Cllr Darragh Butler’s last function as Mayor of Fingal was to receive a Famine Travel Box on behalf of Fingal County Council.

The beautifully crafted wooden box is a replica of the travel boxes which were given to women who went to Australia from workhouses all the country to seek new opportunities. The travel box would have contained all of the women’s worldly possessions including clothing made and paid for by the Poor Law Unions.

The box is the result of collaboration between the Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims and the Irish Prison Service. Michael Blanch, Chief Executive of the CCIFV and Mark O’Brien, Assistant Chief Officer, Irish Prison Service presented the box to the outgoing mayor at a reception in The Atrium at County Hall, Swords.

The box presented to Fingal commemorates women who travelled to Australia from Balrothery Workhouse and is an interpretation of the original travel box.

Cllr Darragh Butler said: “It is a great honour for Fingal County Council to receive one of these unique boxes, particularly as our own tells the story of some of the women who left Balrothery Workhouse for Australia during the famine. It is a novel way of telling their story.”

The first box was completed in September 2015 and only six are made each year. Boxes have been presented to facilities in Ireland, Australia and America with the stipulation that they
must be put on public display. A plan to display the box in Fingal’s ten libraries is currently being drawn up.

PHOTO 1: Mayor of Fingal Cllr Darragh Butler receives a Famine Travel Box on behalf of Fingal County Council from Michael Blanch, Chief Executive of the Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims and Mark O’Brien, Assistant Chief Officer, Irish Prison Service.

PHOTO 2: Mayor of Fingal Cllr Darragh Butler and Fingal County Council Chief Executive Paul Reid pictured with Michael Blanch, Chief Executive of the Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims and Mark O’Brien, Assistant Chief Officer, Irish Prison Service as well as councillors who attended the presentation of a Famine Travel Box in The Atrium at County Hall, Swords.

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For further information please contact press@fingal.ie