

Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in the Council Chamber on Monday 14th July 2025 at 2.00p.m.

Councillor J.P. Feeley, Cathaoirleach, presiding

PRESENT: Councillors W. Bennett, C. Brady, D. Brady, N. Brady, P. Brady, S. Conaty, N. Connell, B. Fay, S.P. O'Reilly, T.P. O'Reilly, A. Rogers, 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, Director of Services
M. McNally, Head of Finance
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed all to the meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes

1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 9th June 2025. Miontuairiscí cruinnithe 9th Mí Meitheamh 2025 a dhearbhú.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor S.P. O'Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 9th June 2025 be hereby approved”

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

Noted.

Votes of Sympathy:

- The Maguire Family, Cullies, Cavan on the death of Mr. Val Maguire, former Chief Fire Officer, Cavan County Council.
- The McDwyer Family, Cullies, Cavan on the death of Dr. Eamonn McDwyer, former member of Cavan Town Council.

A minutes silence was held in memory of the deceased.

Note Minutes of Committee Meetings

3. To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 12th May 2025.

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 JA Harris, Commissioner, An Garda Síochána regarding garda staffing levels and resources in County Cavan.**

Noted.

- (b) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the provision of grant funding for remedial work on septic tanks.**

Noted.

- (c) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding children's oral healthcare services.**

Noted.

- (d) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding Complex Regional Pain Syndrome.**

Noted.

- (e) To note reply from General Manager, Services for Older Persons, Community Healthcare regarding recruitment of Homecare Workers.**

Noted.

- (f) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien, T.D., regarding funding for roads damaged due to flooding and funding to alleviate flooding in County Cavan.**

Noted.

- (g) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Finance in relation to the sale of Israeli War Bonds.**

Noted.

- (h) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding the Cross Border Directive and Northern Ireland Planned Healthcare Scheme.**

Noted.

- (i) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Disability regarding services in Cavan for children with additional needs along with salaries for Speech and Language Therapists in Enable Ireland and HSE.**

Noted.

To approve attendance of members at McGill Summer School to be held in Glenties, Co. Donegal from 17-19 July 2025

Councillors Á. Smith and J.P. Feeley were approved to attend.

6. To hear update from Bróna Keating, Climate Action Coordinator on the Implementation of Climate Action across the organisation.

Ms. Bróna Keating, Climate Action Coordinator gave a detailed presentation to the members on the Implementation of Climate Action across the organisation. Ms. Keating outlined the five key pillars of the plan – Governance and Leadership, Built Environment and Transport, Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure, Communities, Resilience and Transition and Sustainability and Resource Management, supported through one hundred and ninety seven individual actions, all targeted towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030. Ms. Keating stated that the overarching aim to transform the Council into a resilient, low carbon entity, igniting, guiding and enabling ambitious and equitable climate initiatives across the county. Ms Keating noted that in the first twelve months of the plan coming into being, of the one hundred and ninety seven actions, 37% were completed or recurring, 35% have been fully complete and 26% are not due to begin until late 2025.

Councillor J.P. Feeley thanked Ms. Keating for her detailed presentation and acknowledged the impact it is already having in the locality.

The members in turn thanked Ms. Keating for her presentation.

7. Member's Question / Ceist – Councillor Stiofán Conaty

To seek an update on Cavan County Council's adoption of an Ethical Procurement Policy. A reply issued to Councillor S. Conaty prior to the meeting.

8. Member's Question / Ceist – Councillor Trevor Smith

To ask for an update on the compiling of the Register of Automated External Defibrillators in the County by Cavan County Council.

A reply issued to Councillor T. Smith prior to the meeting.

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

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

Noted

Councillor Á. Smith stated that locals in Bawnboy are shocked and dismayed by the several thousand euros worth of damage caused to the disused Bawnboy workhouse. Councillor Smith stated that the estimated damage is in the region of €5,000 and called on Cavan County Council to do more to secure the site.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that there was a lot of frustration in relation to the damage caused by vandals.

Councillor D. Brady stated that the work done on the workhouse showed the great community spirit that pervades in the local area.

Councillor B. Fay stated that it was a disgrace to see what vandals did to the workhouse.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Services stated that that Council are aware of the damage caused. He stated that funding has been allocated previously totalling €170,000 and this was to be used to repair the roof in one section of the building and this is currently at design stage. Mr. Jennings stated that the management of a site of such scale can be challenging and what was paramount was to secure the site in the interests of safety.

10(a) To approve the lease of Ballyconnell Market House and Backlands, an area of 0.0926 hectares or 0.229 acres of land, to Ballyconnell Area Market House Clg for a period of 15 years for a nominal fee of €100.00 per annum, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000, and notices circulated.

It was

Proposed by Councillor D. Brady

Seconded by Councillor Á. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that lease of Ballyconnell Market House and Backlands, an area of 0.0926 hectares or 0.229 acres of land, to Ballyconnell Area Market House Clg for a period of 15 years for a nominal fee of €100.00 per annum, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000 be hereby approved”.

10(b) To approve the disposal of 0.0585 acres or 0.0237 hectares of land at 26 Ard na Laoí, Drumalee, Cavan, Co, Cavan for the sum of €5,000 to Mr. Jim McGaughran, Drumeagle, Crosserlough, Co. Cavan, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000, and notices circulated.

It was

Proposed by Councillor B. Fay

Seconded by Councillor D. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that the disposal of 0.0585 acres or 0.0237 hectares of land at 26 Ard na Laoí, Drumalee, Cavan, Co, Cavan for the sum of €5,000 to Mr. Jim McGaughran, Drumeagle,

Crosserlough, Co. Cavan, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000 be hereby approved”.

11. To approve the co-option of Councillor Adrian Rogers to Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd. and to the Management Board of Irish Central Border Area Network Ltd. (ICBAN).

It was

Proposed by Councillor N. Smith

Seconded by Councillor C. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that the co-option of Councillor Adrian Rogers to Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd. and to the Management Board of Irish Central Border Area Network Ltd. (ICBAN) be hereby approved”.

12. In accordance with 134(A) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as inserted by Section 50 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014), adoption of the 2025 Annual Service Delivery Plan.

It was

Proposed by Councillor T. Smith

Seconded by Councillor S.P. O'Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that in accordance with 134(A) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as inserted by Section 50 of the Local Government Act 2014) the 2025 Annual Service Delivery Plan be hereby approved”.

Vote of Congratulations:

- Mr. Joe McQuillan, Kill Shamrocks on his retirement from refereeing inter county football.
- Mr. Ray McAdam native of Cavan on being elected as the 358th Lord Mayor of Dublin City Council.
- Mr. Seamus Enright, Anglo Celt and his wife Leanne on the birth of their baby boy Beckett.
- Ms. Sinéad Sweeny on her appointment as Chief Fire Officer, Cavan County Council.
- Mr. John Galligan, Kilnavara on his appointment as Principal of Loreto College, Cavan.

- Dr. Gareth Igoe on his retirement as a practicing GP in Virginia Primary Care.
- Mr. Pat Gaynor, Engineer, Cavan County Council who is due to retire in the coming weeks.
- Ms. Colette Herrmann nee Duggan originally Ballyhaise and the Bishop of Wurzburg, Franz Jung for hosting the annual delegation from Mullagh and Cavan County Council to Germany recently.

MEMBERS' ITEMS – JULY

13.16 To call on Minister Martin Heydon, T.D. and Minister Darragh O'Brien T.D. to bring forward the date for hedge cutting alongside roads to the 1st August.

Councillor W. Bennett thanked the Cathaoirleach and members of the Corporate Policy Group for allowing him to bring forward his motion. Councillor Bennett noted that currently the hedge cutting season is prohibited between March 1st and August 31st and proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Government to bring the date forward to August 1st to allow for hedges to be cut along roadsides. Councillor Bennett stated that the Irish Road Haulage Association have said a lack of hedgerow management on rural roads is leading to a significant number of road traffic accidents. Councillor Bennett noted that overhanging branches on smaller roads are causing lorries to lose their wing mirrors and cars are driving across the white line to prevent their cars from being scratched by overgrown hedges.

Councillor N. Connell supported the motion and stated that in the interest of safety all hedges and overhanging branches along our roadsides should be cut.

Councillor T. Smith seconded Councillor W. Bennett's motion and noted that in the interest of health and safety hedges can be cut at any time if they are a danger.

Councillor V. Smith supported the motion.

Councillor S. Conaty noted that the dates are in place for a reason to protect our wildlife and bringing the date forward may not be a good idea. He stated that we would be better to enforce getting hedges cut within the timeframe allowed.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that a bird's nest can be moved but a body cannot. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that a new wing mirror for a lorry can cost between €800 and €3,000 to fix and at the end of the day the onus is on the landowner to cut their hedges.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services stated that under the Wildlife Act the dates for cutting hedges is the 1st September to end of February and legislation would have to be changed to move the dates.

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

- 13.2 To request the Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment, Darragh O'Brien T.D. to provide grants to households in areas where there is a high concentration of lime in their public water supply as it is causing extreme damage to household appliances.**

Deferred.

- 13.3 To ask the Minister for Communications to intervene immediately with satellite television providers regarding the exorbitant prices being sought for live sport events from publicans and club venues.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Communications. Mr. Patrick O'Donovan, T.D. asking that he intervenes immediately with satellite television providers regarding the exorbitant prices being sought for live sport events from publicans and club venues. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that the local pub plays a huge part in any community especially rural ones. Councillor O'Reilly stated that providers such as Sky and others are charging premium fees of up to €1,600 per month in some cases. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that such bills on a sector that is struggling and continues to struggle is unfair and hard to justify. He stated that rural pubs offer a public service that is the fabric of society. Councillor O'Reilly stated that providers like Sky and others are exploiting pub owners and club venues when it comes to the screening of live sports.

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

Councillor A. Rogers supported the motion.

- 13.4 To discuss recent revelations regarding Cavan County Council housing stock and delays in returning homes to use.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly asked the Council to address the perceived delays in returning Council houses back to use. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that recently published figures had created a false narrative around the Council's ability to deliver and stated that we need to get the figures right. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly asked the executive how many houses were delivered in 2024 by Cavan County Council. Councillor O'Reilly queried if there was funding made available by the Department for new schemes to go to construction and if so, how much. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly also asked how successful Cavan County Council is in negotiating with landowners in relation to turnkey development.

Councillor S. Conaty supported the motion and thanked Senator Pauline Tully for advocating the issue in the Seanad for the people of Cavan. Councillor Conaty thanked Cavan County Council for their continued work on housing delivery.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion and asked that the Housing Strategic Policy Committee be presented with regular updates on housing.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and noted that the Council has made great progress in relation to re-letting houses.

Ms. Lynda McGavigan, Director of Services informed the members that the number of vacant homes owned by Cavan County Council is much less than the reported figure once those being refurbished and in the process of being let are factored in. Ms. McGavigan stated that in 2024, 61 houses were re-let by the Council and the local authority is on course to match if not surpass that this year. Ms. McGavigan noted that currently there are 28 houses being worked on, 27 undergoing refurbishment, 2 in the process of being re-let and 7 out for tender. Ms McGavigan informed the members that most of the delays happened in cases where the Council had to carry out significant upgrades to a property, and where obtaining the required skilled trades had become more difficult. Ms. McGavigan stated that several of the main contractors in Cavan were already working on other Council led housing projects. Ms. McGavigan stated that last year the Council returned 212 homes, including turnkey new builds and that number is projected to be above 300 between 2025-2026. Ms. McGavigan informed the members that the Council is in negotiation with property owners and developers about obtaining more new build properties for the purpose of social housing.

13.5 To discuss the issues regarding funding for specific housing adaptation and facilities grants and the lack of funding leading to a temporary pause on applications.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly noted that Cavan County Council's housing department had exhausted current funding in relation to housing adaptation grants. He noted that the Council had contacted applicants stating that there is currently no funding available and applications will not be accepted until funding becomes available. He stated that this has left people in a position that they will have to re-apply for the grant which is not acceptable. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that Cavan County Council is starved of funding which in turn has led to a pause on applications. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that a delegation from Cavan County Council meet with Minister James Brown to discuss the issue.

13.6 To request the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to provide funding for the Housing Adaptation for People with a Disability and Housing for Older People Grants.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking that he provide funding for the Housing

Adaptation for people with a Disability and Housing for Older People Grants. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that there is a lot of frustration out there following the pause on applications. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that we need to look after the vulnerable. He stated that the delivery of grants by Cavan County Council is excellent, but the Government needs to step up and get more pro-active with local authorities. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that the local authorities are helping people by keeping them in their own homes.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that it was agreed at a recent Corporate Policy Group meeting that the Council would continue to accept applications even though they will not be processed and these will be held until such time as funding is available.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and stated that we need to keep these people in their own homes.

Councillors Á. Smith, W. Bennett, P. Walsh, T. Smith and V. Smith supported the motion.

Ms. Lynda McGavigan, Director of Services informed the meeting that in 2024 the Council processed 239 Housing Adaptation Grants worth €2.26m and to date in 2025, 293 application to the value of €2.3m have been processed. Ms. McGavigan informed the members that the Council received an allocation in May, but this had been spend quickly. Ms. McGavigan stated that substantial extra funding is needed to keep the scheme afloat, and a further application for same has been made by the Housing Section to the Department with an outcome not expected until closer to the end of the year.

13.7 To request an update from Irish Water on what plans they have for the upgrading of water and sewage systems in the towns and villages in the County.

Deferred.

13.8 Allocation of SNAs in Primary and Secondary Schools.

Councillor Á. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Education, the National Council for Special Education and all relevant stakeholders to prioritise the appointment and continuity of SNA support for children with special educational and medical needs which should not only apply during the primary years but also continue seamlessly into secondary school, ensuring that children receive the necessary care and assistance throughout their entire educational journey. Councillor Smith noted that currently, primary school children with special educational needs are often not approved for an SNA until after they have started school. She stated that this means that many children, who have previously received support in pre-school or have been identified as needing assistance, face a gap in support when they transition to

primary school. Councillor Smith stated that despite the best intentions of schools and educational staff, the delay can create significant challenges for both the child, parents and their educators, particularly during such an important and formative time in the child's educational journey. Councillor Smith proposed that the current policy regarding the appointment of SNAs for primary school children be urgently reviewed and revised to ensure timely and appropriate support for all children. Councillor Smith stated that while the gap in support during the primary years is an urgent issue, an equally concerning problem arises when children with special educational and medical needs transition to secondary school. Councillor Smith noted that currently SNA appointments are allocated to the school rather than to the individual child which means the support may not follow them into secondary school.

Councillor P. Walsh seconded Councillor Á. Smith's proposal.

Councillor S. Conaty supported the motion and stated that the appointment of SNAs needs to be increased.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion and stated that SNAs should be directed to the child not the school.

Councillors N. Brady, B. Fay, C. Brady and J.P. Feeley supported the motion.

13.9 The need for direct bus services Cavan/Dublin.

Councillor Á. Smith stated that immediate action is needed to ensure that Cavan residents commuting to Dublin have access to a dependable, efficient and fair public transport system. Councillor Á. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council call on the National Transport Authority and Bus Éireann to urgently review and improve the current bus service from Cavan to Dublin and return route particularly the 109X route.

Councillor Smith called on Bus Éireann and the NTA to provide a dedicated express bus service exclusively for Cavan passengers in the morning from Cavan and in the early evening directly from Busáras to County Cavan. Those services should be available at peak hours. Councillor Smith called on the NTA and Bus Éireann to implement a system for timely notification to passengers regarding any cancellations, delays or changes to the service. Councillor Smith acknowledged over the years there had been improved frequency with hourly services but stated that there is other improvements urgently needed for commuters. Councillor Smith stated that there has been repeated instances of scheduled buses from Cavan being cancelled at the last minute without prior notice or explanation, leaving passengers with no alternative arrangements. Councillor Smith stated that poor seat availability for Cavan passengers is an issue of concern and stated that there should be some services in the early morning leaving Cavan town, stopping only at Virginia and Whitegate and then going directly to Dublin City Centre. She stated that this would reduce greatly the journey time for some commuters and the same

should happen returning from Busáras. Councillor Smith stated that she is aware of many instances of people waiting near the Mater Hospital, Connolly Hospital or Phibsboro where people wishing to return to Cavan have to wait ages on buses. Councillor Smith stated that it is not acceptable that a person having had medical treatment has to wait an excessive time to get on a bus. Councillor Smith noted that there are many commuters and travellers who are concerned by the recent increase in fares for the 109X route, which places an additional financial burden on passengers, many of whom are already dealing with overcrowded, unreliable and uncomfortable services. Councillor Smith stated that these fare hikes further undermine the value of the service provided to commuters and people paying in cash are charged more for their fares.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and expressed his dismay at how passengers are being penalised for tendering notes or coins on the buses.

Councillors D. Brady and J.P. Feeley supported the motion.

13.10 Chun iarraidh ar na heagrais ábhartha laistigh de Chomhairle Contae an Chabháin chun dul ag plé le grúpaí pobail Gaeilge áitiúla agus ceanneagraíochtaí Gaeilge náisiúnta at mhairte le éileamh áitiúil ar Ghaelscoileanna breise a bhunú I gCo an Chabháin.

To ask that relevant bodies within Cavan County Council engage with local Irish language community groups and national Irish language lead-organisations with a view to identifying local demand for the establishment of additional Gaelscoileanna in County Cavan.

Councillor S. Conaty called for the relevant bodies within Cavan County Council to engage with local Irish language community groups and national Irish language lead-organisations with a view to identifying local demand for the establishment of additional Gaelscoileanna in County Cavan. Councillor Conaty stated that Cavan needs at least three new Irish medium primary schools in the County, one in the West of the County, the South-East and one in the Cootehill area. Councillor Conaty stated that the County also needs a Gaelcholáiste for the network of bunscoileanna to feed into. Councillor Conaty stated that we should be very proud of Gaelscoil Bhréifne and it is going from strength to strength. He stated that nothing gives the heart joy like seeing children speaking Irish naturally and fluently around Cavan town. Councillor Conaty stated that the Irish medium education sector has been neglected due to lack of support from the State for the language in general, financially and practically. Councillor Conaty stated that Cavan has the lowest percentage of kids attending Irish-medium education in the entire 26 Counties. Councillor Conaty stated that serious investment must be put into the Naíonra sector to provide young children in every town and village in Cavan the

opportunity to undertake their pre-schooling as Gaeilge. Councillor Conaty stated that when children leave Gaelscoil Bhréifní at the age of 12 or 13, with no avenue to follow on their Irish-medium education in secondary school, they can very quickly lose interest and ability in speaking Irish. Councillor Conaty noted that in some counties ETBs have got involved in funding and patronising new Gaelscoileanna. Councillor Conaty stated that there is also precedent of community sections within local authorities actively working alongside local Grupaí Pobail Gaeilge to assess the demand among parents for additional Gaelscoileanna and liaising with national organisations such as An Foras Patrúnachta.

Councillor Á. Smith seconded Councillor S. Conaty's proposal. Councillor Smith also noted the lack of an Irish Secondary School in the County. Councillor Smith stated that the only way for the language to thrive is for families to immerse their children as a way to create cultural awareness. Councillor Smith stated that as a member of Cavan Monaghan ETB she would raise the issue at the next meeting.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and highlighted the work done in Monaghan by the now retired Brendan Ó Dufaigh, principal of Coláiste Oiriail.

13.11 To request Cavan County Council to apply for extra funding for Local Improvement Scheme (LIS).

Councillor N. Connell proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport asking that extra funding be provided for Local Improvement Schemes.

Councillor O'Connell noted that in 2024 eight lanes were complete and nine in 2025.

Councillor O'Connell noted that there are at present 279 applications outstanding and it will take millions of euros to complete these lanes and 31 years to clear the backlog. He stated that is unsustainable and extra funding is needed urgently.

Councillor S. Conaty supported the motion and noted it was not good enough that people had applied for the scheme almost a decade ago and are still waiting for their lane to be done.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that when he was first elected to Cavan County Council the backlog was 13 years, he noted that now there are lanes with no houses on them waiting to be done. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that with the cost of labour increasing the Department of Agriculture should be asked to come on board with regards to supplying funding for the scheme going forward. Councillor O'Reilly thanked former Minister Heather Humphreys for the funding received during her tenure in Government.

Councillor W. Bennett noted that the Fine Gael Group had met with the Tánaiste on 2nd July and the issue of extra funding for LIS was raised with him and hoped there would be some update on funding available before the end of July.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and noted that this is a busy time of the year for road staff and stated that extra funding is also required for surface dressing works. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and stated that the contribution from a household currently is €1,200 which should also be increased as it should not be left to a Council or Department to repair 100 metres of laneway.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and stated that the work being done by Cavan County Council on laneways is to a very high standard and every road done is audited after to the same level as regional or national projects resulting in delays.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services confirmed that there are 279 applications on file going back to 2017. He stated that €600,000 had been spent in 2024 and the Council are on course to spend €519,000 already in 2025 and an application for €1.1m has been submitted to the Department. Mr. Connaughton stated that if the €1.1m is granted it will fix fourteen more lanes.

13.12 Imní faoin ardú na gcostas a bhaineann le hoideachas triú leibhéal.

Concerns over the increasing costs of third-level education.

Councillor S. Conaty expressed his concerns over the increasing costs of third-level education noting that it is preventing young adults from making the most out of the college experience. He stated that the rising cost of education is extremely worrying between rising accommodation costs, rising costs of groceries, rising costs of commuting and public transport and now an increase in college fees to €3,000.

Councillor Conaty stated that people are working for decades in order to pay back a bank for the privilege of having had an education. Councillor Conaty proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Education asking that the Government reverse their decision to hike fees and instead scrap them altogether.

13.14 That Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Housing seeking rent protection for third level students.

Councillor D. Brady proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Higher Education seeking rent protection for third level students. Councillor Brady stated that a recent survey done by four of the colleges in the South of Ireland with students showed that 60% of them struggled to find accommodation and 82% felt very frustrated looking for accommodation. Councillor Brady stated that the situation often forces a student to live in unregulated accommodation that charge extortionate prices or work thirty to thirty three hours a week on top of their education in order to pay for it. Councillor Brady noted that students normally rent accommodation for nine months and are not protected by recently introduced Rent Pressure Zones in the way long term renters are.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion stating that college fees should not be increased.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that it is criminal what some students are being asked to live in. Councillor O'Reilly stated that it is cheaper to buy a car and travel to college daily than pay for rented accommodation.

13.13 Call on Cavan County Council to engage with Government Ministers on the increased cost of living.

Councillor N. Connell stated that recent figures from a report published by Barnardos have shown that more than 40% of families skip meals, 30% have not enough food and 70% of parents worry that they will not be able to provide their children with the daily essentials. Councillor Connell proposed that Cavan County Council engage with Government Ministers on the increased cost of living. Councillor Connell stated that the Government must prioritise people over profit and deliver the investment and support our children and families desperately need. Councillor Connell stated that at an absolute minimum every child should live in a home with adequate electricity, sufficient nutritious food and appropriate clothing.

Councillor S. Conaty seconded Councillor N. Connell's proposal.

Councillor C. Brady stated that she was sick listening to criticism about the cost of living situation in Ireland when it comes to sending children back to school. Councillor Brady stated that a parent can send their child back to school, fully dressed and equipped for learning for less than €50 once the deducted cost of free schoolbooks, core classroom resources and hot meals for students are factored in. Councillor Brady stated that while the supports are not delivered in cash terms, they will benefit each individual family. Councillor Brady stated that it had been brought to her attention that most people now engaging with the Money Advice and Budgeting Service are struggling with personal debt.

13.15 Ag impí ar Rialtas na hÉireann chun pleanáil I dtreo Éire Aontaithe To call on the Irish Government to plan and prepare for Irish unity.

Councillor S. Conaty stated that the Government is being urged to plan and prepare for the reunification of Ireland by setting up an All-Island Citizens' Assembly and a Joint Oireachtas Committee to produce and publish a plan towards Irish unity. Councillor Conaty stated that the setting up of the two bodies would be an important first step and should include the input of civic society and key stakeholders, including local government. Councillor Conaty stated that the Irish Government has a constitutional obligation to prepare for the reunification and for the referendum that would enable it. He stated that the reunification of Ireland is an objective of Bunreacht na hÉireann and

there is a growing national and international discussion and momentum around such a constitutional change. Councillor Conaty stated that reuniting the peoples of this island offers an unparalleled opportunity to unlock Ireland's full potential and to foster prosperity for everyone. He stated that recent independent reports show that the old myth about the twenty six counties is total and utter nonsense. He stated that integration will cost an estimated €3bn in the first year, and over only a few years, Irish Unity will in fact result in a massive net economic benefit for the whole island, north, south, east and west. Councillor Conaty stated that a referendum on Irish unity is both attainable and winnable and it is no longer just an aspiration, it is a distinct possibility. Councillor Conaty called on the Irish Government to plan and prepare for Irish Unity.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and stated that this is a conversation that must be heard loud and clear.

Councillor A. Rogers supported the motion.

The meeting concluded at 4.55p.m.