

# Kerry 1916 from the Archives

## Reaction of Kerry Local Bodies to the 1916 Rising, Part I

The Rising came as a great surprise to "official" Kerry. The County Council's reaction to the Ballykissane Pier incident was to send the County Surveyor to investigate what was believed to have been a tragic accident. The political ramifications only became clear in late May 1916.

Other public bodies in the county were quickly out of the blocks in condemning the Rising. At its meeting on 18 May, Listowel Poor Law Board of Guardians passed two resolutions in relation to events of Easter week. The first recognised the humanitarian need created by events, and was proposed by Mrs Foran. It dealt with the provision of aid for the relief of *those destitute people in Dublin, regardless of politics or religion*.

The second, proposed by Mr Browne, commended the local RIC and the manner in which they *disarmed the Section of the Irish Volunteers of the town here, as we believe owing to his tact* (the District Inspector, RIC) *that unpleasantness of any kind was avoided, and the peace of our town, even though excitement prevailed, was kept as usual*.

At the Cahirciveen Rural District Council meeting on 17 May, the prevailing mood was also one of condemnation. Mr Garvey proposed: *That we express our horror and detestation of the Sinn Féin Rebellion in Dublin and elsewhere .... That we renew our implicit confidence in the Constitutional policy of Mr John E Redmond and the Irish Party*.

While this motion was passed on this occasion, Mr Curran served Notice of Motion to consider its rescission at the next meeting of the RDC. This rescission was passed on a 7 to 3 vote at the meeting on 31 May 1916.

The mood in Listowel changed sharply once the provisions of Martial Law began to take their toll. At the Listowel RDC Annual Meeting on 2 June, Mr Browne brought forward a motion of protest *against the insane policy for indiscriminate arrests* in three of the four provinces *while we see the North is left unmolested although we are of the opinion it was Carson and his Army that brought this Rebel War to our happy homes*.

At their meeting on 6 July, Listowel RDC called for the release or immediate trial of those Kerry Prisoners held under Martial Law. The *unblemished character and high social standing* of Mr Tom Slattery and Mr J McCarthy, both of Tralee are particularly mentioned in this respect.

In late July, Listowel Board of Guardians sought clemency for Roger Casement, and on 10 August expressed their *deep resentment at the execution of patriotic Roger Casement, whose only crime lay in the great and unvarying love which he had for the Motherland*.

