**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in Cabra Castle Hotel, Kingscourt on**

**Monday 6th December 2021 at 11.30a.m.**

Councillor C. Kelly, Cathaoirleach presiding

Present; Councillors M. Argue, W. Bennett, C. Brady, P. Brady, A. Fitzpatrick,

 J.P. Feeley, P. McDonald, P. McVitty, S. O’Reilly, S.P. O’Reilly,

T.P. O’Reilly, T. Smith, V. Smith, P. Walsh.

In Attendance; T. Ryan, Chief Executive

 E. Doyle, Director of Service

 P. Connaughton, Director of Service

 B. Jennings, Director of Service

 E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

Councillors A. Fitzpatrick, S. Smith and A/Head of Finance M. McNally joined the meeting online. An apology was received from Councillor B. Fay.

Councillor C. Kelly welcomed all to Cabra Castle for the December meeting of Cavan County Council.

1. **To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 8th November 2021.**

**Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 8 Mi na Samhna a dhearbhu.**

 It was

 Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor P. McVitty

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of meeting of Cavan County Council held on 8 November 2021 be hereby approved”

1. **Disclosures 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 7 October 2021.**

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(i)To note reply the Office of the Minister for Finance in relation to VAT on the purchase**

 **and maintenance of defibrillators.**

Noted.

**(ii) To note reply from Department of Transport regarding safety of children around**

 **schools.**

Noted

**(iii) To note reply from ComReg regarding scam and nuisance calls and texts.**

Noted. It was proposed by Councillor S. O’Reilly and seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly that the Council write to the Minister of Justice regarding scam and nuisance calls and texts.

**(iv) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Finance regarding branch closures**

 **Announced by Bank of Ireland.**

Noted. It was proposed by Councillor C. Kelly to write to the Minister for Finance once

 again to ask him to meet with the banks and discuss the situation.

**(iv) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Health regarding Covid-19 related**

 **restrictions in maternity hospitals.**

Noted. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Health

 asking him to ensure restrictions will not be re-instated in our maternity hospitals.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley seconded the proposal.

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

**6. To note Chief Executive’s monthly report *(Section 51 Local Government Reform***

 ***Act 2014)*.**

Noted.

**7. To approve disposal of plot of land containing 0.18 hectares or 0.445 acres at Magheranure, Cootehill, Co. Cavan in two lots to Aldi Stores (Ireland) Limited, Newbridge Road, Naas, Co. Kildare W91 VE40, in exchange for 0.29 hectares or 0.7167 acres of land, 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 A. Fitzpatrick

And

Resolved;

“that the disposal of plot of land containing 0.18 hectares or 0.445 acres at Magheranure, Cootehill, Co. Cavan in two lots to Aldi Stores (Ireland) Limited, Newbridge Road, Naas, Co. Kildare W91 VE40, in exchange for 0.29 hectares or 0.7167 acres of land, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000 be hereby approved”.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS – DEFERRED FROM NOVEMBER MEETING**

**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 informed the members that there had been no communication with Eirgrid or ESB Networks since the last Council Meeting in November.

**2. To request the Government to carry out an urgent review on payments made to those on CE, TUS and RSS schemes etc, and the need for better incentives.**

Councillor S. P. O’Reilly proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Social Protection, Minister Heather Humphreys to carry out an urgent review on payments made to those on CE, TUS and RSS schemes etc., and the need for better incentives. Councillor O’Reilly noted that there were people attending interviews for these schemes just to tick boxes and were subsequently able to claim money for another twelve months just because they showed up to the interview. Councillor S.P O’Reilly stated that there needs to be an incentive for those people who genuinely work while on the schemes and an increase of €100 per week would therefore be necessary. He stated that the work these people do for their communities is outstanding and there must be a better monetary gain for their efforts.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that while there was a support grant available to some schemes to assist with costs accrued by community groups, those grants were not available with every scheme. Councillor Feeley stated that it is necessary to streamline support schemes as it is volunteers across the country that are managing the schemes in the first instance.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion and stated that an extra €100 a week would be very welcome by these workers.

 Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion stating that €20 extra a week is an insult to these workers considering the amount of time they give to their communities.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and agreed a top up is needed for these workers. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly noted where seven people were invited to an interview for a CE scheme vacancy in Virginia recently and just one person showed up for the interview. He stated that when people do not show up for interview, they should be asked why they failed to attend, and their payments should also be cut.

 Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion and noted that communities would be much poorer without these schemes and workers.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS – DECEMBER MEETING**

**3. That Cavan County Council introduce awards for individuals/groups who litter pick daily/weekly. These awards should be in each Municipal District to help keep our county looking well.**

Councillor W. Bennett called on Cavan County Council to introduce awards for individuals or groups who litter pick daily or weekly in our towns and villages throughout the County. He stated that these awards should be given out in each Municipal District to help keep our County looking well. He stated that there are several young people who continually help with picking litter in our communities, and they should be rewarded. He stated that this would be a good initiative for sponsors and litter pickers to give them encouragement.

 Councillor C. Brady seconded Councillor Bennett’s proposal. She stated that there is a gentleman in Cootehill who picks litter every single day in his own quiet way and opens and locks the playground and it would be great to see his work acknowledged.

 The motion was supported unanimously.

 Mr. P. Connaughton, Director of Service stated that it is important for the Executive of Cavan County Council to acknowledge the work of the Tidy Towns Committees throughout the County. He stated that it may be possible to link the awards with the new green kilometre scheme. He stated that the Council would look into same.

**4. Progress Report on Local Improvement Schemes.**

 Deferred.

**5. Update on repairs to demountable dwellings.**

Councillor P. McVitty asked the executive for an update on repairs to demountable dwellings within the County. He noted that some people keep their dwellings in good condition and may only need small repairs carried out to their dwelling. He stated that if money was well spent and work done properly it could extend the lifetime of the dwelling for up to twenty years. Councillor McVitty asked how many vacant demountable dwellings were in the County and had fallen into bad repair and if they could be disposed of. Councillor McVitty also asked what the position is in relation to oil heating in these dwellings.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion. He stated that work needs to be done on dwellings where the tenant has been living in them for quite some time.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion. He stated that most people will be living in these houses for the rest of their days, and it is important that the Council maintain the dwellings as best they can.

 Councillors M. Argue, S.P. O’Reilly, P. Walsh and C. Kelly supported the motion.

 Mr. E. Doyle, Director of Service stated that demountable dwellings have been provided by the Council for decades. He stated that the modern demountable dwellings have the highest health and safety and fire safety standards. He stated that the Council renovate and refurbish these dwellings through the housing budget and the Council divert whatever monies they can towards demountable dwellings. He stated that the Council try to prioritise so that investment is long term. He stated that the Council is currently preparing a draft policy where a survey will take place on all demountable dwellings and a prioritised maintenance list. He stated that if the dwelling is no longer habitable in an area, it will be demolished, and land sold to landowner. He stated if the dwelling is in good condition and there is a demand for it then it will be re-let in the area. Mr. Doyle stated that he would consult with John Wilson, Housing Construction in relation to oil heating in these dwellings.

 **6. To request the Government to urgently address the current crisis in the haulage and commercial industry regarding fuel costs.**

Councillor S. P. O’Reilly called on the Government to urgently address the current crisis in the haulage and commercial industry regarding fuel costs. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Finance and Minister for Transport asking that the VAT rate be reduced up to a six month period of time to help those in crisis in the haulage industry. He noted that a 30% increase in diesel prices over the last six months has caused several companies in the sector to go out of business. He stated that the current fuel rebate scheme allows for a maximum repayable rebate in Ireland of 7.5cent per litre where it is much higher in other European Countries. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly noted that you must have a road haulage licence and spend the money first become you can claim it back. He stated that it is costing lorry drivers €350 extra per week to keep their lorry on the road.

Councillor S. O’Reilly supported the motion. She stated that lorry drivers and the haulage industry are not treated with the respect they deserve in this Country. Councillor S. O’Reilly stated that agri-contractors should also be included in the proposal.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion stating that the haulage industry is working with tight margins with the extra cost of fuel. He stated that the decrease in VAT worked for the hospitality sector so it should also work for the haulage industry.

 Councillor P. McVitty seconded Councillors S.P. O’Reilly’s proposal. Councillor McVitty noted that the road haulage organisation did not get involved in the protest in Dublin as it was not organised properly and officially.

 Councillors W. Bennett and J.P. Feeley supported the motion.

**7. To ask Cavan County Council to invite NBI to the next meeting of Cavan County Council to give an update on its progress on the roll out in Cavan.**

 Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council write to National Broadband Ireland inviting them to attend the next meeting of Cavan County Council to give an update on its progress on the roll out of broadband in County Cavan. Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that it is two years since national broadband Ireland attended a meeting with Cavan County Council and there are many people within the Country very frustrated with the roll out of broadband. He noted that Kill National School is still not connected to broadband, and they are not the only school in the County.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley seconded Councillor A. Fitzpatrick’s proposal. He stated that everything about the national broadband scheme is frustrating. He noted that the tender process was a mess and the whole process is moving at the pace of a snail. He stated that these delays had started before Covid so Covid cannot be used as the reason for the delay. He stated that people are hugely dependent on broadband especially with so many people now working from home. He stated that there is clearly not enough pressure being put on them from the Department of Communications.

 Councillor S. O’Reilly supported the motion noting that the roll out to date is very unsatisfactory. She stated that the scheme is to have 115,000 homes connected by the end of 2021 and to date it had 27,000 homes connected. She stated that there must be penalties enforced on them if they do not meet their targets.

 Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion.

**8. To ask Cavan County Council to give an update on the East West Link.**

Deferred.

**9. Staffing crisis in our Schools.**

Councillor P. McDonald stated that he has had several issues raised with him in the last few weeks in relation to primary and post primary schools where there are many teachers absent because of Covid-19 and huge difficulties getting substitute teachers to replace them. Councillor P. McDonald stated that these shortages are not just down to Covid-19 but a lack of planning on the part of the Department of Education. He stated that bringing in student teachers and those retired will not solve the problem in the long term. He noted that there are Polish, Latvian, and other nationalities with degrees to teach but are not allowed teach in our schools because they do not have Irish. He stated that leaving cert students are becoming anxious as some have been without a teacher for a significant period. He stated that the Minister needs to plan for all eventualities and more measures need to be implemented in schools to prevent the spread of covid. He stated that there is currently confusion across the board in schools when it comes to who should or should not wear masks and this needs to be clarified.

. Councillor S. P. O’Reilly supported the motion and felt the Minister could not do much to solve the problem. He stated that it is a backward step bringing retired teachers back into the schools. He stated that currently students and teachers are sick every other day in our schools due to the fact windows must be left open in classrooms. He stated that a streamlined process needs to happen, and he thanked and supported the teachers for their work during covid in our schools.

**10. To ask for an update on the East West Link.**

Deferred.

**11. To request a deputation to meet with Minister Eamon Ryan, T.D. to seek extra funding for roads in County Cavan.**

Councillor C. Kelly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan asking that he attend a meeting with a deputation from Cavan County Council in relation to extra funding for roads in County Cavan. He stated that the public are fed up with Councillors telling them money is not available to do roads and yet these people are paying local property tax and motor tax fees. He stated that it is very important that we meet with the Minister to explain to him the state our roads are currently in. Councillor Kelly noted that the engineering staff in Cavan County Council are doing excellent work with the money they have.

 Councillor S. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that Bailieboro Cootehill municipal district have a very high volume of HGV vehicles on their roads due to commercial properties and the roads are currently in much need of repair. She stated that the roads are like this from lack of investment and years of underfunding.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley seconded Councillor Kelly’s proposal.

 Councillor S.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that a letter had already been sent from the Ballyjamesduff Municipal District requesting extra funding. Councillor S.P O’Reilly asked that all members be invited to the meeting and that the Minister bring officials from his Department with him to answer questions. Councillor O’Reilly asked that Cavan County Council Executive lead the operation.

 Councillors T.P. O’Reilly and C. Brady supported the motion.

 **Housing**

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service informed the members that a letter had been received from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the Council’s engagement with “Housing for All”, the Government’s housing plan to 2030. Mr. Doyle stated that the Council has been given a deadline of December 17 to outline how it intends to deliver on the plan to increase the supply of housing locally in the next five years.

 Councillor C. Kelly asked if voids would form part of the plan.

 Mr. Doyle, Director of Service stated that although it was uncertain, he hoped the government would commit to similar levels of investment to support the void return scheme in 2022. He stated that to address legacy issues within the county, the Council will positively and energetically campaign for additional funding and this case will be made to the Department for Housing in the coming months.

 Councillor M. Argue noted that at the last Strategic Policy Meeting the members were informed that sixty-nine people had turned down the offer of permanent council housing so far in 2021 and stated that the public need to know that the Council are up against it when letting houses.

 Mr. Doyle, Director of Service noted that people on the social housing list have two valid opportunities to refuse offers before their application is suspended for a period of twelve months.

 Councillor V. Smith stated that he is of the opinion that certain people abuse the system solely to get rental supports rather than accept a housing offer.

Councillor P. Walsh noted that people should be aware, where an offer of a house is turned down, the process has to be restarted once again which could take a further three months.

 Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service, despite the challenges welcomed the fact that the Council had managed to provide one hundred and seventy families with a new home in Cavan in 2020 and more than two hundred the year before that.

 Councillor S.P. O’Reilly noted that the Chief Executive’s Report no longer informs Councillors of who is allocated a Council house and wondered why?

 Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service informed that members that this information has not been in the Chief Executives report for the last number of years due to GDPR.

 Councillor S. O’Reilly welcomed the funding received from Minister Heather Humphreys for Castle Lake, Bailieborough. She thanked the Council staff for submitting excellent applications to receive this funding.

 Councillor C. Kelly welcomed the funding for Dun a Ri Forest Park.

 **Votes of Sympathy**

* The Maguire Family, Cullies, Cavan on the death of Bernadette Maguire, wife of Val Maguire former Fire Officer, Cavan County Council.
* The McCabe Family, Kingscourt and Crosserlough on the death of Andy McCabe a great Crosserlough and Cavan Footballer.

A minutes silence was held in memory of the deceased.

**Votes of Congratulations**

* Bishop Francis Duffy a native of Templeport on his appointment as Archbishop elect of the Archdiocese of Tuam.

Councillor C. Kelly conveyed his thanks to the Executive and Staff of Cavan County Council for serving the County well through such a difficult period with Covid. Councillor Kelly wished all a very Happy Christmas and a bright New Year.

Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive stated that it has been a difficult time and he thanked the elected members for their work during the year, being innovative as regard meetings. He thanked the members for working co-operatively with the staff of Cavan County Council. Mr. Ryan thanked the staff for their day-to-day work in the Council and for being flexible and adapting to the restrictions imposed by Covid. He stated that he looked forward to 2022. He wished all a very Happy Christmas.

Councillor J.P. Feeley on behalf of the Fianna Fáil Group stated that it was great to be in person this year at the December meeting. He thanked the Council staff and stated there is always great constructive engagement from them. Councillor Feeley wish all a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2022.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly on behalf of the Fine Gael Group wished all a Happy Christmas. Councillor O’Reilly thanked the executive and staff of Cavan County Council for all their work throughout the year. He also noted that on this day one hundred years ago the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty took place.

Councillor P. McDonald wished all a Happy Christmas.

Items 4, 8 and 10 were deferred.

The meeting concluded at 2pm.

Certified Correct: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cathaoirleach: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_