**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in The Council Chamber, Courthouse, Cavan on Monday 10th October, 2022 at 2.00p.m.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley, Cathaoirleach presiding

Present; Councillors W. Bennett, P. Brady, C. Brady, B. Fay, C. Kelly, C. Lovett,

P. McDonald, P. McVitty, S. O’Reilly, T.P. O’Reilly, T. Smith, V. Smith,

P. Walsh.

In Attendance; T. Ryan, Chief Executive

 B. Jennings, Director of Service

 P. Connaughton, Director of Service

 E. Doyle, Director of Service

 M. McNally, A/Head of Finance

 L. McGavigan, Senior Executive Officer

 E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

Apologies were received from Councillors M. Argue, A. Fitzpatrick, S.P. O’Reilly and S. Smith.

Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed all to the meeting. Councillor Feeley stated that a Book of Condolence is now open and will be placed in the foyer in the Courthouse to allow members of the public express their sympathy to the people of Cresslough on the tragic deaths of ten local people within their community. Councillor J.P Feeley extended his sympathy to the bereaved and noted that prayers are with those who are currently being treated in hospital.

A vote of sympathy was extended to the Tierney Family, Ballyjamesduff on the tragic death of Leonard Tierney, fire officer in the Ballyjamesduff Fire Station.

A minutes silence was held in memory of the deceased.

1. **To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 12th September 2022.**

 **Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 12 Mean Fomhair a dhearbhu.**

 It was

 Proposed by Councillor P. McVitty

 Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of meeting of Cavan County Council held on 12 September 2022 be hereby approved”

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

 Noted**.**

1. **To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 7 July 2022**

Noted.

1. **To note Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee on Housing, Social Inclusion and Corporate Services meeting held on 24 June 2022.**

Noted.

**Note Members’ Reports from Conferences/Training Events.**

1. **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.

**6. Correspondence**

**To note reply from Coillte regarding the Council resolution for Coillte to hand over the Cavan Burren Park to Cavan County Council.**

Noted.

**7. To hear presentation on Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme and Serviced Sites Scheme by John Wilson and Sinead Gibbs, Vacant Homes Officer.**

Ms. Sinead Gibbs, Vacant Homes Officer informed the members that the Croi Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme and Serviced Sites Scheme are among a number of measures to addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock in the Housing for All Programme. Ms. Gibbs noted that the vacant properties refurbishment grant was launched in July 2022 and the ready to build serviced sites for new homes was launched in September 2022. She stated that the Croi Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme will provide new choices for people to live in towns and villages in Ireland, initially through the provision of a grant to support the refurbishment of vacant properties, with priority given to areas where the level of vacancy or dereliction is high. Ms. Gibbs stated that a grant of up to a maximum of €30,000 will be available for the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principal private residence, including the conversion of a property which has not previously been used as residential. Ms. Gibbs stated that where the refurbishment works are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €30,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of €20,000 will be available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict, bringing the total grant available for derelict property up to maximum of €50,000. Ms. Gibbs noted that the scheme will apply to towns and villages with a population of over 400 people. She stated that properties considered for inclusion must be vacant for two years or more and built before 1993. She stated that the fund is focused on home ownership with priorities implemented on a scale as follows:

1. Applicants who are first time buyers or who qualify under the ‘Fresh Start’ principle.
2. Applicants other than 1 above who have particular needs – specifically, disabled people or older people who are moving from their current home which they are selling or have sold and want to live in a town or village setting.
3. Applicants other than 1 and 2 above who are moving from their current home which they are selling or have sold and want to live in a town or village setting.

The property owner must intend in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principle private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling. If at any time they sell the property/site or it ceases to be their principle private residence within ten years, they must reimburse the State an element of the full value of the subsidy. Up to 5 years 100% of the monetary amount of the discount, over 5 years and less than or equal to 10 years 75% of the monetary amount of the discount and over 10 years no clawback. Ms. Gibbs stated that in relation to the serviced site scheme all available sites will be advertised on the local authority’s website and in local publications along with a closing date for receipt of applications.

The members in turn thanked Ms. Gibbs for her presentation.

**8. To approve attendance of members at the following:**

 **Conferences**

**Parnell Society Ivy Day 2022 Symposium held at the Woodenbridge Hotel from 7-9 October 2022 (retrospective approval)**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors T. Smith, V. Smith and T.P. O’Reilly at the Parnell Society Ivy Day 2022 Symposium held at the Woodenbridge Hotel from 7-9 October 2022 be hereby approved”

**Celtic Conferences – ‘Innovation in Solar Energy Technology’ to be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork from 28-30 October 2022.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors S. O’Reilly, P. Brady, C. Kelly, J.P. Feeley and P. Walsh at the Celtic Conference – ‘Innovation in Solar Energy Technology’ to be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork from 28-30 October, 2022 be hereby approved”

**Daniel O’Connell Autumn School 2022 to be held in Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry on 28 and 29 October 2022.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors W. Bennett, C. Brady and S. O’Reilly at the Daniel O’Connell Autumn School 2022 to be held in Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry on 28 and 29 October, 2022 be hereby approved”

**Training**

**AILG training event to be held in the Radisson, Sligo on 27th October 2022.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors B. Fay, S.P. O’Reilly, S. O’Reilly, W. Bennett, P. McVitty, T. Smith, V. Smith, T.P. O’Reilly, P. Brady, C. Kelly and J.P. Feeley at AILG training event to be held in the Radisson, Sligo on 27th October be hereby approved”

**LAMA Autumn/Winter seminar to be held in the Four Seasons Hotel, Coolshannagh, Monaghan on 9-10 November 2022.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors B. Fay, S.P. O’Reilly, S. O’Reilly, W. Bennett, C. Brady, P. McVitty, T. Smith, V. Smith, T.P. O’Reilly and C. Kelly at LAMA Autumn/Winter seminar to be held in the Four Seasons Hotel, Coolshannagh, Monaghan on 9-10 November 2022 be hereby approved”

**Irish Council for Social Housing training to be held in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Sligo on 19 and 20 October 2022.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors C. Brady, P. McVitty, T. Smith, V. Smith and T.P. O’Reilly at the Irish Council for Social Housing training to be held in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Sligo on 19 and 20 October 2022 be hereby approved

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

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

Noted.

1. **To approve overdraft accommodation in the sum of €9,000,000 for year ending 31 December 2023.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor W. Bennett

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that overdraft accommodation in the sum of €9,000,000 for year ending 31 December 2023 be hereby approved.”

**Retirement of Mr. Michael Hanley, Chief Executive, Lakeland Dairies**

Councillor W. Bennett informed the meeting that the Chief Executive of Lakeland Dairies, Mr. Michael Hanley is due to retire in December and asked that the Council do something to thank him for his work over the years and for all the work he has done for dairy farmers in County Cavan. Councillor Bennett noted that Lakeland Dairies is one of the finest co-ops in Ireland and had provided huge employment locally.

Councillor S. O’Reilly agreed with Councillor Bennett and noted that Lakeland Dairies are the largest employer in Bailieborough and Mr. Hanley’s retirement should be marked by the Council.

Councillor J.P. Feeley asked the executive to consider same.

**Shared Island Funding**

Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed the Shared Island Funding received by Cavan County Council under the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme, announced at the Town Hall, Cavan by An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD and Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O’Brien, TD.

**Votes of Congratulations:**

* Drumlane Football Club on winning the County Junior Championship
* Castlerahan Football Club on winning the County Intermediate Championship
* Crosserlough Camogie Club on winning the County Senior Camogie Final
* Lurgan Football Club on winning the County Senior Ladies Final
* Councillor S. O’Reilly who graduated from her First Year Chef Course at Cavan Institute and on winning student of the year.
* Councillor C. Brady on her election as Chairperson of Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS OCTOBER MEETING**

**6. 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

meetings with Eirgrid or ESB Networks since the last Council Meeting.

**7. That Cavan County Council re-introduce the library space in the Johnston Library for use as a community space as soon as possible.**

It was agreed that this motion would be dealt with at the next Cavan Belturbet Municipal District meeting.

**8. To call on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to increase the threshold for people to qualify to get on the social housing list.**

 Councillor P. McDonald called on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to increase the threshold for people to qualify to get on the social housing list. Councillor McDonald stated that currently the maximum earnings yearly for a single person is €25,000, a couple €26,250 and three adults living in the one house €30,000. Councillor McDonald noted that people are turning down work so that their income will stay below the threshold. Councillor McDonald noted that the income limits have not changed since 2011. Councillor McDonald noted that other counties have been able to navigate processes to access housing more quickly than others, stating the Louth County Council had secured 93 homes by CPO in the past five years and still so many vacant and derelict properties lie idle in Cavan.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion and noted that Louth County Council are the lead authority for providing shelter for homeless presentations in Cavan and it is not a great situation sending people from one county to another. Councillor Kelly noted that there is a great need for emergency accommodation to be provided in County Cavan. Councillor Kelly noted that the Minister has stated that before the end of the year he will be making an announcement on the new income limits.

 Councillor S. O’Reilly seconded Councillor P. McDonald’s motion.

**12. To discuss the issue of Housing and the difficulties people are currently facing in applying for supports in County Cavan.**

Councillor S. O’Reilly seconded Councillor P. McDonald’s motion. Councillor O’Reilly stated that income limits are a huge issue currently and they have not been changed since 2011. Councillor O’Reilly noted that there is a rising rate of inflation, and the cost of living is increasing too. She stated that she has been contacted by mainly women, working women who find themselves in circumstances where they have had to leave their family home and seek accommodation in the private rental sector. She stated that most of the constituents she deals with are in desperate need of assistance but are not meeting the eligibility requirements for any kind of assistance for housing support. Councillor O’Reilly noted that we have three and four generations of people living in the one house and they are seen as adequately housed. Councillor O’Reilly stated that a lot of landlords in the private sector are getting out of the market because it is not worth the hassle of renting their dwelling. She noted that some parties are calling for a ban on evictions. Councillor O’Reilly stated that people no longer can meet their rent and are spiralling into arrears. She also noted that they are required to complete outrageous amounts of documentation for the social housing application form. She stated that the form requires the most intimate details of their personal and financial lives, forcing them to relive horrendous situations and retraumatises these people all over again. She stated that the housing list numbers belies the real extent of the housing crisis in our County.

 Councillor T. Smith supported the motion but noted that when the income limits are increased the number of people on the housing list will increase too.

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

 Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service stated that in respect of Councillor P. McDonald’s motion the executive is also awaiting the outcome of the report on the income limits due to be published by end of year. Mr. Doyle noted that it was a changed landscape in terms of housing need and there had been a significant increase in the complexity of cases, as well as frequency when it came to homeless presentations. Mr. Doyle noted that where usually it may have been individual homeless, mainly single men, now it is whole families. Mr. Doyle noted that where the Council have attempted to enter the property market, they have done so sensitively, so as not to bid against potential private buyers. Mr. Doyle stated currently sites for homeless shelters are being looked at in the border counties and in Cavan and Monaghan but no decision has been made yet. Mr. Doyle noted that a compulsory purchase order is useful on a site where the title is uncertain. Mr. Doyle informed the members that nobody is removed from the housing list without being notified.

**9. That the Council request the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to reduce the 20% contribution for Older People’s Grants and Disabled Grants to 10%.**

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking that the Government reduce the 20% contribution from Local Authorities in relation to Older People’s Grants and Disabled Grants to 10%.

 Councillor P. Brady seconded Councillor T.P. O’Reilly’s proposal noting that it is a very worthy motion considering the current rise in costs.

 Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion.

**10. To discuss the withdrawal of cash services from businesses and organisations and its effects on our rural and older population.**

Councillor S. O’Reilly stated that there is no doubt, but we are heading towards a cashless society. She stated that several people contacted her with regards to Cavan County Board refusing to take cash at turnstiles for matches. Councillor O’Reilly stated that for many, particularly older rural men, a weekend of football began by turning up at a turnstile with €10 and entering the game, now, for these people it has become a process of high anxiety, the handing over of personal information and a total dependence on others. Councillor O’Reilly stated that people with no smart phones and/or no bank cards are hugely disadvantaged with trying to get tickets for ticket only GAA matches in Cavan. Councillor O’Reilly noted that buying tickets online is a cumbersome process as you must download two apps. She stated that you need to be a competent phone user, have good broadband and/or coverage when purchasing and when presenting tickets for scanning. Councillor O’Reilly also noted that for a few championship games the app stopped working and the County Board did take cash so why can’t the take cash all the time. Councillor S. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to Cavan County Board asking them to provide a cash option like Monaghan County Board. Councillor S. O’Reilly asked if Cavan County Council still took cash in the Town Hall and at the Customer Services Desk.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and urged people to stop supporting a cashless society. Councillor Fay stated that he is a business owner, and his cash machine crashed a week ago which led to a party of punters leaving for another venue and to date his machine has not been fixed. Councillor Fay said that cash is a legal tender and it is our right to pay with cash.

 Councillor T. Smith supported the motion.

 Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and noted for some people a football match is the only outing they have for the week. Councillor Brady noted that local charities are also being affected as people carry no cash with them and cannot contribute to a collection.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that we are all guilty of going cashless, but we have to look after certain sectors of our society.

 Councillor P. Brady concurred with all that was said and noted that children are now being charged €1 online and this is also causing problems for parents.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion and suggested that clubs raise the matter at County Board meetings that one turnstile be used for cash only.

 Councillors P. Walsh and C. Kelly supported the motion.

 Councillor S. O’Reilly thanked the members for their support and proposed that the Council write to Bank of Ireland and Allied Irish Bank as well as Cavan County Board.

**11. To discuss Anaerobic Digestion in County Cavan and to receive an update on any progress within the County with regard to same.**

Councillor S. O’Reilly stated that the 2020s are seen as a crucial decade for the development of anaerobic digestion in Ireland. She noted that in Cavan and Monaghan there is an abundance of livestock and the availability of manures making it an ideal location of this process. Councillor O’ Reilly noted that the North of Ireland have currently 103 anaerobic digestion sites with 8 sites in the Republic of Ireland. Councillor O’Reilly stated that anaerobic digestion requires a high capital cost and payback will be determined by the price received for the renewable electricity produced. She stated that with pressure on the agriculture sector, which accounts for 33% of Ireland’s carbon emissions, anaerobic digestion is touted as one of the most high-profile solutions. Councillor O’Reilly stated that the development of a sustainable indigenous anaerobic digestion biomethane industry offers a significant potential to support the transition to a low carbon energy system as well as support the achievement of agriculture targets. Councillor O’Reilly stated that an analysis was completed at European level in 2018 which ranked Ireland 23rd out of 27 EU Member States in adoption of renewable energy technologies at farm level. Councillor O’Reilly stated that The European Biogas Association (EBA) predicts that biogas and biomethane production in Europe could double by 2030 and more than quadruple by 2050. To match this ambition, the Irish Government estimates that 20 per cent of the current natural gas demand could be met by biomethane by 2030 with the correct supports in place. Councillor O’Reilly stated that for the first time in twelve months an energy company had introduced a Renewable Energy Feed-in Tariff offering 13cent/kwh. She stated that this alone is not attractive enough to support anaerobic digestion in the Republic of Ireland. Councillor O’Reilly stated that there is a need to reclassify digestate from a wate produce to an organic product. She stated that farmers need to be rewarded for their efforts in offsetting their emissions fairly.

 Councillor O’Reilly asked the executive of Cavan County Council for an update on any progress within the County with regards to anaerobic digestion.

 Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and noted that Ireland are years behind the rest of Europe.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion noting that it was the way forward in generating power and save our streams from slurry.

 Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and noted that the Cootehill Area Development Committee are carrying out a case study to see how anaerobic digestion might be developed in the local area.

 Councillors T.P. O’Reilly and J.P. Feeley supported the motion.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that he is aware of the efforts being made in Cootehill. Mr. Connaughton stated that the funding module for anaerobic does not stack up at the minute. He stated that the common consensus was that biogas was the best identified option, and discussions have taken place with Gas Networks Ireland on the subject.

Item Nos. 1, 2, 3,4, and 5 were deferred.

Councillor J.P. Feeley reminded the meeting of the Cathaoirleach’s Reception being held at 5.30pm for Cavan GAA.

Councillor Feeley informed the members that a Civic Reception will be held on the 21st November 2022 to mark the 100th Anniversary for the formation of An Garda Siochána.

The meeting concluded at 4.05p.m.

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

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