

Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in Dowra Resource Centre on Monday 8th December 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, C. Kelly, 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
C. McEntee, Financial Management Accountant
D. Gilchrist, Meetings Administrator
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer.

Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed all to the meeting. Councillor Feeley noted that it was the first time a Council meeting had come to Dowra, the first village on the River Shannon. Councillor Feeley acknowledged the work of the Committee who look after the Resource Centre and those who prepared the meeting room for the Council meeting. Councillor Feeley also thanked Cavan County Council for their contribution towards the playground, astro turf and car park at the Resource Centre. Councillor Feeley noted that the CPG meeting took place earlier in the Courthouse in Dowra.

Confirmation of Minutes

1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 10th November 2025. Miontuairiscí cruinnithe 10th Mí na Samhna 2025 a dhearbhú.

It was

Proposed by Councillor N. Smith

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 10th November 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 13th October 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 the CEO, Road Safety Authority regarding older people's licence renewals.**

Noted.

- (b) **To note reply from the Department of Social Protection regarding Community Employment, Rural Social Scheme and Tús Schemes.**

Noted.

- (c) **To note reply from Jack Chambers T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform & Digitalisation regarding the industrial action of school secretaries and caretakers.**

Noted.

- (d) **To note reply from Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage regarding the provision of grants to householders in County Cava served by public drinking water supplies.**

Noted.

- (e) **To note reply from the Office of State for Community Development, Charities and Rural Transport regarding transport services from Cootehill to Dundalk on Sundays.**

Noted.

- (f) **To note reply from the Office of the Taoiseach regarding Irish Unity.**

Noted.

- (g) **To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine regarding plans for TB eradication in Ireland.**

Noted. Councillor D. Brady stated that the reply referred to five action measures and compensation was not one of these. Councillor D. Brady proposed that the Council write again to the Minister asking that compensation be paid to farmers in relation to TB eradication. Councillor J.P. Feeley seconded Councillor D. Brady's proposal.

6. **To approve the attendance of members at Celtic Conferences "The Evolving Role of AI in Public Relations" conference held in O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty from 7 to 9 November 2025 (retrospective approval).**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor T.P. O'Reilly

And Resolved

“that the attendance of Councillors C. Brady and S.P. O'Reilly at Celtic Conferences “The Evolving Role of AI in Public Relations” conference held in O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty from 7 to 9 November 2025 be hereby approved”.

**Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Council
To note Chief Executive's monthly report (Section 51 Local Government Reform Act 2014)**

Noted.

- 7. To approve the disposal of lands containing 1.4180 hectares or 3.5038 acres at Cootehill Enterprise Park, Errigal, Cootehill, Co. Cavan to McCabe Civil Holdings Ltd., Derrylea, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan for the sum of €122,633 subject to planning approval, 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 C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor N. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that the disposal of lands containing 1.4180 hectares or 3.5038 acres at Cootehill Enterprise Park, Errigal, Cootehill, Co. Cavan to McCabe Civil Holdings Ltd., Derrylea, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan for the sum of €122,633 subject to planning approval, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act, 2000 be hereby approved”.

- 8. To approve the disposal of lands containing 0.3506 hectares or 0.8663 acres at Cootehill Enterprise Park, Errigal, Cootehill, Co. Cavan to Wedlock Windows, Drumhurt, Cootehill, Co. Cavan for the sum of €30,320, subject to planning approval, 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 C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor S. Conaty

And

Resolved;

“that the disposal of lands containing 0.3506 hectares or 0.8663 acres at Cootehill Enterprise Park, Errigal, Cootehill, Co. Cavan to Wedlock Windows, Drumhurt, Cootehill, Co. Cavan for the sum of €30,320, subject to planning approval, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act, 2000 be hereby approved”.

9. To approve Cavan County Council’s Draft Litter Management Plan 2025-2028.

It was

Proposed by Councillor P. Brady

Seconded by Councillor Á. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that Cavan County Council’s Draft Litter Management Plan 2025-2028 be hereby approved.

Ms. Susan Doherty, Administrative Officer gave a presentation to the members on the Litter Management Plan 2025-2028. Ms. Doherty stated that litter is a persistent issue for Cavan County Council, costing approximately €1.4m each year for the past four years. She stated that there are persistent issues with illegal dumping, dog fouling, food-related litter and stated that there is a need for continued education and behaviour change. Ms. Doherty noted that a strong community collaboration and school engagement is vital to get the message across. Ms. Doherty stated that the four main objectives of the 2025-2028 Draft Litter Management Plan are to develop and implement a litter prevention and control programme, to undertake enforcement actions in a fair and transparent manner, to create and implement public awareness and education programmes and to collaborate with community groups and businesses. Ms. Doherty stated that the aim of the Litter Management Plan 2025-2028 is to enhance cleanliness with community involvement. She stated that goals include eliminating litter, promoting sustainability and raising awareness. She stated that annual reviews will track progress and survey results will guide actions.

The members in turn thanked Ms. Doherty for her presentation,

10. To nominate 7 no. elected representatives from Cavan County Council to sit on the Cavan Local Community Safety Partnership.

It was proposed by Councillor Á. Smith and seconded by Councillor P. Walsh that Councillors C. Kelly and N. Smith be elected representatives to sit on the Cavan Local Community Safety Partnership.

It was proposed by Councillor T. Smith and seconded by Councillor W. Bennett that Councillors C. Brady, N. Brady and T.P. O’Reilly sit on the Cavan Local Community Safety Partnership.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Conaty and seconded by Councillor N. Connell that Councillor D. Brady sit on the Cavan Local Community Safety Partnership.

It was proposed by Councillor B. Fay and seconded by Councillor A. Rogers that Councillor B. Fay sit on the Cavan Local Community Safety Partnership.

Councillors C. Kelly, N. Smith, C. Brady, N. Brady, T.P. O'Reilly, D. Brady and B. Fay were elected as the seven representatives to sit on the Cavan Local Community Safety Partnership.

11. To approve Cavan County Heritage Plan 2025-2030.

It was

Proposed by Councillor S. Conaty

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

And

Resolved;

“that Cavan County Heritage Plan 2025-2030 be hereby approved.

Mr. Nicholas O’Kane, Senior Planner briefed the members on the Cavan County Heritage Plan 2025-2030 noting the four main pillars being:

- learning in connection – the plan will inspire greater engagement with local heritage and involve young people.
- shaping the future by conserving the past – monitor and conserve significant architecture and protect prehistoric structures.
- our memories held in voices – use modern technology to capture stories from the past, engage youth in recording stories and promote greater use of Irish language.
- keepers of the landscape – nurture biodiversity and protect the landscape from climate change.

The members in turn thanked Mr. O’Kane for his presentation.

12. To approve Cavan Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030.

It was

Proposed by Councillor S. Conaty

Seconded by Councillor N. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that Cavan Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 be hereby approved.

Mr. Nicholas O’Kane, Senior Planner briefed the members on Cavan Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 and noted that the overall aims of the Plan are:

- To review biodiversity information for County Cavan and to prioritise habitats and species for conservation action.
- To collect data and use it to inform conservation action, research and decision making.
- To incorporate positive action for biodiversity into local authority services and policy.
- To promote best practice in biodiversity management and protection.
- To facilitate the dissemination of biodiversity information.
- To raise awareness of County Cavan's unique biodiversity and encourage individuals and communities to become involved in its conservation.

The members in turn thanked Mr. O'Kane for his presentation.

13. To consider Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2026-2030 and make Scheme.

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor A. Rogers

And

Resolved;

"that the Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2026-2030 and making of a Scheme be hereby considered".

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive informed the members that this Development Contribution Scheme 2026-2030 is intended to replace the scheme adopted by Cavan County Council in 2017. He stated that the previous scheme has been revised having regard to the current economic, social and community development of the County, including the tourism prospects of the area and matters in relation to climate change. Mr. Doyle noted that one submission was received in response to the public consultation for the draft Development Contribution Scheme from the Land Development Agency seeking that a 100% exemption be put in place for affordable housing units delivered under the Affordable Housing Act 2021. Mr. Doyle stated that he has no objections to facilitating the 100% exemption being put in place. If the Land Development Agency was developing a site in partnership with the Council, it would be exempt from development contributions. Mr. Doyle stated that in 2024, the Irish Government introduced new regulations known as the Circular Economy (Waste Recovery Levy) Regulations. He stated that these rules are set to significantly impact how construction and demolition (C&D) waste is handled and will bring about additional costs for developers. He noted that the levy set out is €10 per tonne of C&D waste that is received. He stated that from March 2026, even smaller recovery sites (under 200,000 tonnes) will be subject to the

levy. Mr. Doyle stated that the Draft Scheme has included “Infilling of lands with soil – (€2,000 per hectare). It is recommended by the Chief Executive that this development contribution is removed as a €10 per tonne Waste Recovery Levy will apply to such developments.

14. To consider Chief Executive’s Report on NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2002 (as amended) July 2025.

It was

Proposed by Councillor N. Smith

Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the Chief Executive’s Report on NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2002 (as amended) July 2025 be hereby considered”.

Mr. Nicholas O’Kane, Senior Planner briefed the members on Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines – NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements, proposed variation to Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028. Mr. O’Kane stated that guidelines issued in July 2025 outlined that the guidelines include a housing growth scenario to 2040 for each Local Authority. The guidelines note that there is unmet demand of the provision of housing and that this unmet demand needs to be addressed in the near term, up to the year 2034. He stated that a total housing units of 55,000 dwellings per annum for the Country is required up to 2034 and a total demand of 41,000 dwellings per annum between 2034 and 2040. He stated that the purpose of the report was to present a recommendation to the elected members detailing how the Council intends to secure the housing delivery objectives of the new guidelines through a proposed variation. Mr. O’Kane noted that the guidelines have not increased the Annual Housing Target of 666 houses per year up to 2034 for County Cavan. He stated that the Council is required to address the requirements of the guidelines in relation to additional provision of up to 50% over and above the housing growth requirement which means zoning more lands. He stated that at least 30% of development within the existing built-up footprint of settlements to ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth. Mr. O’Kane stated that the 50% additional provision excess for County Cavan is in light of the urgent need to increase housing delivery and the fact that for a variety of reasons, a proportion of zoned lands are not activated over the development plan period. He stated that a variation will need to be prepared for the remaining years of the development plan 2026, 2027 and up to July 2028 to accommodate the provision of additional lands and perhaps further years

in the event that the existing development plan timelines are extended beyond 2028 by Government. He stated that a focus for the additionality will be on the nine towns that have zoned residential lands, comprising Cavan Town, Virginia, Ballyjamesduff, Bailieborough, Kingscourt, Cootehill, Belturbet, Mullagh and Ballyconnell. Mr. O’Kane recommended that Cavan County Council proceed with the process outlined in the Chief Executive’s report to allow additional lands to be identified and varied for residential use in order to allow choice and acknowledge that not all lands zoned for residential purposes will deliver housing within the timeframe of the development plan. A discussion took place and the members in turn thanked Mr. O’Kane for his presentation.

15. To note County Cavan Road Safety Plan 2025-2027.

Noted.

16. To note Audit Committee Report for 2024 pursuant to Section 121 of the Local Government Act, as amended by Section 60 of the Local Government Act 2014.

Noted.

17. To approve Cavan Local Authority Audit Committee Annual Report 2024 – (Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014).

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor Á. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that the Cavan Local Authority Audit Committee Annual Report 2024 – (Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014) be hereby approved”.

Votes of Sympathy

- Ms. Olivia Smith, Human Resources Section on the death of her father-in-law Mr. Michael Smith, Creighan, Cavan
- Mr. Michael Boyle, Caretaker Cavan County Council on the death of his wife Mrs. Mary Boyle, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan
- Mr. Joe Curran, Outdoor staff Cavan County Council on the death of his wife Ms. Keira Curran, Bawnboy, Co. Cavan
- Ms. Caroline Grier, Housing Section on the death of her father Mr. Brendan Maguire, Oldcastle, Co. Meath.

Votes of Congratulations:

- Knockbride Ladies Intermediate Team on winning the Ulster Final, the All-Ireland Semi-Final and are now playing in the All-Ireland Final in Croke Park on Saturday 13th

December. Councillor N. Smith proposed that a Cathaoirleach's reception be held for the team. Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that the matter was discussed at the CPG meeting at it was agreed to hold a Cathaoirleach's reception for Cavan Gaels Junior Ladies and Knockbride Intermediate Ladies.

- Cuchulainn's Intermediate Football team on reaching the Ulster Final.
- Caelan McVitty, aged 11, grandchild of former Councillor Peter McVitty on his nomination for Ulster Young Family Carer of the Year.
- Councillor P. Brady, Cavan Chamber of Commerce and Ms. Caroline Brady for great display of Christmas lights in Cavan Town.
- The Slieve Russell Hotel on becoming Ireland's first dementia friendly hotel.
- Ms. Fiona Baxter, Ballymachugh on becoming Ireland's first female State Solicitor
- Cavan Council Staff on entering projects for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards.

MEMBERS' ITEMS – DECEMBER MEETING

19.1 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 one meeting with ESB in relation to compliance with planning conditions and there is a still a huge amount of work to be done.

19.17 I call on the Council to clarify why they continue to engage with ESB instead of EirGrid, as it was EirGrid who got planning approval for the North South Interconnector project and are responsible for agreeing the planning conditions.

19.18 Can Cavan County Council confirm that ESB's proposal to seek approval for condition No. 3 in segments is in compliance with the published conditions attached to the planning approval for the North South Interconnector.

Councillor C. Kelly stated that EirGrid has abdicated its responsibilities in interacting with local authorities regarding compliance with planning conditions. He stated that planning was granted by An Bord Pleanála in December 2016 which was subject to strict conditions with each relevant local authority responsible for enforcing them. He stated we are nine years on and none of these conditions have been signed off in terms of compliance. Councillor Kelly stated that EirGrid has abdicated its responsibility for discussions with the local authority to the ESB and its appointed representatives. Councillor Kelly stated that these discussions should be with EirGrid who were granted the permission. Councillor Kelly stated that the ESB has made the decision not to comply with the binding conditions and instead has made the extraordinary request to

the local authorities to allow major variations to the conditions of a significant material effect. He stated that EirGrid outlined the need for access to approximately 584 access routes via farmers private property and stated they did not submit a single finalised route for approval in the planning application and instead submitted a set of maps outlining indicative temporary access routes. Councillor Kelly stated that these access routes should be submitted to local authorities for agreement prior to the commencement of development, however, to date he noted that the ESB have submitted a mere eleven planned access routes, six in Cavan, one in Monaghan and four in Meath. He stated that this ploy by ESB to pressurise the relevant local authorities to circumvent the binding conditions through a phasing or rolling discharge approach is one that it has tried elsewhere on a similar electricity strategic infrastructure project, but it was rejected by the relevant local authority. Councillor Kelly stated that the bottom line is that procedures must be followed and full compliance with the clear conditions must be enforced.

19.2 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.

19.3 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.

It was proposed by Councillor C. Kelly and seconded by Councillor T. Smith that items 19.2 and 19.3 be deferred to the January meeting,

19.4 To restrict children's access to social media.

Councillor Á. Smith stated that any adult that has spent any amount of time on social media will be aware of its grim toxicity. She stated that social media is everywhere and many children use it from a very young age and while it can help them connect with friends, it also comes with serious risks that we cannot ignore. She stated that studies show that too much screen time and social media use can harm children's brain development. Councillor Smith stated that children need time offline to learn important life skills, like empathy and how to get along with others, but social media and constant device use make this harder. Councillor Smith stated that screen time also affects mental health and children who spend too long online are more likely to feel anxious, experience cyberbullying, or feel pressured to look or act a certain way online. She stated that many children become addicted to devices, constantly checking notifications or scrolling, which interferes with sleep, exercise, schoolwork and real-life friendships.

Councillor Smith stated that artificial intelligence is also changing the way children learn and noted that while AI tools can be helpful, over reliance on them can prevent children from developing critical thinking, problem solving skills and creativity. Councillor Smith stated that Australia is taking action to protect children from these harms and they are introducing rules to limit children's access to social media, reduce screen time and protect their mental health. Councillor Smith stated that the Irish Government should do the same. She stated that social media should be off limits to anybody under the age of 16. Councillor Á. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Taoiseach asking that the Government take stronger action, including better age checks, restrictions for young children, limits on screen time, safeguards for learning and holding social media companies accountable for exploiting young people. Councillor Smith stated that we should be the front runners in Europe in doing this, with Ireland taking up the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in July 2026.

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

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

19.5 To ask Cavan County Council to write to Minister Dara Calleary, T.D, to consider approving current participants on Rural and Town Community Employment Schemes (CE) to assist with gritting of footpaths leading to schools in their respective areas during the winter period as required.

Councillor N. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to Minister Dara Calleary, T.D. Minister for Rural and Community Development asking that he consider approving current participants on Rural and Town Community Employment Schemes (CE) to assist with gritting of footpaths leading to schools in their respective areas during the winter period as required.

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

19.6 Calling for better public engagement from the Minister for Justice in regard to IPAS centres.

Councillor T. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Justice, Mr. Jim O'Callaghan calling for better public engagement with regards to families living in IPAS centres. Councillor Smith stated that he recently attended a meeting in Kilnaleck where eight families were told they had to relocate with just a few days' notice. He stated that with just a few days' notice, parents and children who had spent years integrating into the community, were ordered to relocate which meant children moving to new schools in different counties leaving behind their friends and sports teams. He stated that some of the families stayed working locally and are paying rent.

Councillor N. Connell supported the motion and stated that Local Authorities should be informed if residents are being asked to leave IPAS centres.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and stated that more clarity is needed on what will be happening going forward.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and noted that the same situation arose in Crosskeys. He stated that this movement puts pressure on local national schools which the children attended and some schools risk losing a teacher. Councillor Bennett noted that the situation would be different if the families were going home.

19.7 Shortage of essential therapies for children with additional needs.

Councillor Á. Smith stated that long waiting lists, unclear pathways, poor communication and lack of coordinated support have left many children without the basic assessments, therapies and interventions they urgently need. Councillor Smith stated that families are carrying the burden of a system that should be supporting them, not blocking them.

Councillor Smith stated that therapies such as speech and language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy and behavioural support are not optional and are critical for children to develop the skills needed in daily life. Councillor Smith stated that the stress on families is immense, as parents often struggle to find private support or cope without the help their child urgently needs. Councillor Smith stated that delays in therapies can have long-term consequences that affect the child's education, mental health and overall well-being. Councillor Smith proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Health, Ms. Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, T.D., the HSE and Minister for Disabilities, Ms. Hildegard Naughton, T.D., asking for increased funding and resources and create a plan to reduce waiting times and ensure every child with additional needs has access to the therapies they require.

19.8 To ask Cavan County Council to engage with the Minister for Health, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, T.D. to highlight the serious shortage of essential therapies for children with additional needs in our county.

Councillor N. Connell proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health, Ms. Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, T.D., to highlight the serious shortage of essential therapies for children with additional needs in our county. Councillor Connell stated that he attended a recent meeting of parents where he met two young mothers, one of whom had been waiting for five years for essential therapies for her child. He stated that the Government can send €125 million to Ukraine and there is no money to spend on the vulnerable children that need these therapies.

19.12 Serious shortage of essential therapies for children with additional needs in our county.

Councillor N. Brady stated that she also attended the parents' forum in Cavan recently which she described as heartbreaking. She stated that it is unfair that parents should have to try and get these services privately when financially they may not be able to afford them. She stated that no parent should have to choose between financial stability and their child's development. Councillor Brady stated that there is not enough staff and no plan in place for the scale of the need and children and families deserve better. Councillor N. Brady proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health, Ms. Jennifer Carroll MacNeill asking for increased staffing for therapy services and that a clear and transparent plan be put in place to reduce waiting lists.

19.13 That we write to the Minister for Health and the HSE to highlight the serious shortage of essential therapies for children with additional needs in our county as this crisis is having significant and lasting impact on children's development, family wellbeing, and the ability of schools and early-year settings to meet children's needs safely and effectively. Across the county, families are facing long waiting lists for Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Psychology.

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health and the HSE to highlight the serious shortage of essential therapies for children with additional needs in our county as this crisis is having a significant and lasting impact on children's development, family wellbeing, and the ability of schools and early-year settings to meet children's needs safely and effectively. He stated that across the county, families are facing long waiting lists for Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Psychology. Councillor B. Fay stated that due to these delays, children are not getting the essential therapies they need and teachers, special needs assistants and families are coming under significant pressure. Councillor Fay stated that these services are not optional they are essential.

19.16 To address the shortage of essential therapies for children with additional needs and to look at the crucial designation of medical cards for these children.

Councillor P. Brady concurred with all the previous members had said and stated that he also attended the recent protest by parents in Cavan. Councillor Brady stated that it would break your heart listening to each individual story. Councillor Brady stated that these children cannot get medical cards because one parent is working and therefore do not qualify for a medical card. Councillor Brady stated that there are not enough occupational therapists to even have a group therapy session never mind an individual session.

Councillor J.P. Feeley endorsed all that was said and noted that parents are frustrated, and the problem needs to be addressed at a higher level.

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

19.9 In light of the ongoing issues with the management of commercial afforestation in our county that Cavan County Council:

- **Call on the Taoiseach and the Minister for Agriculture to bring forward an amendment to the Forestry Act, 1988 to remove the obligation from Coillte to manage their portfolio on a commercial basis**
- **To remove property from the Coillte portfolio which has a special archaeological, geological and/or biodiversity value so that such lands can be properly protected for the common good and accessed by the public. Such lands should be placed in the ownership of the local authority or another state agency.**
- **Given the clear conflict of interest arising for the Department of Agriculture as the Department responsible for the promotion of forestry, that all regulatory functions relating to afforestation be removed from the Department**
- **That any proposal for commercial afforestation, clear-felling or replanting be made subject to the Planning and Development Act.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that he felt it appropriate to discuss commercial afforestation seeing that the meeting is being held in Dowra and the area is covered in Sitka Spruce. He stated that the area outside the resource centre is to be clear felled and replanted, but his belief is that it should not be replanted. He stated that commercial forestry has a negative impact on biodiversity. Councillor Feeley noted that Coillte is supposed to be custodians of the landscape however he believes they are not. Councillor Feeley stated that Cavan Burren Park can never be or will it be used for commercial forestry. He stated that it should not be under the ownership of an organisation such as Coillte. Councillor Feeley asked that Cavan County Council remove property from the Coillte portfolio which has special archaeological, geological and biodiversity value so that these lands can be properly protected for the common good. He stated that such lands should be placed in the ownership of the local authority or another State Agency. Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Taoiseach and the Minister for Agriculture to bring forward an amendment to the Forestry Act 1988 to remove the obligation from Coillte to manage their portfolio on a commercial basis. He proposed that Cavan County Council remove property from the Coillte portfolio which has a special archaeological, geological and/or biodiversity value so that such lands can be properly protected for the common good and accessed by the public. Such lands should be placed in the ownership of the local authority or another state agency. Councillor Feeley asked that all regulatory functions relating to afforestation be removed from the Department of Agriculture given the clear conflict of

interest arising for the Department as the Department responsible for the promotion of forestry. Councillor Feeley stated that afforestation is a tax-free operation and therefore Coillte is paying nothing to the communities it affects. Councillor Feeley requested that any proposal for commercial afforestation, clear-felling or replanting be made subject to the Planning and Development Act.

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

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and noted that since she joined Cavan County Council three years ago, Coillte is the biggest bone of contention and noted that the company is taking pure advantage of rural Ireland.

Councillors B. Fay, D. Brady, P. Walsh and T. Smith supported the motion.

19.10 That Cavan County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to put in place an annual allocation of funds under the Measure A8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme so that municipal treatment systems can be installed in subserviced settlements throughout the county.

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to Mr. James Browne T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking that his department put in place an annual allocation of funds under Measure A8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme so that municipal treatment systems can be installed in subserviced settlements throughout the county. Councillor J.P. Feeley noted that Milltown has no municipal treatment system in place and needs one. He stated that this funding is needed annually to encourage sustainable development and Uisce Éireann do not have the legislative entitlement to do it.

Councillor B. Fay seconded Councillor J.P. Feeley's proposal.

Councillors Á. Smith and P. Walsh supported the motion.

19.11 Speed on our main roads and country roads.

Councillor N. Brady called for all motorists to slow down when taking to the roads.

Councillor Brady stated that the issue of road safety is compounded by the dangerous and often reckless behaviour of speeding on our roads. Councillor Brady stated that speeding has become far too common on both national and rural roads. Councillor Brady stated that speed limits are there for a reason and must be adhered to. She stated that speeding on rural narrow roads is a major threat to pedestrians and cyclists on the roads. She stated that motorists do not think about the consequences until it is too late. Councillor Brady stated that motorists need to slow down and consider the safety of those around them.

Councillor N. Smith supported the motion.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and urged those walking and cycling on our roads to be more visible by wearing hi-vis clothing and those driving cars to switch on their lights.

Councillor D. Brady supported the motion and noted that a new danger on our roads is the bright lights on cars. Councillor Brady stated that in relation to speed and driving in general some people need to go back and learn the rules of the road.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and noted that there is no simple answer as people have no respect while driving on our roads.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion and noted that there is a major difficulty around schools where traffic will not slow down.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that due to an increase in population this leads to an increase of traffic on our roads. Councillor O'Reilly stated that people need to realise that they must allocate themselves more time to reach their destination. Councillor O'Reilly noted that mobile phones are also a problem on our roads with people trying to text as they are driving.

Councillors T. Smith, P. Walsh and J. P. Feeley supported the motion.

19.14 That Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport and Bus Eireann to ask why scheduled buses are late or simply don't turn up in towns across the county leaving people stranded, especially late-night buses leaving people sometimes alone and vulnerable.

Councillor B. Fay noted that there is a big issue with the Donegal to Dublin bus not turning up at bus stops or running very late. Councillor Fay stated that while it is a fantastic service, in recent times passengers have been left stranded along the route. He stated that far too often the bus is significantly late with no information provided to passengers. Councillor Fay stated that on a few occasions Belturbet has been by-passed even though it is a designated stop. Councillor Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport and Bus Eireann to ask why scheduled buses are late or simply do not turn up in towns across the county leaving people stranded, especially late-night buses leaving people sometimes alone and vulnerable.

Councillor J.P. Feeley seconded the proposal.

Councillor Á. Smith supported the motion and noted that we are trying to encourage people to use public transport, but they cannot rely on it.

Councillors T. Smith and P. Walsh supported the motion.

19.15 To ask the Director of Services for an update on Rural Regeneration Development Funding (RRDF).

Councillor C, Kelly asked the Director of Services for an update on Rural Regeneration Development Funding for Kingscourt.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that €10.9m had been allocated to Kingscourt Town Centre with match funding of €1.2m provided by Cavan County Council. Mr. Connaughton stated that the Integrated Design Team, headed by Tobin Consulting Engineers are pursuing the next stage of the process. The project in total will take two years.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Services stated that in total €34.5million had been received from the Department for Rural Regeneration projects with €5.3million in funding provided by Cavan County Council. He stated that this funding is for eleven projects spread throughout the County. Mr. Jennings stated that eight of these are complete with work just after commencing on the Percy French Hotel in Ballyjamesduff and works to commence later on St. Michael's Hall Cootehill and Bailieborough Town Centre.

Councillor T. Smith welcomed the commencement of works on the former Percy French Hotel.

19.19 Ag glaigh ar an rialtas chun soléiriú a thabhairt ar a gcuid miantaí ó thaobh Bille na gCríoch faoi Fhorghabháil, agus chun an reachtaíocht seo a chur i bhfeidhm, faoi mar a ghealladh, gan a thuilleadh moille / To call on the government to clarify its intentions in relation to the Occupied Territories Bill and to adopt and implement the legislation, as promised, without further delay.

Councillor S. Conaty stated that back in October 2024, Senator Frances Black, the author of the Occupied Territories Bill visited Cavan County Council when a motion was passed calling on the Irish Government to adopt and implement her legislation. He stated that local authorities and other groups throughout the country demanded that Ireland no longer engage in the purchase or supply of goods and services with companies based on illegally occupied lands. Councillor Conaty stated that it is abhorrent to him that Ireland remains one of Israel's largest trading partners in the EU, this legislation does not put that trade in danger. He stated that is mostly symbolic and it relates not only to Palestine, but all illegally occupied lands around the world, be it Ukraine or otherwise. He stated that when it comes to the Occupied Territories Bill, there seems to be an agenda for delay and hoping it goes away. Councillor Conaty stated that it is not going away because despite an apparent ceasefire, Israel continues its murderous apartheid and genocidal agenda. Councillor Conaty proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Government to clarify its intention in relation to this legislation and to get on with the business of adopting and implementing the Occupied Territories Bill, without further delay.

Councillor N. Connell supported the motion.

Councillor J.P. Feeley wished all a very Happy Christmas and the best of good health throughout the New Year. He invited all to MacNean House and Restaurant in Blacklion for dinner after the meeting and acknowledged Mr. Neven Maguire's contribution to the community. He stated that Nevin is a huge promoter of local businesses and local food producers and employs over sixty people at MacNean House and Restaurant.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Chief Executive, on behalf of the executive of Cavan County Council, wished everyone a Happy Christmas and hoped everybody gets the rest they deserve. Mr. Doyle stated that it is an important privilege as Cathaoirleach of the Council to be able to bring the December meeting to their local community.

The meeting concluded at 4.45p.m.

Certified Correct: _____ Date: _____

Cathaoirleach: _____