

**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Courthouse,  
Cavan on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 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  
J. Wilson, A/Director of Services  
M. McNally, A/Head of Finance  
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

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

**Confirmation of Minutes**

- 1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 9<sup>th</sup> Meán Fómhair 2024 a dhearbhu.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be hereby approved”

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

Noted.

**Note Minutes of Committee Meetings**

- 3. To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 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.

## **Correspondence**

**5(a) To note reply from Minister Heather Humphreys T.D. in relation to an advertising campaign in respect of restricted dog breeds in Ireland.**

Noted.

**(b) To note reply from Alan Dillon, T.D., Minister of State for Local Government and Planning in connection with the noticeable increase in telecommunication structures erected under Class 31 exemptions of the Planning Regulations.**

Noted

**(c) To note reply from Uisce Éireann regarding communications with customers and communities affected by disruptions to water supply.**

Noted.

### **6. To approve attendance of members at:**

- Patrick MacGill Summer School and Arts Week held in Glenties, Co. Donegal from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July (retrospective approval)

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillor S. O’Reilly, C. Kelly, P. Walsh and J.P. Feeley at the Patrick MacGill Summer School and Arts Week held in Glenties, Co. Donegal on 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July be hereby approved”

- LAMA Autumn Seminar to be held in the Newgrange Hotel, Navan on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors V. Smith, T. Smith, W. Bennett, N. Brady, P. Brady, J.P. Feeley, N. Smith, Á. Smith, P. Walsh, C. Kelly, S.P. O’Reilly, S. O’Reilly and B. Fay at the LAMA Autumn Seminar to be held in the Newgrange Hote, Navan on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> October be hereby approved”

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

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

Noted

**8(a) Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee – in accordance with Circular Housing 27 of 2014 and Sections 21 and 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, the following persons be appointed (in addition to members already selected) to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee –**

**Traveller Representatives:**

- 1. Chrissie O’Sullivan, Cavan Traveller Movement, Unit 9, New Court Centre, Cavan H12Y320**
- 2. Mary Stokes, 8 Townparks, Cavan**
- 3. Margaret Hutchinson, 27 Seangharrai, Ballinagh, Co. Cavan**
- 4. Theresa Mongan, 6 Townparks, Cavan.**

**Council Officials:**

- 1. Lynda McGavigan, A/Director of Service, Cavan County Council, Courthouse, Cavan**
- 2. John Wilson, Senior Engineer, Cavan County Council, Courthouse, Cavan**
- 3. Ramona McAvenue, A/Senior Executive Officer, Cavan County Council, Courthouse, Cavan**
- 4. Deirdre Donnelly, Administrative Officer, Cavan County Council, Farnham Centre, Johnston Central Library, Cavan.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor S.P. O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor N. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that the nomination of Traveller Representatives, Chrissie O’Sullivan, Mary Stokes, Margaret Hutchinson, Theresa Mongan and Council Officials, Lynda McGavigan, John Wilson, Ramona McAvenue and Deirdre Donnelly to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee – in accordance with Circular Housing 27 of 2014 and Sections 21 and 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, be hereby approved”

**8(b) To formally appoint Councillor Trevor Smith as Chairperson of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor S.P. O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor P. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that the appointment of Councillor Trevor Smith as Chairperson of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee be hereby approved”

**9. To approve overdraft accommodation in the sum of €9,000,000 for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor S.P. O'Reilly

Seconded by Councillor P. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that overdraft accommodation in the sum of €9,000,000 for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 be hereby approved”

**10. To fix date and time for Budget 2025 meeting (Section 103 Local Government Act 2001).**

It was

Proposed by Councillor W. Bennett

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that the Budget 2025 Meeting be held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 10.30am in the Council Chamber.

Ms. Margaret McNally informed the members that an in-committee budget meeting will take place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 10.00am in the Hotel Kilmore.

**10. To approve the draft Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Scheme.**

Deferred to November Meeting.

**Votes of Sympathy:**

- Former Councillor Paddy McDonald on the death of his wife Brenda McDonald.
- The O'Rourke Family, Athlone on the death of former Fianna Fáil deputy leader and TD Mrs. Mary O'Rourke.
- Mr. Ben O'Reilly, Water Services on the death of his mother Mrs. Una O'Reilly.
- The Naughton Family, Roscommon on the death of Councillor John Naughton, brother of former TD, Mr. Denis Naughton.

### **Votes of Congratulations:**

- Sinéad and Paul Farrelly, Drummully Boxty on winning an award at Blás na hÉireann, Irish food awards.
- Cully's Bread, Arva on winning an award at Blás na hÉireann, Irish food awards.
- Knockbride football team on winning the County Junior Final.
- Arva football team on winning the County Intermediate Final.
- Denn Camogie on winning the County Senior Camogie Final.
- Killygarry U-16 girls football team on winning the County Final.
- Cavan Competitors in the All-Ireland Fleadh competitions held in Wexford.
- Councillor S.P. O'Reilly, Cavan County Council, Community of Mullagh, Cavan Civil Defence and Virginia Fire Officers on the organisation of bringing the relics of St. Kilian to Mullagh.
- Chief Fire Officer, Noel O'Reilly on taking up his new position with Leitrim County Council.
- Ms. Bridie McBrearty, Senior Executive Officer, Housing on her recent retirement.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly spoke of his immense pride in bringing the relics of St. Kilian back to Mullagh and being joined on the journey by his son and daughter. He stated that their interest was indicative of a wider group of young people across the Diocese of Kilmore. Councillor Reilly outlined the route and celebrations that took place during the visit of the relics. He stated that more than one hundred and forty pilgrims along with Bishop Franz Jung of Würzburg and Monsignor Jürgen Vorndran, were in attendance at the event. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly thanked the elected members and executive of Cavan County Council, both past and present for assisting in realising his vision which started alongside Mr. Eoin Doyle with a visit to Würzburg ten years ago. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the return of St. Kilian's relics was the most emotional and spiritual event he had ever experienced and noted that if it did one thing over those four days, it renewed the faith of young people.

The members in turn congratulated Councillor O'Reilly on bringing the relics back to Mullagh.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive thanked Councillor S.P. O'Reilly for his recognition of the work of Council staff. Mr. Doyle credited the army of volunteers in Mullagh stating that the area has a tremendous asset, and that asset is its people. Mr. Doyle stated that the visit has served to deepen an already healthy relationship between the areas of Mullagh and Cavan and Würzburg and Kürnach.

## **MEMBERS' ITEMS**

It was proposed by Councillor S.P. O'Reilly and seconded by Councillor D. Brady to take members item 12.9 first on the agenda.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly welcomed Senator Frances Black and Senator Eileen Flynn to the meeting.

**12.9 Go n-iarrann an Comhairle, i solas rialú na Cúirte Bhreithiúnais idirnáisiúnta faoi mídhleathacht Ionnaíochtaí Iosrael sna Críocha Pailistíneacha faoi Forghabháil, ar Rialtas nah Éireann chun Bille na Críocha faoi Fhorghabháil a chur i bhfeidhm / That Cavan County Council, in light of the recent ruling by the international Court of Justice on the illegality of Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territories, call on the Irish Government to enact the Occupied Territories Bill.**

Councillor S. Conaty proposed that Cavan County Council, in light of the recent ruling by the International Court of Justice on the illegality of Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territories call on the Irish Government to enact the Occupied Territories Bill.

Councillor Conaty noted that this motion regarding the Bill was first introduced before the Oireachtas as far back as 2018 by Independent Senator Frances Black. Councillor Conaty noted that over the past twelve months Israeli genocide in Gaza has broadened and deepened. He stated that Netanyahu has opened the gates of hell and is dragging Palestine through them. He stated that there must be an immediate and total ceasefire, Israel must be held to account and Ireland can and should play a role in building peace in the region. He stated that Ireland along with the rest of the world has so far looked on as Israel carried out war crimes daily and perpetrates a blatant genocide against the Palestinian people. Councillor Conaty listed the numbers caught up in conflict and noted that aid workers and journalists have been expressly targeted and that every single hospital, school and university in Gaza levelled. Councillor Conaty stated that while Israel continues to receive billions of dollars in arms and political cover for their crimes against humanity, Ireland watches overhead as the instruments of genocide and the weapons of warfare are transported through sovereign Irish airspace. He stated that Netanyahu must be stopped and now is the time for real action.

Councillor Conaty's motion was seconded by Councillor D. Brady. The motion was passed unanimously.

## **MEMBERS' ITEMS – DEFERRED FROM SEPTEMBER MEETING**

**12.1 Medical Card eligibility and need for review.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, and the Minister for Public Expenditure and reform, Mr.

Paschal Donohoe, asking for an increase to expand access to medical cards and make them available to more people suffering from chronic illness. Councillor O'Reilly stated that those with life limiting conditions should be automatically entitled to a medical card. Councillor O'Reilly noted that the scheme had not been reviewed since 2005 and there are many illnesses that need adding to make certain medications free to patients.

Councillor O'Reilly stated that there is a need to provide certainty and reassurance to individuals and their families during such a difficult time.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion.

Councillor P. Walsh seconded Councillor S.P. O'Reilly's motion.

The motion was supported unanimously.

### **12.2 The need for updating and reviewing the rules and taxable income under Social Welfare payments and incentives for those under 23.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Social Protection, Ms. Heather Humphreys asking her to update and review the rules and taxable income under Social Welfare payments and incentives for those under 23.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that a person under the age of 23 years and in receipt of job seekers allowance risks falling foul of putting themselves into a tax bracket if they sign up to take part in a Community Employment or Tús back to work scheme.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that this is causing problems for businesses who wish to sponsor workers. Councillor O'Reilly noted that the Carer's Benefit is considered reckonable income, and he also wants to see this addressed.

Councillor S. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that many school term workers such as SNA's and bus drivers find themselves having to sign on for social welfare during holiday periods.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and stated that currently it is difficult to get community workers due to the volume of paperwork involved.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion.

### **12.3 The need to increase income limits for social housing. Deferred.**

#### **MEMBERS' ITEMS – OCTOBER**

### **12.4 That Cavan County Council provide an update on the North South Interconnector.**

Councillor C. Kelly asked the executive of Cavan County Council if there had been any recent updates on the North South Interconnector

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service stated that there had been no recent updates on the North South Interconnector since the last Council meeting.

## **12.5 Ranganna to dhaoine fásta curtha ar cheall mar gheall ar easpa maoinithe /**

### **Cancellation of adult education classes due to shortfall in funding for CMETB.**

Councillor S. Conaty proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Department of Further Education and Solas asking for further funding to ensure the resumption of adult education classes across Cavan and Monaghan. Councillor Conaty stated that these courses allow people to obtain new skills and in the dark cold evenings of the oncoming winter they are an invaluable social outlet. Councillor Conaty stated that teachers and facilitators depend on these classes for income and have undertaken their financial planning for Christmas and the New Year on the back of them. Councillor Conaty noted that because of the deficit in funding from Solas, numerous courses have been postponed or cancelled.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that adult education classes have been extremely important for a huge number of learners on an annual basis and have enabled them to develop skills and obtain qualifications that changed their lives. Councillor O'Reilly stated that if €9m could be found for phone pockets surely €2m can be found for adult education classes.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and stated that these courses were of vital service to adults. Councillor Brady stated that the Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board were told the overdraft could not be used or there would be a shortfall in funding again for the year ahead.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion and noted that Solas encouraged Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board to increase its numbers and yet no money was made available.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and stated that the cancellation of courses is very disappointing for tutors and learners. Councillor Á. Smith stated that regarding the phone pouches, as a teacher in a school which adopted them two years ago, they had been revolutionary in helping students focus. Councillor Smith noted that phone pouches cost the Government €20 per child and noted that it should not be the job of the teacher to take a phone from a student.

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

## **12.6 That Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine requesting him to re-consider the date for the slurry closed season.**

Councillor D. Brady proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine requesting him to re-consider the date for the slurry closed season. Councillor Brady stated that the permitted period for slurry spreading ends September 30<sup>th</sup> with farmers due to have their tanks emptied before this date. Councillor Brady stated that calendar farming does not work in this country and certainly not in

County Cavan. Councillor Brady stated that there is no reason farmers should be held back from slurry spreading in October if the conditions are right.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and stated that calendar farming does not work for farmers.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and stated that there is a need to look at regulations, noting that it is unfair how a small number who did not abide by the rules are holding the rest to ransom.

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

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service noted that the Nitrates Action Plan will be coming up for review shortly. He stated that a motion seeking the power for local authorities to decide on whether to grant an extension would be brought before the Council's Environment Strategic Policy Committee and whatever proposal came from the SPC would be brought before the full Council for approval.

#### **12.7 Repair of roads and lanes after timber extraction from our forestries.**

Councillor D. Brady stated that narrow lanes and narrow roads were being left decimated in the wake of large articulated machinery using them for timber extraction. He stated that he had received several phone calls from locals annoyed at the damage caused by these machines. Councillor Brady asked who is responsible for fixing our roads after these machines have destroyed them. He stated that it is very frustrating for people who live locally.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and stated that forestry companies had no regard for the impact their activity has on the communities adjacent to these sites.

Councillor Feeley stated that the problem in being allowed continue as it is happening on a bye-road in West Cavan and not on Farnham Street in Cavan town. Councillor Feeley stated that the Council need to step up on this issue and conditions need to be imposed when licensing is granted.

Councillors B. Fay and T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that granting of licenses are within the remit of the Department, which ultimately give the green light and not the local authority. Mr. Connaughton stated that the County and City Managers Association rebuffed the good practice guide for managing sustainable timber transport framework in its current format. Mr. Connaughton stated that the current national policy is to increase planting from eleven to eighteen percent and stated that the draft guidelines presented to the CCMA raised many questions.

#### **12.8 As we are now in hedge cutting season to request assistance for people to fell trees along our roads especially ash.**

Councillor W. Bennett requested that Cavan County Council assist people to fell trees along our roads especially ash. Councillor Bennett noted that Leitrim County Council had put a small amount of money in their budget to help landowners. Councillor Bennett stated that overgrown hedges and trees are still causing a lot of problems especially to lorry drivers losing wing mirrors.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and noted that it is very expensive to take down ash trees especially when special signage is required. Councillor Brady suggested that a group of farmers could form a cooperative to complete the necessary training and provide each other with the necessary safety requirements when cutting takes place.

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

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that responsibility for cutting hedges and trees was with the landowner. Mr. Connaughton stated that ash die-back was a national issue, and a national grant scheme would need to be put in place to deal with it. Mr. Connaughton noted that Counties Cork, Leitrim and Clare had a scheme in place to deal with the cutting down of ash trees which extended to between €50 and €75 per kilometre.

**12.10 Chun neamhaird a dhéanamh ar an Liúntas Míchumais to pháistí idir 16 agus 18 agus ríomhú á dhéanamh ar chíos thionóntaí na Comhairle faoin Scéim Cíosanna Dífreálacha / To disregard the Disability Allowance received by children aged between 16 and 18 in full when calculating the rent of Council tenants under the Differential Rent Scheme.**

Councillor S. Conaty called on Cavan County Council to disregard the Disability Allowance received by children aged between sixteen and eighteen in full when calculating the rent of Council tenants under the Differential Rent Scheme. Councillor Conaty noted that the issue only affects a small number of people and local authorities should not be impacting on someone's disability allowance.

Mr. John Wilson, A/Director of Service stated that the Council already considers a number of factors when calculating rent under the differential rent scheme, which is based on a tenant's ability to pay. Mr. Wilson accepted that a small number of families are impacted by the position and stated that the Council will look at means of addressing the situation.

**12.11 Need for Department of Children to outline its plans regarding childcare places.**

Councillor Á. Smith stated that childcare shortage is having an emotional toll on families who have been left with nowhere to turn. Councillor Smith noted that with the closures of baby rooms, parents in many instances are left with no other choice but to defer

returning to work to care for their babies. Councillor Smith stated that parents are incredibly stressed and noted one mother had tried sixteen creches within a fifty-kilometre radius of her home and none of them had a place for her child. Councillor Smith also noted that Childcare providers are also concerned about the level of core funding for childcare facilities. Councillor Smith stated that funding needs to be raised according to inflation. Councillor Smith stated that the Government must realise that childcare is an important part of our educational system, and they have failed to take into consideration the heating and lighting costs, not to mention the pension contribution that employers are expected to pay. Councillor Smith stated that another difficulty for providers is the recruitment of staff. Councillor Smith noted that over the last number of years there has been a substantial increase in government funding for the sector which has reduced costs for most parents, but providers remain under financial pressure. She stated that challenges for providers include an increase in the minimum wage and the auto-enrolment pension plan commencing in 2025, all while childcare centres under the core-funding model operate with a fee freeze. Councillor Smith stated that early years' service providers may be further challenged by a loss of qualified staff by the recruitment of a further one thousand six hundred SNAs who will benefit from the public-sector pay deal. Councillor Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Children asking him to ensure that he supports our childcare providers.

Councillor P. Walsh seconded Councillor Á. Smith's proposal. Councillor Walsh stated that staffing is a major issue as one adult is needed to every eleven children.

Councillor S. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that it is a sad reality that both parents have to work in Ireland in order to make ends meet.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion.

#### **12.12 Improved Ophthalmology services in Cavan.**

Councillor Á. Smith stated that good eyesight is crucial in making sure a child develops to their full potential throughout their early years and beyond. She stated that it is important that practitioners and parents work together to not only encourage regular eyesight checks but also be able to spot the signs of potential issues with vision in a child. Councillor Smith noted that statistics from the Association of Optometrists showed that twenty percent of school-ages children have an undiagnosed problem. Councillor Smith stated that the HSE need to look at the numbers of optometrists working in our region as areas like North Dublin are adequately staffed and we should have the same level of service in Cavan. Councillor Smith noted that health unions have expressed concern that the staff embargo is being replaced with a staff ceiling, based on HSE December 2023 employment numbers. Councillor Smith noted that this is wrong as Cavan have one Ophthalmologist and must cater for all the children in Cavan.

Councillor Smith noted that another Ophthalmologist who is on leave was never replaced. Councillor Smith stated that new patients are being added to waiting lists every day, but no extra staff recruited. Councillor Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health and the HSE asking them to ensure that there is appropriate staffing for County Cavan.

Councillors P. Brady, C. Brady and P. Walsh supported the motion.

#### **12.13 Need for improved home insulation grant scheme.**

Councillor Á. Smith stated that in relation to the home insulation grant scheme more people need to know what is available to them. Councillor Smith noted that Mr. Owen McConnon who is our Community Retrofit Champion for Cavan and Monaghan is doing a great job, but the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) need to put together an information scheme regarding insulating homes and energy efficiency.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion and noted that most people are not aware that you must insulate walls and attic to draw down the grant.

#### **12.14 Call on Minister Jack Chambers T.D. to stop the wasteful spending of public money and start financing essential services.**

Councillor N. Connell proposed that Cavan County Council write to Minister Jack Chambers, T.D. asking him to stop the wasteful spending of public money and start financing essential services. Councillor Connell noted that there is a need for financial support for the Irish Wheelchair Association which due to a funding shortfall had to reduce services to its users. Councillor Connell highlighted the millions spent defending the government's position in the Apple tax case and confusion over invoices highlighted at the National Children's Hospital.

Councillor S. Conaty seconded Councillor N. Connell's proposal noting that the main issues on the doorsteps leading up to the local election was the need to fix roads and provide more housing.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that there are always going to be ways to find examples of money spent in less than satisfactory ways. Councillor Feeley gave a brief outline of the budget and asked his fellow councillors to point out elements that the public could disagree with.

#### **12.15 Funding for First Responders equipment.**

Councillor N. Connell proposed that Cavan County Council make additional funding available for the supply of defibrillators across communities. Councillor Connell stated that he knew of two people who recently benefited from defibrillators within the locality.

Councillor Connell stated that the cost in maintaining this equipment is very high and funding should be made available. He stated that when a defibrillator is used it has to be replaced and not every community or organisation has the appropriate sum of money to do this.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and noted that currently the Council is in the process of putting a register together with the various locations in the County where there is a defibrillator.

Councillors S. Conaty, T. Smith, J.P. Feeley and T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion. Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service stated that ad-hoc assistance had been given to various communities and stated that a national scheme needs to be put in place to fund the costs.

#### **12.16 That Cavan County Council set out timetabled arrangements to allow active farmers to have their lands exempted from the Residential Zoned Land Tax.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council set out timetabled arrangements to allow active farmers to have their lands exempted from the Residential Zoned Land Tax. Councillor Feeley noted that this problem was for small holdings who wish to continue farming and stated that there should be an arrangement where farmers could opt out. Councillor Feeley stated that years ago they resided outside of the town, and it was never considered part of the town development envelope.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and agreed that there are plenty of farmers who want to still farm their own way but at the same time do not want to be pay tax.

Councillor T.O. O'Reilly supported the motion and stated that there had been a lot of land zoned which he felt amounted to a tick box exercise only.

Councillor S. O'Reilly noted that land zoned but exempt from tax would be worth a lot more money than land de-zoned.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service informed the members that Residential Zoned Land Tax was designed to address a loophole and fix issues around land hoarding as a solution to the current housing crisis, but there is still further to go on determining exemptions. Mr. Jennings stated that it is the Council's role to identify lands that had the potential to be developed near major urban centres. Mr. Jennings stated that there is an appeals process open to landowners, and the current situation would remain unless there is a change in legislation.

#### **12.17 That Cavan County Council call on Transport Infrastructure Ireland to provide funds to allow for the upgrade of the N3 to the border with County Fermanagh so**

**as to ensure that the construction of the Virginia By-Pass does not simply move traffic delays on to the junction of the N3 with the N55 at Cavan.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council call on Transport Infrastructure Ireland to provide funds to allow for the upgrade of the N3 to the border with County Fermanagh to ensure that the construction of the Virginia By-Pass does not simply move traffic on to the junction of the N3 with the N55 at Cavan. Councillor Feeley noted that more than ten thousand vehicles are using the Cavan by-pass every day, far in excess of its anticipated usage rate when first built nearly twenty-five years ago. Councillor Feeley stated that significant issues already exist, leading to delays for drivers daily. Councillor Feeley stated that to open the road at Virginia would only move the problem further down the road.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and stated that discussions need to start immediately to deal with traffic problems about Cavan town.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and noted that the junction at Tractamotors is currently a nightmare for the town and something needs to be done.

Councillors B. Fay, P. Brady, N. Connell, S.P. O'Reilly and T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that Virginia by-pass is currently seen as a priority and although he acknowledged the concerns expressed as credible, he stated that there is a model hierarchy that needs to be assessed. He stated that a new master plan is being drawn up to shape the future development of transport infrastructure in Cavan Town over the next twenty to thirty years and the draft document could soon be ready. Mr. Connaughton noted that the proposal to extend the by-pass of Virginia along the N3 as far as the Border with Fermanagh remains very long term. He stated that one of the main projects for Cavan Town going forward is the roll out of the Active Travel Scheme and support for public transport before any further major road investment projects can be approved. Mr. Connaughton noted that the planned reduction in urban speed limits is another factor that needs to be considered.

**12.18 That Cavan County Council call on the Minister for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform to engage with the insurance industry to reduce the costs of the small number of thatched dwellings and improve grant aid for the re-thatching of roofs and amend other conditions to the grant support.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform, Mr. Malcolm Noonan, asking that he engages with the insurance industry to reduce the costs of the small number of thatched dwellings and improve grant aid for the re-thatching of roofs and amend other conditions to the grant support. Councillor Feeley noted that he had spoken with two thatched property

owners who told him that the costs they now face have gone through the roof.

Councillor Feeley noted that while the grant covered up to €5,000, the cost of re-thatching was often several times that figure.

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

**12.19 That Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Education on the issue of school retention for main-stream teachers and pupil enrolment as this is causing serious problems for both teachers and parents and needs to be updated.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Education on the issue of school retention for main-stream teachers and pupil enrolment as this is causing serious problems for both teachers and parents and needs to be updated. Councillor Fay noted that the staffing of a school is based on the pupil schedule for the current year and enrolments on the previous September. Councillor Fay stated that this can have a major impact on both the schools affected and the community in which they are located. Councillor Fay stated that schools who fail to submit the requisite number by the deadline but pick up numbers after must go through and appeals process with an even stricter set of rules to be met. Councillor Fay stated that instead of a one year turn around a three-year programme would be much fairer to all concerned.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and noted that smaller schools are an integral part of rural communities. Councillor Smith stated that teacher pupil ratio is important and noted that covid still has an impact on younger generations coming through.

**12.20 That Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health requesting that changes be made to allow health insurance to cover cancer and TIL therapies abroad as this could save lives of Irish Citizens who cannot get treatments in Ireland.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health requesting that changes be made to allow health insurance to cover cancer and TIL therapies abroad as this could save lives of Irish Citizens who cannot get treatments in Ireland. Councillor Fay stated that people with rare tumours often need to travel abroad to receive TIL therapy which involves extracting T and B lymphocytes directly from the patient's tumour and because they are extracted from the tumour itself, TIL therapy is personalised for each patient. Councillor Fay stated that this is life saving treatment for these people but unfortunately in most cases people cannot afford the cost of treatment. The motion was supported unanimously.

**12.21 That Cavan County Council write to Minister Mary Butler, T.D. and the HSE to ask that they consider funding small charities like SOSAD who help out in the vital area of mental health but receive no government funding.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to Minister Mary Butler, T.D. and the HSE to ask that they consider funding small charities like SOSAD who help out in the vital area of mental health but receive no government funding. Councillor Fay noted that Cavan SOSAD has provided almost double the number of support sessions in 2024 as it did four years ago. Councillor Fay stated that without the necessary funding, the volunteer led suicide prevention and awareness charity and others across the Country might not see Christmas. Councillor Fay noted that one of the biggest drains on resources are costs such as light and heat. Councillor Fay stated that many of the people contacting SOSAD in 2024 are women. Councillor Fay stated that funding is a constant worry for SOSAD and noted that whatever money is raised it stays within the community. Councillor Fay stated that the HSE and other organisations often refer people to SOSAD for support.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and noted that if funding saves just one life, then it is worth it.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and commended the work being done in Mullagh which operates a one-day per week service at the St. Kilian Heritage Centre. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that another issue that needs addressing is rural isolation especially within the elderly community. Councillor O'Reilly stated that post Covid effects has led to a departure of people from one another. Councillor O'Reilly suggested that a delegation from Fianna Fáil meet with the Minister.

The motion was supported unanimously.

The meeting concluded at 5.20p.m.

Certified Correct: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathaoirleach: \_\_\_\_\_