

Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in the Council Chamber on Monday 14th April 2025 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.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

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

Confirmation of Minutes

1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 10th March 2025. Miontuairiscí cruinnithe 10th Mí Marta 2025 a dhearbhu.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor C. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 10th March 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 10th February 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 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) regarding hard shoulders on national routes in County Cavan.

Noted.

(b) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Justice regarding Garda resources in County Cavan.

Noted.

(c) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the impact of Storm Éowyn.

Noted.

(d) To note reply from the CEO, EIR regarding the repair work after Storm Éowyn.

Noted.

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

Chun uasdátú a lor gar chinneadh chruinniú mhí Eanáir chun fiosrúchán a iarraidh ó Sheirbhís na Cúirte faoi bhaill na mbothanna vótála atá freagrach as vótaí millte de bharr ballóidí gan stampáil / To ask for an update on the request made at January meeting for the Executive to seek a Court Service investigation into staff at polling booths responsible for spoiled votes by failing to properly stamp ballot papers.

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

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

Chun iarraidh ar Chomhairle Chontae an Chabháin cuntas a thabhairt ar bhaineadh amach spriocanna tógála tithíochta anuraidh 2024 agus go dtí seo i mbliana 2025 / To ask for an account of Cavan County Council's housing construction targets, commencements and completions for 2024, and to outline targets, commencements and completions so far in 2025.

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

8. Member's Question / Ceist - Councillor Niall Smith

To ask Cavan County Council if they will consider appointing Fire Wardens to patrol County Cavan Public areas, Lake Walks, Forest Parks, as a fire prevention method during the summer months due to the number of purposely lit fires reported recently.

A reply issued to Councillor N. 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

10. To seek nomination to replace Councillor Shane P. O'Reilly on the Northern & Western Regional Assembly.

It was

Proposed by Councillor W. Bennett

Seconded by Councillor C. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that the nomination of Councillor Trevor Smith to replace Councillor Shane P. O'Reilly on the Northern & Western Regional Assembly be hereby approved”.

11. To approve draft Training and Development Programme for Councillors 2025 - 2026

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that the draft Training and Development Programme for Councillors 2025 – 2026 be hereby approved”

12. To approve the LCDC 2024 Annual Report under Section 128(b)(i) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor C. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that the LCDC 2024 Annual Report under Section 128(b)(i) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 be hereby approved”

13. Consideration of the Annual Financial Statement 2024 under Section 108 of Local Government Act 2001.

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that consideration of the Annual Financial Statement 2024 under Section 108 of Local Government Act 2001 be hereby approved”

14. Approval of Additional Revenue Expenditure 2024

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that Additional Revenue Expenditure 2024 be hereby approved”

15. Approval of Transfers to Capital 2024.

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that Transfers to Capital 2024 be hereby approved”

16. Statement of Rate Collection 2024.

It was

Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that Statement of Rate Collection 2024 be hereby approved”

17. Review of Standing Orders for Council Meetings.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

And

Resolved;

“that the review of Standing Orders for Council Meetings be hereby approved

18. Standing Orders for SPC meetings.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

And

Resolved;

“that Standing Orders for SPC meetings be hereby approved

Votes of Sympathy:

Sympathy was offered to the families of the following:

- Councillor V. Smith and the extended Smith Family on the death of Mr. Hugh Smith in New York formerly Termon, Virginia.
- The McDonnell Family, Dungimmon, Mountrugent on the death of Mrs. Nancy McDonnell.
- Mr. Kieran Beard, employee Cavan County Council on the death of his mother Mrs. Janice Beard, Ballinagh.

Vote of Congratulations:

- St. Patrick's College, Breifne College, Loreto College and the Royal School on their fantastic production of "Juno and the Paycock".
- Cavan Tidy Towns Committee on taking part in the annual Spring Clean weekend which took place on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th April.
- Cavan Senior Ladies football team on winning the Division 3 All-Ireland Final.
- Recipients of Cavan County Council Gaeltacht Scholarships which included eight adult course winners and four student summer school winners and Ms. Edel Scally, Executive Librarian for her promotion of the Irish Language.
- Students from Coláiste Dún an Rí Kingscourt along with their Principal Mr. Fergal Boyle who participated on an open discussion about the hit Netflix show "Adolescence" on RTE's Upfront with Katie Hannon.
- Bailieborough Community on winning the Lidl All-Ireland Post Primary School Senior C and Junior C finals.
- Cavan Local Enterprise Office on organising the Student Enterprise Awards and also all students who participated.
- Mr. Kieran Callaghan on his outstanding speech at the Students Enterprise Awards
- McEvoy's Cavan Eagles Basketball team on securing promotion to the Domino's Women's Super League, following their win over Limerick Celtics in the Division One Final.
- Cavan Chamber of Commerce on a very successful St. Patrick's Day parade

MEMBERS' ITEMS – MARCH

19.1 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 took place on the 8th April 2025 between the three Local Authorities and the ESB.

19.2 Cearta vótála I dtoghcháin uachtaránachta do shaoránaithe / Voting rights for Irish Citizens in presidential elections.

Councillor S. Conaty stated that Ireland needs to extend the franchise of voting for the next Presidential Election to those living north of the border. Councillor Conaty called on the Government to set out a timeframe for holding a referendum, making good the commitments promised by the 2013 constitutional convention, recommending that voting rights be extended to citizens living outside the Republic of Ireland. Councillor Conaty stated that first-generation diaspora deserves the right to vote in Presidential Elections. He stated that young people who were forced to leave the country over the last number of years deserve the right to vote. Councillor Conaty noted that there will always be emigration, and young people will want to travel but the current level of people departing our shores is not normal. He stated that these want to contribute to our economy and participate in our democratic process. Councillor Conaty stated that it is crucial that citizens in the six counties are no longer left behind when it comes to votes electing our President.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion.

19.3 That this Council along with other local statutory agencies, emergency services, public utility providers and local community groups, carry out a review into the response to Storm Éowyn at local level.

Councillor Á. Smith stated that there is urgent need for the Council along with other statutory agencies, emergency services, public utility providers and community groups, to carry out an extensive review into the response and learnings around Storm Éowyn. Councillor Smith stated that with more adverse weather events expected in the future the goal would be to form a set of best practices that would come into play whenever required. Councillor Smith praised the response of the local authority and emergency services personnel during the last storm but suggested a more co-ordinated effort is needed with additional expertise.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and noted that some people were without power for up to three weeks.

Councillor S. Conaty supported the motion and criticised the Humanitarian Assistance Scheme where he said a lot of people, he spoke to were refused the grant.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and stated that he knew one home in Cavan still without phone connectivity.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and stated that no one in West Cavan was left abandoned following the storm, but he accepted that there were cases where the response could have been better. He stated that EIR was blaming the Local Authority for delays in fixing poles and lines and restoring phone and broadband services.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that he served as Chair of the County's Emergency Response Committee and noted that the work put into dealing with Storm Éowyn by Council staff and emergency workers was second to none. Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that much of the repairs being looked at now relate to work that needed to be done ten years ago, and such assessment should be ongoing.

19.4 That Cavan County Council write to Minister Darragh O'Brien, T.D. Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications and Minister for Transport to bring in a grant to help all householders that have a problem with their septic tank that needs repair to improve our water quality across County Cavan.

Councillor W. Bennett proposed that Cavan County Council write to Minister Darragh O'Brien, T.D. Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications and Minister for Transport to bring in a grant to help all householders that have a problem with their septic tank that needs repair to improve our water quality across County Cavan.

Councillor Bennett stated that repair works to septic tanks will improve water quality and the Government should be doing more to support ways of protecting our water sources.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and stated that there should be some relief for people facing bills of between €10-12,000 to get their tanks repaired.

Councillors P. Walsh, J.P. Feeley, B. Fay, D. Brady and C. Kelly supported the motion.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services stated that there is a grant available under certain circumstances which is operated by the Council on behalf of the Department. He stated that the criteria for qualification is narrow and you must be in a designated area under the High-Status Objective Catchment Area or be in an area for action in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan, or have your septic tank inspected by your local authority under the National Inspection Plan and subsequently be issued with an advisory notice. Mr. Connaughton stated that you must have your septic tank registered with ProtectOurWater.ie before applying for the grant.

19.5 That Cavan County Council call on the HSE to increase funding for addiction services for our young people across the Country.

Councillor D. Brady proposed that Cavan County Council write to the HSE asking for increased funding for addiction services for our young people across the Country.

Councillor Brady stated that it is a worrying to see so many young people hooked on drugs which he believes is to fit in with their peers. He stated that unfortunately it has now come to the stage when you can buy drugs in local towns and villages as easy as you buy cigarettes. He stated that drugs are currently destroying the lives of our young people. Councillor Brady stated that more resources are needed for addiction services as currently there is only one youth drug and alcohol treatment service in Ireland.

Councillor P. Walsh seconded Councillor D. Brady's proposal.

Councillor S. Conaty supported the motion and noted that the current policing system is not working. Councillor Conaty stated that more social housing is needed particularly for single people as lack of housing is not helping the drug situation.

Councillors N. Connell and B. Fay supported the motion.

19.6 That Cavan County Council introduce an Awards System in conjunction with our schools in tackling our litter problem.

Councillor D. Brady proposed that Cavan County Council introduce an Awards System in conjunction with our schools in tackling our litter problem. Councillor Brady complimented the community groups who participated in the litter clean up over Spring Clean week and stated that it was frightening to see the amount of rubbish gathered around our roads. Councillor Brady stated that the Council needs to start in schools and youth clubs to get our youth to clean up the rubbish and have it inspected monthly by our litter wardens. Councillor Brady stated that at the end of the year each Municipal District award schools for their efforts with maybe a lap top or a piece of sports equipment.

Councillor Á. Smith highlighted the number of schools in County Cavan with Green Flags and stated that she finds it frustrating as a teacher that the solution always seems to be put back on the schools. Councillor Smith stated that the default answer for dealing with litter was often to approach it through education. Councillor Smith stated that the problem with rubbish being discarded was not solely with children. Councillor Smith stated that educators are being overstretched and taken away from teaching the set curriculum.

Councillor J.P. Feeley agreed with Councillor Smith stating that schools and teachers are being relied upon to instil responsibilities in children and in some cases are being abdicated or outright ignored by parents at home. Councillor Feeley stated that it is up to parents to teach their children to do the right thing. Councillor Feeley noted that far be it from children creating the problem, he stated that he witnessed situations where people had travelled considerable distance by car to dump domestic refuse in public bins.

Councillor W. Bennett and C. Kelly supported the motion.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services stated that the return scheme was a great success, and the Council backed the Green Flag project but was open to hearing from Councillor Brady on other ways to incentivise greater participation. Mr. Connaughton stated that the problem with using covert CCTV is that it is problematic from a data protection/privacy point of view but is hopeful that changes are coming in that respect. Mr. Connaughton acknowledged the work done by Tidy Town Committees throughout the County and thanked them for their effort.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly credited young people with being more aware of environmental issues and their responsibilities than older generations. He stated that the onus is on all of us to keep our County clean.

19.7 Ag iarraidh at Chomhairle Contae and Chabháin maoiniú a thabhairt do ghrúpaí pobail ar mhaithe le gineadóirí a cheannach agus molanna pobail a ollmhú faoi choinne tarlú adhaimsire / Asking Cavan County Council to allocate funding for community groups for the purpose of purchasing generators and kitting out community hubs for future severe weather events.

Deferred.

19.8 That Cavan County Council call on the Minister to institute reform of the Decision Support Service to encourage more people to make Enduring Powers of Attorney.

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister of State at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to reform the Decision Support Service (DSS) to encourage more people to make Enduring Powers of Attorney. Councillor Feeley stated that the responsibilities of the DSS include processing applications in respect of decision support arrangements, in particular applications relating to Enduring Powers of Attorney and Co-Decision-Making Agreements. He stated that the overhaul was designed to replace an existing and out-dated legislation on capacity, including abolishing wardship, but it has ended up having unexpected consequences in that it has made the process of applying for support arrangements far more strenuous. Councillor Feeley stated that despite the introduction of a dedicated helpdesk service to support those in completing an online application the system remains far from perfect. Councillor Feeley noted that many people looking to establish an Enduring Powers of Attorney are of an age or ability where using a computer is difficult and it also requires a MyGov.ie log-in and for the person to whom the Enduring Powers of Attorney is being bestowed to sign-up also. Councillor Feeley stated that all of this is creating a barrier and noted that people of his profession were running the risk of being accused of impersonating applicants to get the ball rolling on enduring powers of attorney on their behalf. Councillor Feeley stated that more investment in the service is needed to alleviate the burden currently being placed on families and their loved ones.

Councillor C. Kelly seconded Councillor J.P. Feeley's proposal.

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

19.9 That Cavan County Council consider ways in which Ard-Scoil Bhréifne can be commemorated as we mark the 100th Anniversary of the last formal classes.

Councillor J.P. Feeley asked that Cavan County Council consider ways in which Ard-Scoil Bhréifne can be commemorated to mark the 100th Anniversary of the last formal classes taught at the Irish school in Glangevlin which was the last Gaeltacht to exist in County Cavan. Councillor Feeley stated that the college was named after Fr. Michael McLoughlin, a native of Drumkeerin and curate in Glangevlin. He stated that the College started in July 1921 in the midst of the Civil War. Councillor Feeley noted that a recent republication of a booklet entitled “Night Prayers collected in Glangevlin”, re-edited by Dr. Nollaig O Muraile was launched by Monsignor Liam Kelly. Councillor Feeley noted that the Civil War played a role in the downfall of the College. He stated that the commemoration of Ard-Scoil Bhréifne required more than a plaque and stated that the College is an important part of the social history of Cavan and the west of the County. Councillor Feeley hoped that by remembering its legacy it would encourage more people to speak their native language.

Councillor S. Conaty supported the motion and stated that Irish was spoken socially in communities across Cavan right up to the 1960s and 70’s and we should do something to carry on the work that was started. Councillor Conaty also asked that Cavan County Council employ an Irish Officer sooner rather than later.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and noted that Dr. Nollaig O’Muraile was her lecturer while studying Irish in College. Councillor Smith noted that the launch of the Prayer Book was a lovely occasion and stated that the late Senator Seamus O’Dolan was among the last native Irish speakers to leave the area.

19.10 The need for the local link bus service to have stops between towns.

Councillor T. Smith stated that more passengers would use the local link bus service in the County if there were more stops available along routes. He stated that in some cases the local link passes outside a person’s door but because it does not stop, they are left with no other option but to either drive to the closest stop and get on or simply continue their journey privately as planned. Councillor Smith stated that this defeats the purpose of the service, and more stops would be particularly helpful for older members of the community or those living in isolated or rural locations. Councillor Smith stated that more set-downs are needed in Ballyjamesduff and Mountnugent. Councillor Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to Local Link asking them to provide more bus stops along routes.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and stated that more stops are needed right across the region. Councillor Brady stated that the services need to be made as accessible as possible.

Councillor N. Connell supported the motion and stated that there is a need for a local link stop at Ballintemple where there is ample pull-in space and parking also available.

The motion was supported unanimously.

19.11 That we ask the Council to write to the HSE, the Minister for Health, mental health services, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Enterprise and relevant departments and in our schools and workplaces, requesting that a mental health initiative be looked at and rolled out across our community to try and protect the most isolated and vulnerable in our society especially since recent storms.

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the HSE, the Minister for Health, mental health services, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Enterprise and relevant departments and in our schools and workplaces, requesting that a mental health initiative be looked at and rolled out across our community to try and protect the most isolated and vulnerable in our society especially since recent storms. Councillor Fay stated that mental health support systems should be made available in our schools along with counselling services. Councillor Fay noted that employee well being is important and encourages employers to adopt mental health policies. Councillor Fay stated that the mental health of our citizens should be of the utmost importance.

Councillor S. Conaty seconded Councillor B. Fay's proposal and noted that the world is a different place for young people now with the scourge of social media.

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

19.12 Timing of Oral State examinations.

Councillor Á. Smith stated that once again in 2025 the State Examination Commission dictated that the spoken aspect of language exams should continue to be delivered during the Easter holidays, the same model as adopted during Covid. Councillor Smith stated that this is deeply unfair and one that raises serious concerns about student wellbeing, equity and the very purpose of academic holidays. Councillor Smith stated that it is a time that should be reserved for rest, family and reflection but instead it has become another source of stress and pressure for students already navigating what is a stressful academic year. She stated that by placing exams during this period the state disrupts that balance, treating students not as individuals with lives and limits, but as endlessly available participants in an unforgiving system. Councillor Smith stated that the pressure is especially intense for students who must complete multiple oral exams, often in different languages all within the same week. Councillor Smith stated that there is also the psychological toll of compressing such demanding tasks into a single shortened week. Councillor Smith stated that with the Leaving Certificate now for reform, that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Education asking that languages be given a fair examination process. Councillor Smith stated that the work of the students and teachers in preparation for these examinations needs to be respected.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion noting that the pressure is unbearable and branded the process as disgraceful. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that the work done by teachers was amazing but sorely undervalued. The motion was supported unanimously.

19.13 Dumping of refuse.

Councillor Á. Smith stated that the increasing number of incidents of illegal dumping of refuse in isolated rural areas across the County is becoming a huge concern and noted incidents along roadside verges, laneways, forests and open countryside. Councillor Smith stated that illegal dumping not only damages the environment and natural habitats but also places an unfair burden on rural landowners, residents and local authorities who are often left to deal with the clean-up. Councillor Smith stated that the Council should take a tougher stance and begin a more intense publicity programme regarding the damage littering does. Councillor Smith complimented the Tidy Towns Committees, GAA Clubs and other community groups that organise the collection of litter in their own local areas. She stated that their efforts and work are very commendable. Councillor Smith stated that facilities are there to be enjoyed by locals and visitors and should not be a dumping ground for people's waste.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion and noted that farmers often had to cover the cost of cleaning up rubbish dumped.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and stated that he was stunned by the number of black bags of rubbish collected by local volunteers in the Ballyconnell area during a recent spring clean event.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that there is only one way to deal with fly-tippers and that is to name and shame and impose tougher penalties, but the judiciary do not want to listen.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services stated that the Draft Litter Management Plan brought before the Councillors last November is now with the Strategic Policy Committee and will be circulated to the Councillors shortly.

The meeting concluded at 4.30p.m.