest speaker is writing their own script, a copy will be requested for use by the media and for press release purposes.

As part of the event, the Master of Ceremonies will manage the running order and make 'housekeeping' and data protection notices at the start of the running order of the event.

Media and Photographs

As part of the central coordination role, Corporate Services will have lead responsibility for all press and media aspects of the visit and will include responsibility for:

- Press Releases (pre and post-event, if required);

- Media Invitations and Accreditation;
- Media Briefings and Contacts with the Press;
- Photographer and Video Facility;
- Liaison with Department/Government Press Units (where relevant);
- Social Media Outputs.

For some events photographs will be taken in-house.

Branding and Signage

If the event is being held at an independent location, adequate signage will be provided, both outside and within the building (in the reception area, guiding guests to the appropriate function room).

Refreshments

Corporate Services will organise refreshments for events, where appropriate. As a general rule, alcohol will not be served at civic events.

Key Contacts

Various members of the Corporate Services Department play a role in the implementation of this protocol and in the delivery of civic events:

Name	Title	Role in Civic Events
Des Foley	Director of Corporate Services	Oversight of Protocol
Robert Collins	Senior Executive Officer	Implementation of Protocol and management of event planning
Olive Falsey	Administrative Officer	Administration of Council and CPG meetings and Communications
Claire King	Administrative Officer	Administration of Municipal District meetings
Audrey Norris	Senior Staff Officer	Management of Event Implementation and Planning
Siobhan Satelle	Clerical Officer	Event Management and Preparation
Maeve Sheridan	Staff Officer	Customer Services