

**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in the Council Chamber on Monday
12th January 2026 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, C. Kelly, S.P. O'Reilly,
T.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
D. Gilchrist, Meetings Administrator
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer.

Apologies were received from Councillors B. Fay and A. Rogers.

Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed all to the meeting and wished everyone a happy and healthy 2026.

Confirmation of Minutes

1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 8th December 2025. Miontuairiscí cruinnithe 10th Mí na Nollag 2025 a dhearbhú.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor D. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 8th December 2025 be hereby approved”

2. To confirm minutes of Budget Meeting held on 6 December 2024.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of Budget Meeting held on 6 December 2024 be hereby approved”

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

Noted.

Note Minutes of Committee Meetings

4. **To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 10th November 2025.**

Noted.

Note Members' Reports from Conferences/Training events

5. **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:

- 6.(a) **To note reply from Communications and Public Affairs Manager, HSE Dublin and North East regarding Community Welfare Beds at Monaghan Hospital.**

Noted.

- (b) **To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection regarding Bereavement Grant.**

Noted.

- (c) **To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding the Long Term Illness Scheme.**

Noted.

7. Member's Question – Councillor Stiofán Conaty

Ag fiosrú, de réir mo rún i mí Iúil 2025 maidir le bunú Gaelscoileanna breise i gContae an Chabháin, má rinneadh an comhfhreagras iarrtha leis an Bhord Oiliúna agus Traenála agus más féidir uasdátú a thabhairt. / To ask, on foot of my motion in July 2025 in relation to establishing additional Gaelscoileanna in County Cavan, if the requested correspondence has taken place with CMETB and if any update from the CMETB can be provided.

A reply issued to Councillor S. Conaty prior to the meeting.

8. **To approve the attendance of members at LAMA Spring Seminar to be held in The Connacht Hotel, Old Dublin Road, Galway on the 28 & 29 January.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor T.P. O'Reilly

And Resolved

“that the attendance of Councillors C. Kelly, P. Walsh, Á. Smith, P. Brady, N. Smith, J.P. Feeley, S. Conaty, S.P. O'Reilly, W. Bennett, C. Brady, N. Brady, T. Smith, V. Smith T.P.

O'Reilly and A. Rogers at LAMA Spring Seminar to be held in The Connacht Hotel, Old Dublin Road, Galway on the 28th & 29th January 2026 be hereby approved”.

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 C. Kelly thanked Cavan County Council housing staff for going above and beyond the call of duty in responding to incidents over the Christmas period.

Mr. E. Doyle, Chief Executive thanked the staff for responding so efficiently and stated that Cavan County Council staff are always willing to deliver.

10. To approve a 7 year lease of 0.08019 hectares or 0.1981 acres of land and building at Fairgreen, Belturbet, Co. Cavan to Happy Days Childcare Services Limited for a nominal sum of €50.00 per year, 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 Á. Smith

Seconded by Councillor D. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that a 7 year lease of 0.08019 hectares or 0.1981 acres of land and building at Fairgreen, Belturbet, Co. Cavan to Happy Days Childcare Services Limited for a nominal sum of €50.00 per year, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000 be hereby approved”.

Votes of Sympathy

- Mr. Paddy Sheanon, Arts Office on the death of his brother-in-law Mr. Brendan Coyne in America.
- Ms. Caroline Brady, Town Regeneration Officer on the death of her father-in-law Mr. Edward Brady, Kilcogy
- Mr. Thomas Keaney, outdoor staff member on the death of his nephew Mr. Seán Keaney in Australia.
- Mr. Ronan Gargan, Northern Sound on the death of his uncle Mr. Patrick Gargan.

Votes of Congratulations:

- Knockbride Ladies Intermediate Team on winning the All-Ireland Club Championship Final.

- St. Clare's College, Ballyjamesduff on winning the u-14 boys Ulster Football Final.
- PQE Cootehill on the official opening of their new unit in Cootehill Industrial Park.
- Councillor T.P. O'Reilly complimented the staff of Cavan County Council on raising over €1,900 from their Christmas Jumper Day for Cavan Alzheimer's Society.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow Councillor S.P. O'Reilly bring forward a motion in relation to An Post.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that as and from February 3rd, 2026, An Post is set to increase the price of a national stamp from €1.65 to €1.85. Councillor O'Reilly stated that additionally a new €3.50 stamp for a letter to anywhere in Europe, including Britain will be introduced. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly noted that since the start of 2023, An Post has now raised the price of a stamp three times. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the growing rise in stamps is being felt particularly by ordinary households and rural communities. Councillor O'Reilly stated that An Post insists the increases are justified, claiming they reflect global trends. Councillor O'Reilly stated that it is no surprise that people are abandoning letter-writing altogether when prices keep climbing. Councillor O'Reilly noted that Cavan County Council was at the forefront in backing An Post in its bid to secure the Cash Payment Services contract, which guarantees over the counter welfare payments through post offices nationwide. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Chief Executive Officer of An Post, Mr. David McRedmond seeking a reversal in the increase in postage stamps and write to the Tánaiste and Taoiseach asking that they intervene on the matter.

Councillor D. Brady seconded Councillor S.P. O'Reilly's proposal.

MEMBERS' ITEMS – DEFERRED FROM DECEMBER MEETING

11.1 To request a full review and adequate confirmation by the Central Bank of Ireland of fail-safe measures and procedures to never have a Tracker Mortgage scandal in this jurisdiction again.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Finance and request a full review and adequate confirmation by the Central Bank of Ireland of fail-safe measures and procedures to never have a Tracker Mortgage scandal in this jurisdiction again. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that the problem was when banks refused to let people return to a tracker after a fixed rate period, which they had signed up to initially in good faith. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that in some cases banks told customers they were never entitled to a tracker when they were and moved people on to higher variable rates instead, meaning some homeowners paid far more than they should have. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that many people lost homes over this through no fault of their own. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly noted that

once regulators stepped in, banks had to restore trackers where appropriate and refund overpaid interest.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly seconded Councillor S.P. O'Reilly's motion and stated that he too got a phone call from his bank manager but thankfully he did not take up the offer.

11.2 That Cavan County Council requests all MEPs, TDs and Senators to oppose and vote against the proposed Mercosur Trade Deal, due to the detrimental effect it will have on both our agricultural and food safety in the future, as stated by all political parties in the recent General Election 24 and European Election 24.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to Ireland's fourteen MEPs asking them to reject the EU Mercosur trade deal as it will have a disproportionate and damaging impact on Irish farmers. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that there is far too much indecision surrounding the agreement. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that he attended the tractor protest held in Athlone organised by Independent Ireland as part of a national demonstration and rally, attended by thousands. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that Ireland was one of five EU countries along with France, Austria, Hungary and Poland to vote against the agreement at a meeting in Brussels. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that the matter will come before a plenary session scheduled for 18/19th January. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly noted that eleven Irish MEPs have indicated they will vote against the trade deal. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly welcomed the decision by the Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Tánaiste Simon Harris on Ireland's opposition to the deal in its current form. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that Irish concerns are centred on the threat posed to Irish beef producers by lower-cost Brazilian imports. He stated that Irish farmers produce some of the best, most nutritious and safest food in the world, meeting high EU environmental and welfare standards and wondered why Europe would want to accept food produced to lower standards.

11.5 To discuss the Mercosur Trade Deal

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that a united front is needed to show how opposed Ireland is to the planned trade deal. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that all MEPs across Europe should be encouraged to vote against the current deal. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that the beef coming into Ireland needs to be up to the standards of what is produced in Ireland and if this deal is passed then this will not be the case.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and stated that the Mercosur Trade Deal is a bad deal for Ireland and Irish farmers, highlighting recent IFA investigations which found Brazilian beef containing banned hormones had entered the Irish food chain. Councillor Brady stated that under the proposed agreement, 99,000 tonnes of Mercosur beef would be allowed into the EU market at a 7.5% tariff, equivalent to four million head of cattle.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and concurred with all that was said.

Councillor Bennett called for a phased introduction of imports.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and noted that the farming community are the backbone of rural Ireland.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion.

Digital Clock – Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed the arrival of a large digital clock to the Chamber and stated that the initiative to tighten speaking time will be introduced on a trial basis. Councillor Feeley noted that in the past there had been instances where speakers had taken too long to say something that could have been said more briefly.

MEMBERS' ITEMS – JANUARY MEETING

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

Cllr Kelly asked the Executive if there were any meetings or site visits with Eirgrid since the last Council meeting.

Mr. B. Jennings, Director of Service stated that there had been no meetings or correspondence with Eirgrid since the last Council meeting.

11.4 Chun uasdátú a lorg faoi chun cinn an Shlí-Ghlas Iarthuaiscirt an Cabháin, ach go háirithe, i dtaobh an bhealaigh idir Bhaile an Chabháin agus an Chanáil Ulaidh tríd Bhéal Átha hÉis agus Cnoc Rua, agus ag iarraidh go mbuailfí toscaireacht ón Chomhairle le hionadaithe ón dhá phobal chun an tógra a phlé / To seek an update on the Cavan North-West Greenway, in particular in relation to the route connecting Cavan Town with the Ulster Cavan via Ballyhaise and Redhills, and to ask that a delegation from the Council meet with the representatives of both communities to discuss the project.

Deferred.

11.6 Chun ghlaigh ar an rialtas teoracha pleanála bonneagair a chur i bhfeidhm maidir le áiteanna a gcuirtí monarchana bithmheatána agus díleá anaeróbacha, de réir an Dréacht Phlean Naisiúnta Bhithmeatánach / To call on the government to introduce energy infrastructure planning guidelines in relation to the location of biomethane and anaerobic digestion plants, in line with the Draft National Biomethane Strategy.

Councillor S. Conaty stated that there is a growing acceptance that anaerobic digestion and biomethane plants are necessary for our transition to a carbon-neutral economy and to meet the capacity requirements of our natural gas network. Councillor Conaty stated that while he is not an expert on the subject, biomethane could have benefits for County

Cavan and the border region with our relatively large output of chicken and pig manure, which is otherwise difficult to dispose of. Councillor Conaty stated that biomethane has the potential to support local farmers and rural communities by providing an additional income stream through the sale of feedstock, reducing waste disposal costs, producing nutrient-rich biofertilizers, creating jobs in agriculture, technology development, energy production, and stimulating rural economies. He stated that the issue came to light recently following the announcement that seven towns in Cavan have been earmarked by L  nra   G  is   ireann (Gas Networks Ireland) for development of Biomethane Plants and these are Bailieborough, Virginia, Shercock, Cavan Town, Ballyconnell, Kingscourt and Cootehill. He stated that plans for the plant in Cootehill seems to be more progressed than the others. Councillor Conaty stated that he had received extensive representations on this matter from very concerned residents from the wider locality. He stated Cootehill Biogas Concern Group was formed with the sole aim of stopping a Biogas plant being built in the town. The Committee stated that it is not against Biogas plants but feel they should be placed in rural locations where the people they are affecting are also benefiting from them financially. Councillor Conaty stated that the only direct engagement with residents has been via a Zoom call, where questions could only be asked through the chat box and only those living within a 1km radius were invited. Councillor Conaty stated that Biomethane production is a relatively new and unfamiliar technology to us in this State and in the absence of proper consultation with residents, it is only natural that communities would have very real and legitimate concerns. Councillor Conaty proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment, Mr. Darragh O'Brien asking why guidelines initially included in the Draft National Biomethane Strategy were removed from the National Biomethane Strategy, and why the focus seems to be on locating these facilities in towns and built up areas, rather than in the countryside, where their impact would be lessened.

Councillor C. Brady stated there is a lot of fear and tension not just in Cootehill but in surrounding areas. Councillor C. Brady stated that while she felt the proposed site was not proper, she stressed the importance of gathering all facts and information before the situation risked getting out of hand. Councillor C. Brady stated that the debate around the proposal had grown arms and legs particularly on social media.

Councillor V. Smith stated that he attended the meeting and while the biomethane plant is a good idea the location is unsuitable.

Councillor C. Kelly also agreed that the location of the site was completely wrong and would be better suited to a rural location.

Councillor W. Bennett stated that while he was not suggesting it was the right location in Cootehill, he noted that similar developments had taken place elsewhere without any

problems. Councillor Bennett stated that anaerobic digestion would serve a critical national need in the years ahead.

11.7 To discuss assessment of set down areas at bus stops.

Councillor T.P O'Reilly stated that set down areas at bus stops in rural areas particularly along the N3 are a danger to passengers. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that we are encouraging people to use public transport but yet passengers entering and exiting transport often have to step down on to uneven or unstructured surfaces. He stated that many people use public transport to attend hospital appointments in Dublin and there should be concrete plinths at all set down areas to allow passengers get off the bus safely. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly asked the Council if something could be done in relation to same.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion and stated that proper facilities should be in place if we are to encourage people to use public transport.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that there are long running issues with regards to commuter facilities at Whitegate outside Virginia, especially with traffic heading northbound towards Virginia.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and noted that bus shelters are also needed along our country roads.

Mr. P. Connaughton, Director of Service stated that last year a study was carried out on bus routes and half a million in funding was given by Transport Infrastructure Ireland for locations stretching from Belturbet to the Meath Border and long-term solutions are currently being looked at. Mr. Connaughton stated that in relation to bus shelters the Council are hoping to identify six locations in each Municipal District and carry out upgrades. He stated that bus stops with greater than five services per day are being looked at.

11.8 Ag glaigh ar bhainsitíocht Eir chun cinntiú go gcoinneálfar i gceart ár líonra lastuas tuaithe / To call on the management of Eir to ensure the proper maintenance of our rural overhead network.

Councillor S. Conaty proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Communications and the Government in general to ensure that Eir properly maintains our rural overhead communications infrastructure, for which they have sole responsibility. Councillor Conaty stated that Eir has a monopoly on the physical telecommunications network in the twenty-six counties, a network which was built using public money. He stated that they should be accountable to the State and its citizens, but instead, Eir operates on the motive of profit above all else. Councillor Conaty noted that those living miles away from rural exchanges are forgotten about. He stated that

there are a number of backroads throughout the County littered with broken poles, cables are hanging from trees into fields leaving farmers with no option but to prop up wires on ditches and gates. Councillor Conaty stated that due to lack of maintenance over the years, faults are being serviced on a firefighting and patchwork basis, with the same issues recurring every few months. Councillor Conaty stated that the ground staff of Eir are doing their best and the issue is not with them. He stated that the issue is with management structure, which operates within the confines of having to justify to their superiors why they would spend money on unprofitable and remote phone lines. Councillors N. Connell, T. Smith and W. Bennett supported the motion.

11.9 To request Cavan County Council to write to the HSE and the Minister for Health to reverse the decision of the fifty euro charge for blister packs.

Councillor D. Brady proposed that Cavan County Council write to the HSE and the Minister for Health asking that the decision of a fifty euro charge on blister packs be reversed. Councillor D. Brady stated that blister packs keep daily dosage of tablets in separate plastic pockets which allows patients avoid confusion around what to take and when. Councillor Brady stated that blister packs are a powerful tool especially for the elderly and people living alone. He stated that these packs prevent skipping medication and double dosing. Councillor D. Brady stated that people will not be able to afford blister packs which are designed to organise medicines daily and make it easier for the person taking them. Councillor Brady stated that blister packs are a lifeline for people living alone and gives the person their own independence. Councillor Brady stated that a decision by the Government to withdraw funding from this month for blister packs issued by pharmacies has been delayed following political backlash to the decision. Councillor S. Conaty seconded Councillor D. Brady's proposal and noted that the Government are targeting the most vulnerable.

Councillors S.P. O'Reilly, C. Kelly, P. Walsh and P. Brady supported the motion.

11.10 That Cavan County Council supports the Dispose with Dignity campaign, a campaign to provide sanitary bins in men's toilets.

Councillor D. Brady called on Cavan County Council to support the Dispose with Dignity Campaign which is supported by the Irish Cancer Society and Irish Men's Sheds Association. He stated that the campaign is driven to remove the stigma around male urinary incontinence by raising awareness with the public, providing guidance for men and creating innovative product solutions. He stated that these product solutions will create safe spaces for men to dispose of their incontinence waste. Councillor D. Brady stated that he was speaking from experience and noted that from talking to other men in similar situations they experienced months of incontinence that left them feeling isolated

and embarrassed. He stated that some men would not leave their homes, avoiding social visits and everyday outings due to the fear of leaks and the lack of facilities to manage them discreetly. He stated that placing sanitary bins in male washrooms will make a real difference, giving them the option to change pads discreetly and feel more confident in public spaces.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and stated that the Executive of Cavan County Council had confirmed that they will be placing sanitary bins on a phased basis in local authority buildings.

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

11.11 To ask Cavan County Council to write to the Minister for Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland requesting that toll charges on the M3 and the M50 be reduced.

Councillor Á. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland requesting that the toll charges on the M3 and M50 be reduced. Councillor Á. Smith stated that every morning commuters from Cavan travel to Dublin not by choice but out of necessity and with limited public transport options available to them the road is often the only route to employment. Councillor Á. Smith stated that for some people travelling to Dublin they have to pay two tolls every day, the M3 and the M50 and paying these tolls day after day can become a relentless drain on household finances. Councillor Smith stated that some motorists pay €44 every week on tolls before paying for fuel, insurance, servicing or repairs. Councillor Smith called on Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Government to finally acknowledge the unfairness of the current toll regime and she urged the Minister for Transport to engage directly with TII and relevant stakeholders to examine targeted measures that would ease the pressure on frequent commuters, such as introducing a possible tax relief or refundable credit that would recognise toll charges as legitimate, employment related expenses.

Councillor S. P. O'Reilly supported the motion and stated that many families and businesses are paying a small fortune on toll costs. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that the people of Cavan are disproportionately paying more money on tolls than any other County as they have two tolls to pay going to Dublin.

Councillors C. Kelly, T. Smith, P. Walsh, T.P. O'Reilly, D. Brady, W. Bennett and J.P. Feeley supported the motion.

11.12 To ask Cavan County Council to write to the Minister for Education seeking funding for Primary Schools.

Councillor Á. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Education and advocate for, a meaningful and permanent increase in capitation funding that reflects current cost, targeted supports for smaller schools under 60 pupils and action to address escalating insurance costs and greater certainty and timelines in the payment of school grants. Councillor Á. Smith stated that she was bringing the motion forward due to ongoing engagement and conversations with primary school principals in her local area who have highlighted the serious and growing financial pressures facing schools at present. Councillor Á. Smith stated that principals are constantly raising concerns in relation to the inadequacy of current capitation funding in the context of sharply increased costs over recent years. Councillor Smith stated that energy, electricity and heating costs have risen significantly, with light and heat now accounting for, on average, approximately half of a school's capitation allocation. She stated that insurance costs have also increased to the extent that they now represent between 31% and 50% of capitation funding in many schools, placing an unsustainable burden on already stretched budgets. Councillor Smith stated that she is particularly concerned about the disproportionate pressure being placed on smaller schools, especially those with fewer than sixty pupils. She stated that these schools face the same fixed costs as larger schools but with far lower capitation income. Councillor Smith stated that principals have also raised the impact of inadequate ancillary funding where in some cases schools received no ancillary grant as these funds were absorbed following the transfer of secretarial pay to the Department of Education. She stated that as a result schools are struggling to fund basic services such as cleaning, forcing teachers to reduce cleaning hours significantly. She stated another issue is the difficulty schools face in planning and budgeting due to uncertainty around what grants they will receive and when payments will be made. Councillor Smith stated that while principals are grateful for the additional supports provided, the ongoing cost-of-living increases have had a lasting impact. Councillor Smith stated that schools should not be forced to rely on constant fundraising by parents simply to meet basic operational costs, nor should school leadership be placed under such strain.

Councillor C. Kelly seconded Councillors Á. Smith's proposal.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion.

11.13 That this Council calls on the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Taoiseach, and the Tánaiste to unequivocally oppose the EU-Mercosur trade agreement, on the grounds that it poses a serious threat to Irish and European farmers, food producers, rural communities, and the high standards of food

safety, animal welfare, environmental protection and traceability that apply within the European Union.

Deferred.

The meeting concluded at 3.35p.m.

Certified Correct: _____ Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____