

Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Courthouse, Cavan on Monday 9th December 2024 at 2.00p.m.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly, Cathaoirleach, presiding

PRESENT: Councillors W. Bennett, C. Brady, D. Brady, N. Brady, P. Brady, S. Conaty, N. Connell, B. Fay, J.P. Feeley, C. Kelly, S. O'Reilly, S.P. O'Reilly, Á. Smith, N. Smith, T. Smith, V. Smith, P. Walsh

IN ATTENDANCE: E. Doyle, Chief Executive
P. Connaughton, Director of Services
B. Jennings, Director of Services
L. McGavigan, A/Director of Services
C. McEntee, Financial Management Accountant
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly welcomed all to the meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes

1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 11th November 2024. Miontuairiscí cruinnithe 11th Mí na Samhna 2024 a dhearbhú.

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor N. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 11th November 2024 be hereby approved”

2. Disclosure of Interests (Section 177 Local Government Act 2001).

Noted.

Death of former T.D. and Councillor Andrew Boylan.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that it was a sad day for the Cavan Monaghan Constituency as former Fine Gael T.D. and Councillor, Andrew Boylan is laid to rest. He stated that Andrew Boylan embodied public service and made a real difference to the people of Cavan during his political career. Councillor O'Reilly noted that Mr. Boylan was first elected to Cavan County Council in 1974. He served as Chair of both Cavan County Council and Cavan Urban Council, before being elected to the Dáil in 1987. Councillor O'Reilly offered his sympathy to Andrew's wife Margot, children Gerard, Andrew, Matt, Fergal and Bríd, grandchildren and extended families.

Councillor T. Smith offered his sympathy to the Boylan Family and noted that Councillor Boylan was responsible for securing Cavan/Monaghan as a disadvantaged area which saw

higher payments to farmers, and he was also responsible for securing funding to enhance the road network in Cavan when it was known as the pothole capital of Ireland.

Councillor D. Brady on behalf of the Sinn Féin group expressed his sympathy to the Boylan Family and noted that Andrew was a gentleman to work with.

Councillor J.P. Feeley on behalf of the Fianna Fáil group extended his sympathy to the Boylan Family. Councillor Feeley stated that Andrew lived a long and active life, with real passion for community, football and farming and his death is the end of an era especially in the Butlersbridge area.

Councillor C. Kelly stated that he served alongside Andrew for many years on the Council and stated that he was one of nature's gentlemen whose heart was always in Cavan, and he would do anything for the people of Cavan.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that County Cavan was the better for having Andrew Boylan represent the County locally and nationally.

The members in turn expressed their sympathy to the Boylan Family.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive Officer expressed his sympathy to the Boylan Family and acknowledged fully the legacy and contribution made by the late Councillor Boylan to Cavan. He stated that Andrew was a man of tremendous integrity and professionalism, and he set a standard for political life in Cavan.

The meeting was adjourned for fifteen minutes as a mark of respect to the late Councillor Andrew Boylan.

Note Minutes of Committee Meetings

3. To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 10th October 2024.

Noted.

Note Members' Reports from Conferences/Training events

4. To note members' reports from conferences and training events (*Section 142 and Section 143 of the Local Government Act 2001; Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2014 Part V Section 5 (1)*).

Noted.

Kilnaleck Garda Station.

Councillor T. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Justice and the Garda Commissioner seeking clarification on the status of the Garda Station in Kilnaleck.

Councillor Smith stated that there was mention that the station may be downgraded.

Councillor W. Bennett seconded Councillor T. Smith's motion.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that the downgrading of the station had already happened. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the station will be a non-operating

public station. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the town had already lost their credit union, bank and post office and the situation now with the Garda Station is a total disregard for rural Ireland. Councillor O'Reilly called on Cavan County Council to seek a meeting with the Minister for Justice and the Garda Commissioner regarding the situation.

Storm Darragh.

Councillor J.P. Feeley acknowledged the good work done by the ESB, Fire Service Staff and staff of Cavan County Council during the recent storm Darragh. Councillor Feeley highlighted the long delays in restoring power and water to homes within the County. Councillor Feeley stated that in many cases the power outages and delays are down to trees and the location of them to electrical power lines. Councillor Feeley stated that forestry companies like Coillte and other forestry agencies have left trees overhanging power lines and have no regard for the people living or travelling in these rural areas. Councillor Feeley stated that forestry companies going forward must take a more hands on approach and carry out a lot more maintenance than they are doing to prevent trees falling on power lines in the future. Councillor Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture, Coillte, other Forestry Agencies and our Oireachtas members in Cavan Monaghan in relation to the situation.

Councillor W. Bennett seconded Councillor Feeley's proposal and noted that it was a miracle no one was killed during the storm with all the fallen trees. Councillor Bennett stated that all trees along public roads should be cut down for safety reasons.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and praised the fire service for the trojan work done during storm Darragh and noted the very difficult working conditions faced during the storm.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and concurred with all that was said.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and highlighted a communication with Uisce Eireann who alerted their customers to issues with water via text and notification on their website. Councillor O'Reilly stated that when Cavan County Council oversaw water in the County there was not as many problems.

Councillors P. Walsh, Á. Smith, B. Fay and T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion.

Votes of Congratulations:

- Cavan County Board on winning first place in the Community Project Award category at the 2024 Stadium Business Design and Development Awards in the Theatre of Dreams, Old Trafford for Kingspan Breffni's new accessibility space and sensory room.
- Bailieborough Drama Group on winning the All-Ireland with their performance "Dying Minutes" and Conor Shaffrey on taking the Best Actor award.

- County Registrar Joe Smith and his Count Staff for a well-run count in Cavan Monaghan along with staff in Corporate Services who update the register of electors.
- Deputies David Maxwell, Matt Carthy, Cathy Bennett, Niamh Smyth and Brendan Smith on being elected to the 34th Dáil.
- Northern Sound and the Anglo Celt for their coverage of the General Election.

Votes of Sympathy:

- Kieran Coyle, outdoor staff member on the death of his brother Luke Coyle in America.
- John McGahern, Senior Executive Engineer, Ballyjamesduff Municipal District on the death of his sister Ms. Karen Gumley, Ballinagh.
- The Boyle Family Ballyconnell on the death of Paddy Joe Boyle.

Correspondence

5(a) To note reply from the Office of Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform regarding publicity at election times.

Noted.

(b) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding cover provided by private Health Insurance Companies.

Noted.

(c) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in respect of the Decision Support Service and in particular Enduring Powers of Attorney.

Noted.

(d) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding medical card eligibility.

Noted.

(e) To note reply from Office of the Minister of Further Education, Research, Innovation and Science in relation to the resumption of adult education classes across Cavan and Monaghan.

Noted.

(f) To note reply from Transport Infrastructure Ireland regarding upgrade of the N3 to the border with Fermanagh.

Noted.

(g) To note reply from Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) regarding home energy upgrades and available grants.

Noted.

(h) To note reply from Head of Service, Primary Care, Community Healthcare Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo regarding improvement of Ophthalmology Services in County Cavan.

Noted.

(i) To note reply from the Office of the Minister of State James Lawless, T.D., regarding waiting times for driving tests.

Noted.

(j) To note reply from Minister Roderic O’Gorman T.D.’s office regarding the availability of early learning and childcare.

Noted.

(k) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Further Education, Research, Innovation and Science regarding pay for apprentices.

Noted.

To approve attendance of member at Celtic Conferences “Health Service Entitlements” conference held in O’Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork from 13th – 15th December 2024

It was:

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved:

“that attendance of Councillor Shane P. O’Reilly at the Celtic Conferences “Health Service Entitlements” conference held in O’Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork from 13th – 15th December 2024, be hereby approved.”

Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Council

6. To note Chief Executive’s monthly report (*Section 51 Local Government Reform Act 2014*).

Noted

7. Adoption of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029.

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029 be hereby approved”.

8. Adoption of Local Sports Plan

Deferred to January Meeting.

MEMBERS’ ITEM – DEFERRED FROM NOVEMBER MEETING

9.1 The need for HSE management to outline the immediate filling of posts in the Dublin North-East clinical area.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the HSE and incoming Minister for Health asking for the immediate filling of posts in the Dublin North-East clinical area. Councillor O’Reilly stated that this is nothing to do with local management in our hospitals as they are doing their best and noted the budget they are

given is not enough to maintain all services. Councillor O'Reilly stated that there are numerous positions not being filled and clarification needs to be sought as to why this is happening. He stated services like radiology and palliative care are suffering as there is not enough staff employed to carry out the services. He stated that Cavan hospital is under immense pressure and the HSE are not filling positions that they have permission to fill.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly seconded Councillor S.P. O'Reilly's proposal.

9.2 That Cavan County Council propose the total abolition of inheritance tax for all domestic homes and family farms.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Finance asking for the total abolition of inheritance tax for all domestic homes and family farms. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the Government need to look at the inheritance tax system in the Country and families should not be penalised for leaving assets behind to the next generation.

Councillor B. Fay seconded Councillor S.P. O'Reilly's proposal.

Councillor S. Conaty was of the opinion that inheritance tax should not be abolished as it is a progressive tax.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that early planning is essential to protect loved ones from a financial security point of view and noted that effective state planning can help by minimising tax liabilities. Councillor Feeley stated that a son or daughter can receive gifts and inheritances up to the value of €400,000 within their lifetime before having to pay inheritance tax and this non-taxable level is called a threshold. He stated that the government is not unreasonable, people need to plan ahead.

Councillor T. P. O'Reilly agreed with Councillor Feeley stating that it is all about succession and encouraged people to make a will.

9.3 That a full survey of dangerous junctions and road crossings be published and additional funds be sought for their improvements.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that he had already spoken with Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services who informed him that surveys are currently being carried out of dangerous junctions and road crossings in the County and that extra funding had been sought for their improvements.

MEMBERS' ITEMS – DECEMBER

9.4 That Cavan County Council provide an update on the North South Interconnector.
Deferred.

9.5 To ask that more supports be given to Carers.

Councillor N. Connell proposed that Cavan County Council write to the HSE asking that more support be given to carers. Councillor O'Connell stated that carers go above and beyond their call of duty for patients but in many cases, families are required to carry out such care on a regular basis with no staff to do the hours. Councillor O'Connell noted that in some cases where a carer is sick it leaves a family stranded as there is no cover. Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and stated that families are left in limbo when the carer is unable to come. Councillor Brady stated that carers save the State huge amounts of money by keeping the patient in their own home to be looked after.

Councillor J. P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that families have no problem in getting care hours, the difficulty arises with getting carers to fill these hours. Councillor Feeley noted that in some cases carers cannot take their annual leave as they do not want to see the patients left with no one to look after them.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that carers need to be rewarded for the work they do.

The motion was supported unanimously.

9.6 Ag dul i ngleic le céas na dtithe tréigthe inár mbailte agus sráidbhailte.

Tackling the scourge of dereliction in our county's towns and villages.

Deferred.

9.7 That Cavan County Council extend/expand the route for winter maintenance gritting.

Councillor T. Smith asked that Cavan County Council extend or expand the route for winter maintenance in the County. Councillor Smith raised the case for geographically vulnerable businesses and asked for a review of the gritting routes to include more areas.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and mentioned in particular Sheelin Nursing Home in Mounthugent and Carrigabruise National School.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and noted that some people are travelling to primary schools on roads of ice.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and asked that a social media post be created by Cavan County Council with a list of areas that had being gritted, how often the roads are gritted and how much it costs the Council to grit these roads.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and in particular the idea to spread awareness of icy roads.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and acknowledged all the roads that are being regularly treated in the County by the Council. Councillor Feeley stated that roads are gritted to the County boundary but unfortunately if rain comes this work is undone. Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and praised the work the Council do in treating roads in icy conditions. Councillor Brady asked that gritters be permitted to use their own discretion on whether they should treat roads.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion stating that the public need to realise roads are dangerous in frosty conditions. Councillor O'Reilly highlighted the damage that salt can do to road surfacing.

9.8 Availability of palliative care.

Deferred.

9.9 Affordable housing schemes for County Cavan.

Councillor Á. Smith called on Cavan County Council to offer a scheme that allowed people access affordable housing in Cavan. Councillor Á. Smith stated that affordable housing units could be beneficial for families who work hard but are not able to get a mortgage. Councillor Smith noted that such schemes are working well in other counties. Councillor Smith noted that the population in Cavan is increasing all the time and asked that the Council consider offering this scheme.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that while there are schemes in place the difficulty lies in meeting the qualifying criteria for them.

Councillors T. Smith, T.P. O'Reilly, P. Walsh and N. Smith supported the motion.

Ms. Lynda McGavigan, A/Director of Service stated that currently the Council have a survey underway to determine the need for such housing across the county which closes on December 20th, 2024. Ms. McGavigan stated that the Council are actively considering the provision of affordable housing in the county over the coming years under the Housing for All Plan. Ms. McGavigan stated that the information gathered from the survey will be used to inform the Council of the level of demand and locations for affordable houses.

A minute's silence was held in memory of the late Andrew Boylan.

The meeting concluded at 4pm.