

## **Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in the Lavey Inn on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 2.00p.m.**

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

**PRESENT:** Councillors W. Bennett, C. Brady, D. Brady (online) N. Brady, P. Brady, S. Conaty, N. Connell, B. Fay, J.P. Feeley, C. Kelly, 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, Director of Services  
M. McNally, Head of Finance  
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer  
E. Smith, 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 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Miontuairiscí cruinnithe 13<sup>th</sup> Mí Eanair 2025 a dhearbhú.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor J.P. Feeley

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 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 6<sup>th</sup> December 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.

### **Votes of Sympathy:**

Sympathy was offered to the families of the following:

- Councillor Carmel Brady on the death of her aunt Mrs. Bridie McSherry, Drung.
- Thomas Maloney and the Maloney and Carolan Families on the death of Dr. Fiona Maloney, former Director of Further Education with Cavan VEC and Cavan Educational & Training Board. Ms. Maloney was described as a very approachable person and a champion of access to education who made an enormous impact on further and higher education. The attendance of Tánaiste Simon Harris at her funeral was a testament to what she had done for higher education through her career.
- Eamon & Shirley Smith, Mountnugent on the tragic death of their son Glen Smith.
- The Dalton Family, Loughduff on the death of Andy Dalton, retired craftsman with Cavan County Council.
- The Chief Executive and Elected Members of Roscommon County Council on the sudden death of their colleague Councillor Anthony Waldron.

### **Vote of Congratulations:**

- Councillor J.P. Feeley and his wife Niamh on the birth of their baby girl Siún.
- Ms. Lynda McGavigan on her appointment as Director of Services.
- Councillor S. O'Reilly on her election to Seanad Eireann
- Pauline Tully on her election to Seanad Eireann
- Deputy Niamh Smyth on her appointment as Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
- Councillor C. Brady for contesting the Seanad Election.
- Sharon Keogan on her election to the Seanad

### **Correspondence**

**To note reply from Mental Health Service, HSE regarding funding for SOSAD, Cavan.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to Deputy Mary Butler, Minister of State for Mental Health asking that more funding be made available to SOSAD.

**5(a) To note reply from the General Manager, Services for Older Persons, Community Healthcare regarding the request for additional support for carers from the HSE.**

Noted.

**(b) To note reply from Coillte regarding the removal of trees near powerlines.**

Noted.

**(c) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding the sale of vapes to under 18s.**

Noted.

**6. To approve attendance of members at the AILG training seminar to be held in the Fairways Hotel Dundalk on 20<sup>th</sup> February or Newpark Hotel Kilkenny on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor N. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors N. Brady, W. Bennett, C. Brady, T. Smith, V. Smith, T.P. O’Reilly, S. P. O’Reilly, B. Fay, J.P. Feeley, C. Kelly, P. Walsh, Á. Smith, P. Brady, N. Smith and S. Conaty and N. Connell at the AILG training seminar to be held in the Fairways Hotel Dundalk on 20<sup>th</sup> February or Newpark Hotel Kilkenny on 22<sup>nd</sup> February be hereby approved”.

**7. Member’s Question – Councillor Niall Smith**

To ask Cavan County Council how many roads are scheduled to be repaired in 2025 under the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS).

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

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

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

Noted

**9. To approve the nomination of Mr. Paddy Denning, Agricultural and Farming Interests to replace Catherine McCollum, Agricultural and Farming Interests to Cavan Local Community and Development Committee under Section 128C (3)(b) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.**

It was:

Proposed by Councillor Á. Smith,

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

And

Resolved;

“that the nomination of Mr. Paddy Denning, Agricultural and Farming Interests to replace Catherine McCollum, Agricultural and Farming Interests to Cavan Local Community and Development Committee under Section 128C (3)(b) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 be hereby approved”.

**10. To note Cavan County Council’s Noise Action Plan 2024-2028.**

Noted.

**11. To note the 2 year Progress Report on achievement of the objectives of the Cavan County Development Plan incorporating a Local Area Plan for Cavan Town 2022-2028.**

Noted.

**12. To approve Cavan County Council's draft Corporate Plan 2024-2029.**

It was:

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley,

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that Cavan County Council's draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028 be hereby approved”.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive informed the members that the Corporate Plan serves as Cavan County Council's strategic framework for action during the lifetime of the Council, 2024-2029. He stated that it sets out the vision for County Cavan and what Cavan County Council will do, together with all stakeholders, to deliver that vision. He stated that it outlines the strategic goals and objectives that will drive the work of the Council over the next five years. Mr. Doyle thanked Ms. Angela Fitzpatrick for her efforts in preparing the Corporate Plan.

**13. To approve a loan of €10,000,000 from the Housing Finance Agency for housing purposes as authorised under the Housing Acts.**

It was:

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly,

Seconded by Councillor J.P. Feeley

And

Resolved;

“that a loan of €10,000,000 from the Housing Finance Agency for housing purposes as authorised under the Housing Acts be hereby approved”.

**MEMBERS' ITEM – DEFERRED FROM JANUARY MEETING**

**14.1 That Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport to increase the allocation for Regional and Local Roads for County Cavan with particular emphasis on Restoration Improvement Grants to enable our Local and Regional Roads Network to be brought up to an acceptable standard to enable local businesses to function properly.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport Mr. Jack Chambers asking him to increase the allocation for Regional and Local Roads for County Cavan with particular emphasis on Restoration Improvement Grants to

enable our Local and Regional Roads Network to be brought up to an acceptable standard to enable local businesses to function properly. Councillor Fay noted that in particular the L15210 road in Killeshandra is not fit for purpose. He stated that there are businesses operating in Cavan employing thousands of people and their future success is linked to the need for better roads.

Councillor J.P. Feeley seconded the proposal and noted that this issue has been raised by all members throughout 2024. He stated that in 2024 roads funding returned to the level it was at in 2008 but unfortunately the cost of materials and labour has increased significantly since 2008 so local authorities are still well behind in roads funding.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion and stated that he looked forward to the new Government's commitment to provide extra funding.

Councillor T. Smith suggested that a delegation meet with the Minister for Transport.

Councillor N. Connell supported the motion and suggested that the whips and the executive meet with Minister Chambers.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion.

#### **14.2 That Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Justice and the Garda Commissioner to enquire about staffing levels and resources including Patrol Cars.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Justice, Mr. Jim O'Callaghan and the Garda Commissioner, Mr. Drew Harris to enquire about staffing levels and resources including patrol cars. Councillor Fay noted that Garda Stations are being downgraded throughout the County and CCTV cameras are at a stand still as no clarification is given on who takes ownership of the cameras. Councillor Fay stated that the new three county divisional structure considerably weakened Cavan's ability to deal with criminal matters.

Councillor T. Smith seconded Councillor B. Fay's proposal. Councillor Smith referred to the recent downgrading of Kilnaleck Garda Station and stated that a meeting was held with the Chief Superintendent who informed him that staffing is an issue in Garda Stations and if staff levels are sufficient there is no patrol car for them to use in the town.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and stated that CCTV cameras are needed now more than ever and asked that the matter be discussed at the next Joint Policing Committee meeting. He stated that we are protecting criminals not the public.

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

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive stated that concern remains with regards to the administration and storage of cameras.

## MEMBERS' ITEMS – JANUARY

### **14.3 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 a meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February with the Senior Planners from the three planning authorities and the ESB.

### **14.4 In the aftermath of the most recent storms, that Cavan County Council call on**

- i. The Minister for Local Government to provide specific funding to Group Water Schemes to put in place generators to allow supplies to continue**
- ii Uisce Eireann to ensure that emergency power is available in all plants**
- iii That an information campaign be put in place to encourage homeowners to remove trees within falling distance of their homes**
- iv That landowners, particularly Coillte and private forestry companies be held to account for the damage done to powerlines and roads due to fallen trees and that we invite them to attend a meeting of the Council to discuss these issues and that we seek a meeting with relevant Ministers.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley thanked ESB network staff and providers across Europe for working so diligently to restore power after the destruction done by Storm Eowyn. Councillor Feeley acknowledged the work of the Council outdoor staff, Council Executives, Fire Services, Uisce Eireann, Civil Defence and the staff of the housing section for looking after their council tenants. Councillor Feeley also thanked John Donohoe and Terry Hyland for the establishment of community hubs throughout the County who provided facilities to the people of the community. Councillor Feeley thanked landowners who cleared debris and trees from our roads and noted that a lot of dangerous work was done and still has to be done to clean up the aftermath of Storm Eowyn. Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Local Government asking that specific funding be provided to Group Water Schemes to put in place generators to allow supplies to continue and that Uisce Eireann ensure that emergency power is available in all plants. Councillor Feeley also asked that an information campaign be put in place to encourage homeowners to remove trees within a falling distance of their homes. Councillor Feeley asked that all landowners particularly Coillte and private forestry companies be held to account for the damage done to powerlines and roads due to fallen trees and that we invite them to attend a meeting of the Council to discuss these issues and seek a meeting with the relevant Ministers. Councillor Feeley stated that since December 2023 there had been seven

outages in one community in West Cavan and all but one outage had been caused by wind damage to trees causing them to fall on powerlines. Councillor Feely stated that West Cavan had become a dumping ground for Stika Spruce over the years. Councillor Feeley stated that serious action needs to be taken, and proper planning cannot be ignored when it comes to planting trees. He stated that forest owners should be held accountable for loss of electricity.

**14.7 The need to provide generators at all critical infrastructure plants/facilities.**

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and urged companies going forward to be more proactive in their approach. Councillor Smith stated that generators need to be provided at all critical infrastructure plants and facilities. Councillor Smith thanked the local communities for their help in setting up hubs and providing facilities to those without electricity and water. Councillor Smith stated that grants must be given to farmers to equip them for situations like this going forward. Councillor Smith also asked Insurance Companies not to increase their prices in situations like this.

**14.8 The need to extend the time allowed for hedge cutting this year in view of recent storms.**

Councillor Á. Smith proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Agriculture asking that the time allowed for hedge cutting this year be extended in view of the recent storms. Councillor Smith noted that there are many areas where trees have been weakened and not yet fallen over. She stated that these trees continue to pose a risk, and more time is needed to assess these from a health and safety point of view.

**14.11 The need for collaboration between local authorities and government agencies in relation to road safety and prevalence of trees along public roads.**

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and stated that trees should not be growing near critical electricity wires where potential for damage can be caused. Councillor Brady called for collaboration between local authorities and government agencies in relation to road safety and prevalence of trees along public roads.

**11.14 That Cavan County Council request the Minister to provide grants for the purchase of generators and the necessary wiring of same in houses and on farms.**

Councillor W. Bennett proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Government to provide grants for the purchase of generators and the necessary wiring of same in houses and on farms. Councillor Bennett praised the timely interventions of those group water schemes who had the insight to bring in generators to help maintain supply. He stated that as a dairy farmer it is very hard to live without water. Councillor Bennett stated that going forward all new houses should be wired to accommodate generators. Councillor Bennett also stated that some private forestry owners had planted a few acres of land with forestry to have it as their pension in years to come and now it is lying on the ground worth nothing to them.

**11.13 To ask Cavan County Council to write to the Minister asking that the Planning legislation be amended to allow chimneys to be installed on all new buildings.**

Councillor W. Bennett proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Local Government, Heritage and Planning asking that the planning legislation be amended to allow chimneys to be installed in all new buildings. He stated that the damage caused by Storm Eowyn had been a wake-up call for a lot of people and especially so in respect of banning chimneys from all newly built homes.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly seconded Councillor W. Bennett's proposal. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that not all forestry growers are the same and there are many farmers now, who opted to plant their land as a potential pension, have now seen them wiped out. He stated that they could not get felling licences due to constant objections and there needs to be an amnesty on felling licences for the next two months and an extension to the hedge cutting period. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the defence forces should have been brought in to help with the clean-up and repair of power lines. He stated that the army had been there in the past when the Beast from the East hit the Country, and they should have been there for the people impacted by the aftermath of the storm. He stated that there are three thousand soldiers in the wider area, and it is not good enough that they are not being used to assist with the clean-up. Councillor O'Reilly proposed that the Council write to the Taoiseach asking him to engage the army with the clean-up.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion and asked why more Council staff were not trained in the use of chainsaws. Councillor Smith noted that the six-hour lifespan of a water treatment plant once power cuts out is not good enough. Councillor Smith thanked the local communities for providing facilities to those without electricity and water.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and praised the community hubs for offering a lifeline to families and stated that the closure of Dún Uí Neill barracks was a big mistake. Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and credited the work of his colleagues in the fire service and the response of local businesses in stepping up to help their communities.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and stated that every house that relies solely on electricity needs to be rewired properly to enable a generator to be installed if required. Councillor N. Connell supported the motion and pay tribute to all services who helped clear the roads. Councillor Connell stated that he is still aware of homes without power. Councillors C. Kelly and N. Smith supported the motion.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and stated that measures should have been put in place a decade before, and not only after what was one of the worst storms ever to lash the country. Councillor O'Reilly praised the emergency services, first

responders and civil defence members, council staff and volunteers who set up hubs in their communities to support their neighbours. Councillor O'Reilly stated that statutory organisations such as Coillte and the ESB need to start engaging with landowners. He stated that there needs to be some form of gesture to the wider public for being discommoded for so long, such as doing away with standing charges for electricity. He stated that more trees will fall, and the next high winds will put pressure on weakened branches.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services acknowledged that Storm Eowyn was the worst storm in terms of wind speed. Mr. Connaughton noted that on the Sunday after the storm over 80% of blocked road routes had been cleared. He stated that the army are only required in times of a national emergency and noted that chainsaw use by Council staff was limited on health and safety grounds, but the fire service looked after the cutting of trees. Mr. Connaughton stated that extending hedge cutting would require a derogation nationally.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive acknowledged and praised the good work done by organisations and statutory authorities in co-ordinating their combined efforts as well as those who supported the setting up of community hubs. He stated that it was an effort we can all be proud of.

**14.9 To ask Cavan County Council to assist with the drawing up of a Register of vulnerable people in our County.**

Councillor C. Brady proposed that the Cavan County Council assist with the drawing up of a Register of vulnerable people in our County. Councillor Brady stated that a lot of houses and homes were isolated and cut off due to roads and laneways being blocked. She stated that phones were down and people living alone were days without services, particularly elderly people with panic buttons, hospital beds and no family living nearby to check in on them.

The motion was supported unanimously.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Services stated that he expected that this is something that will now be done nationally and updated.

**14.5 That Cavan County Council seek specific funding to provide safety barriers on R200 in Glan Gap.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that he has had the motion on the Municipal District agenda and advised that there are no resources in the existing roads budget to address the matter. Councillor Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council seek specific funding to provide safety barriers on R200 in Glan Gap and the Mash Road in Corlough.

Councillor Feeley stated that while it is a picturesque road there are significant falls on both sides of the road. He stated that it is a busy route with traffic travelling west and it

is set to become busier in the coming years with the various tourist projects in the region. He stated that there were crash barriers provided years ago, but they are now needed on other locations along the road. He stated that there is approximately eight to ten kilometres of traffic barriers required. Councillor Feeley asked that the Council carry out a detailed survey on the road and see what is needed and where the barriers can be installed.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and stated that the Mash Road is very dangerous with drops on both sides of the road. Councillor Smith suggested that reflective lighting such as white strip lights be put on the road to make people aware of the danger as there is no white line on the road either.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion.

#### **14.6 That Cavan County Council call on TII to revise standards to ensure that a hard shoulder is provided on all realigned national routes.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) asking them to revise standards to ensure that a hard shoulder is provided on all realigned national routes. Councillor Feeley stated that TII have by most recent standards removed hard shoulders from national routes and this is not future proof. Councillor Feeley stated that without a hard shoulder motorists are left with no room to manoeuvre should an issue arise. He stated that road designers nationally are so fixated on installing cycle lanes that they have forgotten about the basics.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and noted the lack of pull-in areas on the newly realigned section of road between Ballinagh and Killydoon.

Councillors T. Smith, W. Bennett and T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services stated that hard shoulders are included in design only where they are required under specific criteria set out by TII.

#### **14.10 Safety signage to alert motorists of cyclists on roads in Cavan.**

Councillor N. Connell called on Cavan County Council to erect safety signage specifically warning motorists to pay greater heed to cyclists when travelling the county's roads. Councillor Connell stated that motorists must keep 1.5m from cyclists but this is not happening. Councillor Connell stated that cycling activity has increased in County Cavan and proper signage is needed to give a greater sense of community awareness. Councillor Connell suggested that the Council, which has invested millions in installing cycle lanes in towns throughout the county, could possibly access funding for the initiative through the Active Travel Scheme.

Councillor S. Conaty seconded Councillor N. Connell's motion and stated that it is good to see people cycling. Councillor Conaty asked that the signage be bilingual. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that it would be hard to put signage on all roads and asked that cyclists always have a marshal in front and behind. Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director Services stated that Cavan County Council have identified places in the County where signage would be suitable. He stated that signs have been purchased and will be put up at suitable locations.

#### **11.12 The need to improve services for children with additional needs and particularly for appropriate therapies.**

Councillor P. Brady stated that over the last few months he has had a lot of parents come to him who are emotionally frustrated and angry as their children are not getting the help they need for appropriate therapies. Councillor Brady stated that parents are exhausted trying to chase down every avenue that might provide additional support for their child in their development. Councillor P. Brady proposed that with the formation of the new Government, the Council write to the relevant Ministers asking that services be improved for children with additional needs and particularly for appropriate therapies. He stated that a start to dealing with the problem, would be to bring workers contracted by Enable Ireland up to the same level of pay as their HSE counterparts in the same roles.

Councillor W. Bennett seconded Councillor P. Brady's proposal and noted that children with Downs Syndrome and Autism have increased over the years and these children need to receive the appropriate therapies.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and early intervention is key. Councillor Smith suggested writing to the Department of Education and asked that speech and language therapists and occupational therapists be placed on site in schools who can work together with teachers. Councillor Smith stated that children with additional needs need to be looked after first.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and noted that these services are vital for children at a young age. Councillor Walsh also noted that the time for children to be seen through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is far too long. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion.

#### **Forest Parks**

Councillor C. Kelly stated that Dún a Rí and Killykeen forest parks in County Cavan have been badly affected after storm Eowyn and requested that the executive of Cavan County Council meet with Coillte and ask them to clear the forests. He stated that we are heading into brighter evenings and people use the forests for recreational purposes.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that Deerpark Forest in Virginia is in a terrible state at the minute and needs to be cleaned up as it is used frequently for recreational purposes. Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive confirmed that the Council have already been in contact with Coillte. He stated that there is a high level of damage done in all parks and Coillte were unable to give an exact date when these parks will be open, but they are working on it.

The meeting concluded at 4.50pm.