**Minutes of Virtual Meeting of Cavan County Council held on Microsoft Teams on Monday 24th May 2021 at 9.30a.m.**

Councillor S. O’Reilly, Cathaoirleach presiding

Present; Councillors M. Argue, W. Bennett, C. Brady, P. Brady, B. Fay,

A. Fitzpatrick, J.P. Feeley, C. Lovett, P. McDonald, P. McVitty,

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

In Attendance; T. Ryan, Chief Executive

 E. Doyle, Director of Service

 P. Connaughton, Director of Service

 N. O’Kane, Senior Planner

 M. McNally, A/Head of Finance

 E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

Apologies were received from Councillors C. Kelly and S.P. O’Reilly

Cathaoirleach S. O’Reilly welcomed all to the meeting and informed the members that the purpose of the meeting was to clear the May agenda.

**Votes of Sympathy**

* Ms. Emma Clancy, County Librarian on the death of her mother Mrs. Kathleen Clancy, Co. Leitrim.
* The McCaffrey Family on the death of P.J. McCaffrey, Kells, Co. Meath and formerly Bawnboy, Co. Cavan.

Cathaoirleach S. O’Reilly stated that it was a pleasure for her to sign contracts with Demac Construction Ltd for the delivery of the landmark Virginia Civic Centre Project. She stated that the integrated civic centre will incorporate a new library, additional theatre space at the Ramor Theatre and a shared multipurpose civic events space.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly also welcomed the signing of the contracts stating that it is a great boost to the town of Virginia and the County.

Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive stated that he was delighted to see the contracts signed -after gaining successful funding for the project under the rural regeneration scheme. Mr. Ryan thanked the relevant staff for their good work on the project.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Services acknowledged the contribution of the elected members past and present in the project which he stated will be a great flagship for people entering the town. He stated that it is hoped to have the project completed by the end of 2022.

**Local Improvement Scheme**

Mr. Peter McVitty welcomed the €290,000 in funding for the LIS from the Department of Community and Rural Affairs. He stated that he was disappointed with the negative report in the Anglo Celt newspaper where the comments made obviously referred to him. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed to await the outcome from letters sent to the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Transport in relation to providing funding for the LIS scheme as it was felt that no one department can provide the amount of funding needed to clear the backlog of applications within Cavan County Council.

**3. Sewerage Scheme for Milltown**

Councillor S. Smith stated that he has raised this issue on a number of occasions and despite being on the cards for several years, having plans drawn up, provision of a treatment plant was stepped over in the list of projects listed for investment when Irish Water was first established. He stated that over the years new resources have been built in Milltown such as new childcare facilities, GAA club facilities, upgrading of national school and Milltown group water scheme. He stated that all these projects were initiated by the local community. Councillor Smith stated that Milltown is an attractive location with a great community spirit. He stated that it has rich heritage such as Drumlane Abbey. He stated that a sewerage scheme is essential for the village particularly due to the increase in population over the years. Councillor S. Smith asked that the executive of Cavan County Council engage with Irish Water regarding the installation of such a facility in Milltown.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion. He noted that members of the community had met with the Council on numerous occasions and Cavan County Council have land in their ownership to facilitate a sewerage system. Councillor Feeley noted that the sewerage system for Milltown is tabled for inclusion in the Draft County Development Plan which will go for public consultation later.

Councillor V. Smith supported the motion stating that a lot of small villages are forgotten about throughout the County when it comes to funding. He stated unless you have a sewerage scheme you cannot qualify for funding for any small grants under the town and village renewal scheme.

 Councillors B. Fay, P. McVitty, P. Walsh and M. Argue supported the motion.

Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that the Council did purchase a site in Milltown in 2008 for the treatment plant. He stated that the biggest challenge is funding the scheme despite the fact numerous applications for funding have been made to the Department and Irish Water.

Councillor S. Smith thanked the members for their support and he acknowledged Mr. Connaughton’s accurate assessment of the scheme.

**5. That Cavan County Council call for more supports to be put in place to help family carers.**

Councillor P. McDonald called on Cavan County Council to support Sinn Fein’s proposals to stand up for family carers and ensure they get the support they deserve. He stated that carers have been abandoned by the Government for too long and it is time family carers finally get a break and receive the support they need. He noted that there are 500,000 family carers across Ireland who work unpaid hours to care for and support their loved ones and current financial support is nowhere near enough and this has become even worse for families with the Covid pandemic. He noted that during the pandemic, day centres were closed and carers could not rely on other family members to give them help due to covid restrictions. He stated that carers have been ignored with regards to their pleas to be prioritised in the vaccine sequencing plan. He noted that family carers have gone above and beyond the call of duty throughout this pandemic to keep their loved ones safe at home. He stated that it is unfair that family carers are being treated differently to paid care workers who are prioritised for the vaccine. Councillor P. McDonald noted that the income for carers’ allowance has remained at the same rate for the last 12 years and this needs to be increased. He stated that carers’ benefit should also be extended to the self-employed.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick supported the motion and stated that a lot of people would not be able to reside at home if it were not for carers.

Councillors T.P. O’Reilly, P. Walsh, B. Fay, P. McVitty and S. Smith supported the motion.

**6. To ask Cavan County Council to consider employing a Park Warden for the Con**

 **Smith Park.**

Councillor M. Argue asked Cavan County Council to consider employing a Park Warden

 for Con Smith Park as it is a great amenity to Cavan Town and gets quite a lot of use. She

 stated that the park was donated by Con P. Smith in memory of his son Con who died tragically in an aeroplane accident. She stated that a Park Warden is needed to help the outdoor staff maintain the park and provide security as vandalism has occurred at the park in the last while. She stated that the amount of litter thrown around the park is unreal.

 Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion stating that the Park is a very popular area and

 the playground is used constantly. She noted that the Tidy Towns do great work in the

 park.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion stating that it is a great amenity in the town.

Councillor Feeley stated that we should look at how we could provide more and better facilities like this throughout the County. Councillor Feeley stated that it might be a good idea to extend the CCTV cameras further into the Park. He noted that a warden would not be on duty after dark and this is when most acts of vandalism take place.

 Councillor W. Bennett suggested that a Park Warden be employed to work between Con

 Smith Park, Killykeen and Lough Oughter.

 Councillors T.P. O’Reilly concurred with Councillor Bennett. He stated that there are a lot

 of playgrounds throughout the County that could do with someone to maintain and clean

 them.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service noted the members concerns and stated that

 the Council is currently in the process of recruiting a community warden which would

 increase the amount of litter patrols in the County. Mr. Connaughton acknowledged the

 good work of the Tidy Towns Committee. He stated that the Council will look into

 extending the CCTV cameras as most vandalism takes place after dark. He stated that

 the Council could not justify a full time park warden and stated that the matter can be

 discussed at a municipal district meeting.

 Councillor M. Argue thanked the members for their support and stated that she was told

 previously that CCTV cameras could not be extended into the Park due to data protection.

**7. To ask Cavan County Council to request that better state funded psychological**

 **supports be put in place for victims of crime post trial.**

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that better state funded psychological supports need to be put in place for victims of crime post trial. He stated that victims are too often left to their own devices after the trial is complete. Councillor O’Reilly stated that it is vital that victims of domestic and sexual abuse get the support they require. He stated that support is given to the criminal and the victim is forgotten about. Councillor O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Minister for Health to put better state funded psychological supports in place for victims of crime post trial.

 Councillor P. McVitty seconded Councillor T.P. O’Reilly’s proposal.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and stating that it is wrong to see free legal aid given to criminals with no means testing.

Councillor M. Argue supported the motion and stated that there is a significant need for additional support for victims of crime.

Councillors P. McDonald, W. Bennet. P. Walsh and S. Smith supported the motion.

**8. To request that Simon Harris, T.D., Minister for Further and Higher Education**

 **Research, Innovation and Science review the proposed changes to the issuing of**

 **Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Cards for skilled workers.**

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to Minister Harris, T.D.,

 Minister for Further and Higher Education Research, Innovation and Science requesting

 him to review the proposed changes to the issuing of Construction Skills

 Certification Scheme (CSCS) Cards for skilled workers. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated

 that Minister Harris announced the development of a licensing model for certain

 construction and quarrying related activities. He stated that this will change the current

 practice under which some workers in construction are certified to undertake specific

 activities in areas like operation of machinery. Councillor O’Reilly stated that these

 operators will now be required to prove that they have the skills and experience to maintain

 their licence on a regular basis and this replaces the current model where there are no

 restrictions on the renewal of operator cards. He stated that it also cost employers extra

 as employees will now have to sit courses and therefore have to be replaced the days they

 are missing. He stated that most of these have already sat the test and should not have

 to do it again. He stated that the Government need to look at young people driving big

 tractors and not those that are already qualified.

 Councillor P. McVitty supported the motion stating that it was only a money racket. He

 stated that the same expense is placed on lorry drivers.

 Councillor T. Smith supported the motion.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and stated while she does not condone health and safety issues on site these people are driving these machines for over forty years and are well experienced at their job.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and noted that the proposed tests should be carried out every four years and not yearly at a cost to the employer.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick supported the motion and stated that these courses should be available online for people to do at night with no cost to the employer.

Councillors B. Fay, P. McDonald. C. Lovett and S. Smith supported the motion.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly thanked the members for their support.

**9. That Cavan County Council request insurance companies operating within the**

 **County of Cavan to state clearly if they operate a dual pricing strategy and if this is**

 **the case to cease from such practice.**

Councillor P. McDonald stated that loyal insurance customers are being ripped off by dual

 pricing and noted that dual pricing most commonly occurs where an insurer charges new

 customers significantly less than customers who are renewing an existing policy. He

 stated that renewal customers often pay what has become known as loyalty premium for

 not seeking out competition elsewhere. Councillor P. McDonald stated that a central bank

 interim report showed the majority of insurance providers in Ireland charge higher prices

 to existing customers who are less likely to switch. He stated that the report also found

 some policyholders are being overcharged by as much as 35%. Councillor McDonald

 noted that Sinn Fein’s bill to end the practice of dual pricing by insurance companies will

 require insurers to only use rating factors directly linked to the risk of being insured.

 Councillor P. McDonald asked the members for their support to ban the practice of dual

 pricing as it discriminates and overcharges customers and distorts the market.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and stated that dual pricing issues need to be

 tackled and we as a nation must learn as we fall for it all the time by thinking that insurance

 companies are our friends. He noted that currently an investigation is being carried out

 and we need to await the outcome of this before we act further. He stated that the people

 most affected are those subject to accidents with a genuine claim. He stated that

 insurance companies settle cases that they should not and noted that people should fight

 to the bitter end.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion. He stated that as members of the public it

 is imperative that we look for reductions every year.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion.

 Councillor P. McDonald thanked the members for their support and stated that we would

 await the outcome of the investigation.

**10. To ask Cavan County Council to install communication boards in all its playgrounds**

 **in Cavan to help assist non-verbal children to communicate.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council install communication

 boards in all its playgrounds in Cavan to help assist non-verbal children to communicate.

 He stated that the communication board is a picture symbol board and it can be used to

 enable non-verbal children make comments, requests or give a direction. He stated that

 the user can gesture, point to, or blink at images on the board which helps them

 communicate with others. Councillor Fitzpatrick informed the meeting that there is already

 a communication board in the Holy Family School, Cootehill and one at the Cavan County

 Museum. Councillor Fitzpatrick read a letter he had received from a pupil of the Holy

 Family School looking for support in putting forth the idea of communication boards

 throughout the County.

 Councillor T. Smith supported the motion and noted that Cavan Autism Parents Support

 (CAPS) had erected the communication board at Cavan County Museum.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion and noted that all amenity areas throughout

 the County should have a communication board.

 Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and stated it is a great way of showing other

 children that children with disabilities are not different.

 Councillors P. McVitty, C. Lovett, B. Fay, P. Walsh, J.P. Feeley, S. Smith, T.P. O’Reilly

 and S. O’Reilly supported the motion.

 Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service noted the comments of the members and stated that

 the Council will commit to exploring these communication boards and placing them in

 playgrounds throughout the County.

 Councillor A. Fitzpatrick thanked the members for their support.

**11. That Cavan County Council ask the Minister for the Gaeltacht to develop a policy of**

 **bi-lingual packaging for consumer products similar to the system operated in**

 **Canada.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that it is important that the Irish language is promoted in a

 practical way. Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that the Council write to the Minister for

 Tourism. Culture, Arts and Gaeltacht, Ms. Catherine Martin and also the Minister of State

 for the Gaeltacht, Mr. Jack Chambers asking them to develop a policy of bi-lingual

 packaging for consumer products similar to the system operated in Canada. He stated

 that it would not be a costly project and it would highlight goods made locally.

 Councillor S. Smith seconded Councillor J.P. Feeley’s proposal.

 Councillors T. Smith, P. McDonald, A. Fitzpatrick and S. O’Reilly supported the motion.

**12. That Cavan County Council ask the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to**

 **ensure that regulations for the sale of animal medicines allow for the prescription**

 **of animal medicines in appropriate circumstances by licenced merchants and**

 **veterinary pharmacies.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for

 Agriculture, Food and the Marine asking him to ensure that regulations for the sale of

 animal medicines allow for the prescription of animal medicines in appropriate

 circumstances by licenced merchants and veterinary pharmacies. He stated that the

 products concerned are primarily worm treatments and fluke treatments which are

 currently available to purchase in the local co-op, licensed premises and pharmacies

 without prescription. He stated that these regulations are being brought in to comply with

 EU regulations. Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that common sense is needed and a

 practical implementation of same which should take into account the situation facing

 farmers to ensure that costs do not increase. He stated that it is important to recognise

 the role played by licensed merchants in our rural towns in this process and the significant

 business they have in this regard.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion stating that the regulations are undermining

 the competency of farmers to carry out and administer drugs to their own livestock. He

 stated that it is important that the local small stores can continue to sell the medicines. He

 stated that these are not antibiotics and the vet should not have to issue prescriptions for

 same.

 Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and stated that this is more red tape and

 increasing costs for farmers.

 Councillor S. Smith supported the motion and stated that farmers know best as to what is

 needed for their animals. He stated that this will drive people across the border to purchase

 the medicine as a prescription won’t be needed there.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion.

**14. To ask Cavan County Council to write to the Department of the Environment to**

 **provide an update on the progress of their commitment in introducing a Deposit**

 **Return Scheme.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Mr. Eamon Ryan to provide an update on the progress of their commitment in introducing a Deposit Return Scheme. Councillor A. Fizpatrick noted that Carrickmacross installed Ireland’s first reverse vending machine two years ago and it allows people to bring empty plastic bottles for recycling and users can redeem a 10 cent voucher per bottle. He stated that in April this year the Government committed to introduce the Deposit and Return Scheme by Quarter three of 2022 and he wondered if this was still on target. He noted that Minister Ryan recently announced €5million in additional funding for litter infrastructure and awareness campaigns and stated that this money could have been used to fund reverse vending machines right across the Country.

Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion and stated that 90% of litter is found on the sides of our roads.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and noted that these machines are in America for the last thirty years and work well.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and stated that anything we can do to improve the litter situation would be very welcome. He stated that he would like to see car registrations being placed on chipper bags so that the culprits could be traced when litter is thrown out windows of cars.

 Councillors M. Argue and P. Walsh supported the motion.

 Item no 4 was deferred to June meeting.

The AGM was arranged for 2pm on Monday 14th June in the Hotel Kilmore with Covid regulations to be adhered to.

 The meeting concluded at 11.50a.m.

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

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