**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in The Council Chamber, Courthouse, Cavan on Monday 13th March, 2023 at 2.00p.m.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley, Cathaoirleach presiding

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

A. Fitzpatrick, C. Kelly, C. Lovett, P. McDonald, P. McVitty, S. O’Reilly, S.P. O’Reilly, T.P. O’Reilly, Á. Smith, 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

 L. McGavigan, Senior Executive Officer

 E. McGinn, Senior Staff Office

 Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed all to the meeting.

1. **To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 13 February 2023.**

 **Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 13 Feabhra a dhearbhú.**

 It was

 Proposed by Councillor P. McVitty

 Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 13th February 2023 be hereby approved”

**12. To approve co-option of Áine Smith to fill a casual vacancy arising from the passing of Sean Smith, in accordance with Section 19 of Local Government Act 2001.**

It was

 Proposed by Councillor J.P. Feeley

 Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

 And

 Resolved;

“that the co-option of Áine Smith to fill a casual vacancy arising from the passing of Sean Smith, in accordance with Section 19 of Local Government Act 2001 be hereby approved”

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that it was a special and poignant day for Áine Smith as she fills the seat arising from the death of her late father Seán Smith. Councillor Feeley stated that it was an important and historic day for Áine and noted that she is the third generation of the Smith family in local government. He stated that he had no doubt that she would do her job well. Councillor J.P. Feeley welcomed Áine’s mother Anne, Deputy Brendan Smith and Senator Diarmuid Wilson to the meeting.

 Councillor P. Walsh welcomed Áine Smith to the Chamber and stated that Áine is well capable of filling her late father’s shoes. She stated that all members work as a team in Cavan County Council and will be there to always support Áine.

Councillor Áine Smith thanked the Councillors, Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach for their support and welcome to Cavan County Council. Councillor Smith thanked the members of the Cavan Belturbet Municipal District for their support and nomination. Councillor Smith thanked the officials of Cavan County Council for their help and support and thanked the Council for holding a Special Meeting in memory of her late father Councillor Sean Smith. Councillor Smith noted that it was a bitter sweet moment for her and wished circumstances were different. Councillor Smith stated that it was a great honour for her to sit in the chair where her father worked as a local politician for over forty years and stated that she will work to support families across Cavan to the best of her ability. She stated that she grew up with politics and therefore is conscious of all the work and demands involved in political life. She stated that she will endeavour to live up to her late father’s standards and also noted that challenges are different now than when Sean was first elected in 1979. Councillor Smith stated that she looked forward to working alongside her fellow colleagues and believed that in any walk of life we get more done by working together. Councillor Smith thanked her family for supporting her decision, her husband Cian, her twin boys and in particular her mother Anne who she deemed as her right hand woman.

 Councillor P. McVitty on behalf of himself and the Fine Gael party welcomed Áine to the Council Chamber. Councillor McVitty wished her the best of luck and stated that he looked forward to working with Áine.

 Councillor M. Argue wished Áine well in her new role and stated that all will work together for the good of the County.

 Councillor B. Fay welcomed Áine to the Chamber and stated that he looked forward to working with her.

 **Northern and Western Regional Assembly**

It was

 Proposed by Councillor P. Walsh

 Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

 And

 Resolved;

“that the co-option of Councillor Áine Smith to the Northern and Western Regional Assembly be hereby approved”.

**Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board.**

It was

 Proposed by Councillor P. Walsh

 Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

 And

 Resolved;

“that the co-option of Councillor Áine Smith to Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board be hereby approved”.

This nomination is to be clarified with Cavan Monaghan Educational Training Board.

**Local Monitoring Committee (Rural Water)**

It was

 Proposed by Councillor P. Walsh

 Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

 And

 Resolved;

“that the co-option of Councillor Áine Smith to the Local Monitoring Committee (Rural Water) be hereby approved”.

**Geopark Committee**

It was

 Proposed by Councillor P. Walsh

 Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

 And

 Resolved;

“that the co-option of Councillor Áine Smith to the Geopark Committee be hereby approved”.

**Transportation, Infrastructure and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee**

It was

 Proposed by Councillor C. Lovett

 Seconded by Councillor P. Brady

 And

 Resolved;

“that the election of Councillor A. Fitzpatrick as Chairman of the Transportation, Infrastructure and Emergency Service Strategic Policy Committee 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 5th January 2023**

Noted.

1. **To note Minutes of the Cultural Development, Irish Language & Sport Strategic Policy Committee meetings for 2022.**

Noted.

 **4(b) To approve Cavan Calling Community Grants.**

 It was

 Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

 Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

 And

 Resolved;

“that Cavan Calling Community Grants be hereby approved”.

1. **To hear presentation from Kim McCaffrey on Cavan Arts Festival**

Ms. Kim McCaffrey made a presentation to the members in relation to Cavan Arts Festival which will take place from 18th to 21st May 2023. Ms. McCaffrey is a performer, street theatre maker and director of Cavan Arts Festival since 2018. She stated that Cavan Arts Festival is free of charge with something to offer all age groups. She stated that her dream came through in 2018 when Tom Sullivan, County Librarian at that time through the Creative Ireland Programme gave her the opportunity to run Cavan Arts Festival. Ms. McCaffrey thanked Cavan County Council’s Arts Officer Caitriona O’Reilly and Tourism Officer Joanne Hayes for their ongoing support. She stated that there is no reason why the Cavan Arts Festival cannot become the new Galway Arts Festival. Ms. McCaffrey noted that during Covid buildings in Cavan town had beautiful murals painted on them. She stated that various artists visited Nursing Homes and performed outside for them. She stated that Cavan Arts are now looking to the future to hold a successful arts festival and conversation is important to help spread the word.

Councillor J.P. Feeley thanked Ms. McCaffrey for her presentation and noted that she is very passionate about the work she does. He stated that it is very important to have a thriving arts association in County Cavan.

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

1. **To hear presentation from Evelyn Cusack, Head of Forecasting at Met Éireann regarding weather alerts to the public.**

Ms. Evelyn Cusack, Head of Forecasting at Met Eireann addressed the members in relation to weather alerts. Ms. Cusack thanked the members for their letter and stated that she was delighted to attend the meeting as Met Éireann is interested in the voice of the people in the area. Ms. Cusack stated that weather warnings are designed to assist the citizens and stakeholders and are based on European colour standard, so as not to appear as the boy who cried wolf. Ms. Cusack informed the members of the Met Éireann weather app stating that you can search the weather for any part of the country on it hour by hour for up to ten days in advance. Ms. Cusack opened the Met Éireann website and asked members if they were happy with it or if they wanted anything added to it. She stated that Met Éireann cannot control the media and yet they cannot manage without them. Ms. Cusack informed the members that Met Éireann are working on a flood forecasting service with the OPW which is due for completion in October of this year and felt this should aid more localised weather forecasting.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly thanked Ms. Cusack for attending the meeting. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that the persistent weather warnings are scaring the elderly people of Cavan as these vulnerable people take what is said literally. He stated that instead of warnings, people should be able to use their common sense. Councillor O’Reilly stated that the media have to do their job and felt Met Éireann are issuing too many weather alerts.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly thanked Ms. Cusack for her presentation and stated that elderly people are around much longer than the rest of us and they need to be given more credit.

Councillor P. Brady thanked Ms. Cusack for her presentation and asked if Met Éireann could give weather warning to local authorities individually instead of the whole country.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick thanked Ms. Cusack for her presentation and noted that when the orange weather warning was issued last week, some people did not take it seriously due to the over use of warnings in the past.

Councillor B. Fay thanked Ms. Cusack for her presentation.

1. **To hear presentation from the Parents’ Association, Holy Family School, Cootehill regarding concerns over the lack of services and opportunities for young adults after they graduate from the School.**

Ms. Norma McVitty, Secretary of the Parents’ Association, Holy Family School, Cootehill made a presentation to the members regarding their concerns over lack of services and opportunities for young adults once they graduate from the Holy Family School. Ms. McVitty stated that parents are very fortunate to have a great facility in the Holy Family School but once the children reach eighteen years of age it’s a no man’s land as parents do not know what to do. She stated that parents do not want their children left at home for the rest of their lives without stimulation and intervention. She stated that parents of children with special needs are always concerned about the future, especially when there is little to no availability across the Cavan/Monaghan Region when it comes to essential services for young adults. Ms. McVitty asked that all public representatives push for funding to see if there are any buildings that will facilitate all the different needs of young adults from the Holy Family School that are age and interest appropriate. She noted that a hydro therapy pool was build in the Enable Ireland building on the Ballyjamesduff Road, yet not one child has put a toe in the pool. She stated that it needs people to operate the facility noting that there are twelve out of twenty two positions in Cavan/Monaghan that needs to be filled. She stated that other counties have numerous services in comparison to Cavan. She stated that the HSE have an empty building in Killygowan left idle which was previously used for respite when works were being done in Cootehill.

Councillor P. McVitty thanked the Council for allowing the Parents’ Association to address the meeting. Councillor McVitty stated that the members will put pressure on the powers that be to provide services for these young people when they reach the age of eighteen.

Councillor P. Brady stated that as a society we are letting our children down and we need to support families of these children,

Councillor C. Kelly proposed that the Council send a letter to Minister Anne Rabbitte, Minister of State at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth outlining the needs for these services in our County.

Councillor P. Walsh seconded Councillor C. Kelly’s proposal.

Councillor Á. Smith offered her full support to the parents and noted that respite is so important for parents as well as the children.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that it was heart wrenching to hear what the parents have to go through. Councillor O’Reilly asked that the parents get a breakdown of services and positions available and services and positions not yet filled.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that the three Council members on the Health Forum need to have the matter discussed at their next meeting. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly proposed that the Parents’ Association email a list of points of action that they want the Councillors to discuss with Minister Anne Rabbitte T.D. and proposed that a delegation from the Council together with the Cathaoirleach arrange to meet the Minister. He asked that the Committee sit down and go through their data and then send it to the members.

Councillor P. McVitty seconded Councillor S.P. O’Reilly’s proposal to seek a meeting with Minister Anne Rabbitte T.D. and asked that members of the Parents’ Association also attend the meeting.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick stated that he is on the HSE forum and that he will have it discussed at next meeting.

 Councillors S. O’Reilly, P. McDonald, W, Bennett, C. Brady and B. Fay in turn thanked

 the Parents’ Association for their presentation.

Councillor J.P. Feely thanked the members for their contributions and stated that it is extraordinary to think that this problem exists. He agreed that a meeting be sought with HSE officials to see what services are there and what services should be there.

**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.

 **Correspondence**

**9.(a) To note reply from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**

 **regarding the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.**

 Noted.

**(b) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Finance regarding the**

**protection of vulnerable mortgage holders against further rises in interest rates.**

Noted.

**(c) To note reply from Minister Eamon Ryan, T.D., Minister for Transport regarding**

 **funding for regional and local roads in County Cavan.**

 Noted.

1. **To approve attendance of members at the following Training and Conference:**

**The Suck Valley Way “Inspiring Rural Creativity Conference” to be held in the Abbey Hotel, Roscommon Town on 5 and 6 April 2023.**

 It was

 Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

 Seconded by Councillor P. Brady

 And

 Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors P. Brady, A. Fitzpatrick, P. McVitty, C. Brady, M. Argue and T.P. O’Reilly at The Suck Valley Way “Inspiring Rural Creativity Conference” to be held in the Abbey Hotel, Roscommon Town on 5 and 6 April 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. **In accordance with 134(A) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as inserted by Section 50 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014), adoption of the 2023 Annual Service Delivery Plan.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor P. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that In accordance with 134(A) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as inserted by Section 50 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014), the 2023 Annual Service Delivery Plan be hereby approved”.

**Jean Tighe**

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Portuguese Ambassador to Ireland in relation to missing woman Ms. Jean Tighe from Munterconnaught. He stated that Ms. Tighe was reported missing by her friends she was staying with in a hostel in July 2020, however, it was only when she did not return to Ireland at Christmas that her family was informed of her disappearance. He stated that the community of Munterconnaught are very worried about the missing woman and that her family have been left devastated by the lack of action taken by authorities in Portugal. He proposed that Cavan County Council write to Tanaiste Michael Martin T.D. looking for support for the family.

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

 **Planning Permissions**

Councillor C. Kelly proposed that Cavan County Council write to Minister Darragh O’Brien T.D. in relation to Section 42 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, as amended, relating to the extension of the appropriate period of a planning permission. This section was further amended in 2021 which came into force on 9 September 2021. New provisions for Section 42 of the Act introduced in September 2021 require applicants to have carried out substantial works on the site prior to an application under Section 42. Section 42(1b) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 provides for the further extension of the appropriate period of a planning permission by an additional period of up to two years or until 31 December 2023 whichever first occurs, subject to the planning authority being satisfied of a number of matters set out in section 42 (1B). Councillor Kelly stated that this time frame is unacceptable, and applicants should be allowed five years for a further extension of time.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS – DEFERRED FROM FEBRUARY**

**14.1 To investigate how potatoes originating in France were labelled with a Bord Bia quality mark and to ask what measures are being put in place to ensure this does not happen again.**

Councillor S. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Charlie McConalogue asking him to investigate how potatoes originating in France were labelled with a Bord Bia quality mark and to ask what measure are being put in place to ensure this does not happen again. Councillor O’Reilly noted that French potatoes were mislabelled by Keogh’s Farm to suggest they were grown in Ireland and had been shipped to retail outlets around the country with the Bord Bia Quality Assurance label, which includes the tricolour on the packaging despite the fact that the potatoes had been sourced in France. She stated that Keogh’s Farm admitted that a mistake had been made and said an internal investigation was under way but stressed that it had not been its intention to mislead. Councillor O’Reilly stated that this is unacceptable and asked that a thorough investigation take place and the findings be made public. She stated that it is important that consumers and farmers have confidence in Bord Bia’s systems.

 Councillor C. Kelly seconded Councillor S. O’Reilly’s proposal.

 Councillor C. Brady supported the motion.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS – MARCH**

**14.2 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.

**14.3 The need to retain firefighters after their retirement age due to the problem with recruitment of new members.**

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking him to examine the possibility of extending the mandatory retirement age of a firefighter. Councillor O’Reilly noted that the current retirement age is 55 with an option to extend that to 58 if they pass a medical. He stated that many firefighters would like to see the age raised to 60 in line with Gardaí. Councillor O’Reilly praised the work of local fire crews but highlighted the difficulties which many stations across the county are facing due to the recruitment and retention of staff.

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

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion stating that we need to look after our firefighters as they are the first called to the scene of an accident. He stated that they should be able to work until they are 65. He also suggested that a reception should be held for retired firefighters in Cavan County Council.

 Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive informed the members that an event is being held for retired members of Cavan County Council in the Hotel Kilmore in early April. He stated that Covid prevented the Council from having it over the last three years.

**14.4 The need for more education on the banking system within our colleges and schools.**

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that there is a need for more education on the banking system within our colleges and schools. Councillor O’Reilly stated that the banking system has moved on which has resulted in very little one to one service due to current predominantly online service available. He stated that young people need to be aware of what is involved in applying for a mortgage. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the main banks in Cavan town to see what services they offer to schools and colleges.

 Councillor W. Bennett seconded Councillor T.P. O’Reilly’s proposal and noted that things have changed a lot in ten years in relation to banking.

 Councillor Áine Smith stated that some banks visit secondary schools during transition year and give advice to students on how to create a bank account. She stated that more needs to be done in educating the youth regarding mortgages.

 Councillor P. Brady supported the motion.

**14.5 The need for extra supports for the sheep sector.**

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Charlie McConalogue T.D. asking that more support be given to the sheep sector. He stated that prices are continually falling over the past six months and the Government needs to look at grants for the sheep sector. He stated that €12 a ewe is far too little and at least €30 per ewe is needed.

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

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that the sheep sector has been under pressure over the last number of months.

**14.6 To ask Cavan County Council what Regulations are in place regarding the public having their dogs on a lead in public parks.**

Councillor M. Argue asked what regulations are in place with regard to the public having their dogs on a lead in public parks in Cavan. Councillor Argue stated that there are dogs in public parks with no leads and little children are scared of them. Councillor Argue stated that you rarely hear of dog owners being fined for having their dog off their lead.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that dog owners are required by law to keep their dogs under control and there are only a certain breed of dogs that must be kept on a lead. He stated that currently there is no legislation unless bye-laws are brought in.

**14.11 To discuss the problem of dog fouling in our towns and possible solutions including asking our Government to fund a national campaign to highlight this problem and to educate dog owners of their responsibilities.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Environment asking that the Government fund a national campaign to highlight the problem of dog fouling in our towns and possible solutions and also to educate dog owners of their responsibilities. Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that dog fouling is a major problem in the streets in Cootehill and noted that residents from Drumlin House get their wheelchairs destroyed when travelling on the footpaths.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that dog fouling comes under the Control of Dogs Act. Mr. Connaughton stated that Cavan is one of the highest counties where dog owners have licences for their dogs. Councillor P. Connaughton stated that people need to know that dogs are for life not just a present.

 Councillor B. Fay asked if dogs need to be on a lead or do they need a muzzle also.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service informed Councillor Fay that these dogs must wear a muzzle. Mr. Connaughton stated that adults and dog owners need to be trained and maybe a letter could be sent to all licence dog owners informing them that they are responsible for the control of their dogs and there is a substantial fee if a dog fouls in a public area and it is not cleaned up by the owner. He stated that the dog must be caught in the act to issue a fine for dog fouling and the complainant must give their name in order to prosecute.

 Councillors C. Kelly, P. Walsh, P. McVitty and C. Brady supported the motion.

**14.7 That this Council calls on the new Minister for Defence to award the medals as recommended by Commandant Pat Quinlan to the veterans of Jadotville. Failure to do so is a stain on the reputation of the State.**

Councillor P. Walsh proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Defence calling on him to award the medals as recommended by Commandment Pat Quinlan to the veterans of Jadotville. She stated that failure to do so is a stain on the reputation of the State. Councillor P. Walsh outlined in great detail the Siege of Jadotville which took place in September 1961. She stated that a specially commissioned medal is not enough and these soldiers need to be recognised with a Distinguished Service Medal. Councillor Walsh stated that a review is ongoing but it is now time that a report be issued on the findings. Councillor Walsh noted that a permanent monument was unveiled in Athlone outside the Custume Barracks on 9th December 2022 dedicated to the families of the Jadotville soldiers, but this is not enough to recognise the work of these great men.

Councillor J.P. Feeley seconded Councillor P. Walsh’s motion.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion.

 Councillor S. P. O’Reilly supported the motion and complimented Senator Gerry Craughwell, a former member of the Defence Forces on his work in seeking a judicial review of the findings of the independent board which decided only one hero, Commandment Pat Quinlan should be awarded a distinguished service medal for his role in the Siege of Jadotville.

Councillors B. Fay, T.P O’Reilly and A. Fitzpatrick supported the motion.

**14.8 That we write to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, T.D., and the HSE to ask that a special unit be set up in Cavan General Hospital and all public hospitals in the Country for mental health issues, suicide and anything pertaining to mental health, as being sent to A & E is inappropriate and wrong on almost every scale and that we should circulate to all Councils in Ireland.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, T.D., and the HSE to ask that a special unit be set up in Cavan General Hospital and all public hospitals in the country for mental health issues, suicide and anything pertaining to mental health. He stated being sent to the Accident and Emergency Department is inappropriate and wrong on almost every scale and that we should circulate this motion to all Councils in Ireland. Councillor B. Fay noted that problems accessing local GP services has given those suffering with mental health issues no other option but to turn up at Accident and Emergency for help. He stated that as a result of this most vulnerable people are left waiting for hours which is not good enough. Councillor Fay stated that hospital staff are doing their best, but units are under-staffed and health workers are facing immense pressures. He stated that when those who are vulnerable turn up at accident and emergency they are either turned away, left sitting or else they are being offered a quick fix in the form of prescription tablets and being sent out into the world again, untreated, which only adds to any existing problems they have. He stated that we do not want a doctor who is a bone specialist looking after someone who is suicidal.

 Councillor S.P. O’Reilly seconded Councillor B. Fay’s proposal. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that a dedicated mental health unit is needed attached to our accident and emergency department. He stated that Cavan will continue to be top of the suicide ladder if something is not done urgently.

 Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and stated that putting our youth into adult psychiatric services is not acceptable. He stated that as a nation we are failing society. Councillors V. Smith, P. Walsh, T.P. O’Reilly and S. O’Reilly supported the motion.

**14.9 That we write to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and Transport outlining the concerns people have that petrol will have added ethanol moving from E5/E7 to E10 from 1st April as with the cost-of-living crisis, this will lead to extra hardship for people with older vehicles and garden equipment.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan outlining the concerns people have that petrol will have added ethanol moving from E5/E7 to E/10 from 1st April. He stated that with the current cost of living this will lead to extra hardship for people with older vehicles and garden equipment. Councillor B. Fay stated that the Government need to warn people of the effects of the change on their vehicles and garden equipment.

 Councillor S. O’Reilly seconded Councillor B. Fay’s proposal.

**14.10 To ask Cavan County Council to write to the Minister for Justice to include a child protection objective in the Sale of Alcohol Bill which is currently before the Oireachtas Committee.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Justice to include a child protection objective in the Sale of Alcohol Bill which is currently before the Oireachtas Committee. Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that Monaghan and Cavan Youth Substance Support project in Cavan Monaghan is underpinned by a network model approach and this approach supports and enables young people and their families whose lives are harmed by alcohol and other substances use access pathways to a combination of services that enable young people to overcome alcohol and drug relation problems. He stated that a recent report showed that 15.5% of 13-year-olds drink and 90% are drinking by the time they reach 18 years. He stated that one in three children live with a parent who binge drinks. He stated that he is calling for a separate category of licence for delivery of alcohol to the home. He stated that children of any age should not be allowed attend large scale events. He stated that drink is one of the biggest problems leading to mental health issues.

 Councillor Á Smith supported the motion and noted that vaping is now a major issue in schools. She stated that vaping is common among younger teenagers who vape in school toilets and are not detected by smoke alarms. She stated that we need to educate parents and children on this.

 Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and noted that alcohol is being sold in some supermarkets earlier than 11 o’clock on Sunday mornings.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted there is a need for early intervention to support our young people. He stated that there are gummy sweets now being sold to young people with cannabis in them.

 Councillors J.P. Feeley, S. O’Reilly, P. Walsh supported the motion.

**14.12 Affordable Housing**

Councillor C. Kelly asked the Director of Service what stage the Council are at in relation to the housing programme for the County. Councillor C. Kelly stated that it is impossible to find a house to rent in Cavan at the minute and people must seek accommodation outside their area. He stated that we need to provide affordable housing. Councillor Clifford asked how long it takes when a house becomes vacant to have it re-let.

 Councillor A. Fitzpatrick supported the motion and noted that every town needs affordable housing.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion and asked if the housing plan is running to plan in County Cavan at the minute.

 Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and stated that while we have a lot done, we have more to do.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that there is a need for more social housing.

 Councillors T.P. O’Reilly and S. O’Reilly supported the motion.

 Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service stated that under the County Development plan process Cavan County Council is obliged to complete an affordable housing constraint study. He stated that the methodology of this study was set up by the Department and like other rural County Councils, Cavan was not able to demonstrate sufficient constraints to qualify for affordable housing. In recent weeks the Department has advised that a separate assessment can now be done on a sub county basis. He stated that Cavan County Council has commenced this study. Mr. Doyle noted that in relation to social housing the biggest constraint is land. Mr. Doyle stated that the Council would like to develop services sites around the county but at the minute the priority is social housing.

 **To set date and time of April Meeting**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor P. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that the April meeting be held on Tuesday 12th April 2023 at 2pm in the Council Chamber”.

**14.13 It should be the responsibility of Utility Companies to maintain their manholes on our footpaths and roads.**

 Councillor C. Kelly asked the executive of Cavan County Council who is responsible for the maintenance of manholes on footpaths and roads. Councillor Kelly stated that the utility companies should be responsible for same and if not, they should have to pay the local authority to maintain them. He stated that in many cases utility companies carry out repair work and leave the manholes in poor condition when finished. Councillor C. Kelly proposed that the Council charge the utility company if the manhole is not left in order.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and seconded Councillor C. Kelly’s proposal.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service informed the members that the utility companies are responsible for their own manholes and the Council takes responsibility for raising roads. He stated that it should be possible for the Council to issue a charge if manhole not maintained properly.

 Councillor C. Kelly asked if there was an accident who is responsible for manhole.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service informed Councillor Kelly that the utility company is responsible.

 **Extend time of meeting.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that the meeting be extended to later than 5pm”

**14.14 Roads Budget**

Councillor C. Kelly stated that this year an increase of 6% was received in relation to the roads budget which is unacceptable considering the rise in costs of bitumen, tarmac and other materials. He stated that people are complaining about the roads throughout the County and we do not want a repeat of the 1980’s when Cavan was known as the pothole County of Ireland. Councillor Kelly proposed that a delegation meet with the Taoiseach and Tanaiste in relation to putting proper funding into our roads. He stated that Cavan County Council are doing fantastic work on our roads but are limited due to resources.

**14.16 To write to the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan, T.D. demanding him to take immediate action by increasing the roads’ budget in line with inflation costs so as to prevent the savage cuts being made to roads programmes by local authorities all over Ireland due to insufficient funds.**

Councillor S O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan T.D. demanding him to take immediate action by increasing the roads budget in line with inflation costs so as to prevent cuts being made to roads programmes by local authorities all over Ireland due to insufficient funds. Councillor S. O’Reilly stated that current government policy seems to be geared towards not investing in infrastructure. Councillor O’Reilly stated that we need to look after our industries and in doing so we need to have good roads for heavy machinery to travel on.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and stated that extra funding is needed for the upkeep of our roads. Councillor O’Reilly stated that the extra funding given to local authorities is not in line with inflation. Councillor O’Reilly complimented the engineering staff in the municipal districts for using the money they have to the best of their ability.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion and noted that there is a serious shortfall in roads funding.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and thanked Director of Service, Paddy Connaughton for the briefing given to the members at the roads meeting. He stated that there are excellent engineers and staff working in the municipal districts and every municipal district is affected by the allocation given. He stated that the Council are doing well with the Smarter travel programme and national road funding is excellent, the problem lies with regional and local road funding.

 Councillors P. Brady, A. Fitzpatrick, B. Fay and T. Smith supported the motion.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that the Council have excellent funding in terms of capital projects and stated that concern is with local and regional roads. He stated that there is concern going forward in relation to funding and increasing inflation.

**14.15 To ask the Minister for Transport to have the Driver Theory Test reviewed.**

Councillor T. Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport to review the Driver Theory Test. He stated that the matter needs to be addressed as the high rate of test failures is having a negative impact on young people across rural communities who are reliant on their drivers licence for job opportunities. Councillor Smith stated that he knew of one person who failed their test fifteen times which seems totally unfair and we need to get to the bottom of it as it is a huge cost on parents.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly seconded Councillor T. Smith’s motion.

 Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion.

**14.17 To write to the Minister for Health and the HSE to ask what steps they are taking to address the huge increase in the numbers of patients leaving hospital Emergency Departments without being seen.**

Councillor S. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health and the HSE to ask what steps they are taking to address the huge increase in the numbers of patients leaving hospital Emergency Departments without being seen. Councillor O’Reilly stated that there are major concerns over people who need treatment leaving and subsequently suffering life threatening impacts as a result. Councillor O’Reilly stated that more investment is needed in frontline services and staff. Councillor O’Reilly noted that in the last five years, ten thousand people have left the emergency department at Cavan General Hospital without treatment. Councillor O’Reilly complimented the nurses on the great work they are doing but they need more resources. Councillor O’Reilly stated that people are still being charged despite the fact they leave without being seen to.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and noted people are leaving after ten to twelve hours waiting and not being seen to.

 Councillor P. McVitty supported the motion and stated that he would not like people to think that A & E in Cavan General Hospital is a dangerous place to be. He stated that during his time there the service was second to none and we should be proud of our hospital.

 Councillor C. Kelly endorsed what Councillor McVitty said.

 Councillor A. Fitzpatrick stated that unfortunately the good news stories are never told, only the bad news stories. He stated that at the HSE forum meeting before Christmas it was noted that a number of people were holding up places in A & E because they are not vaccinated.

 Councillor P. Walsh stated that the staff in Cavan General Hospital work very hard. She stated that it is frustrating waiting hours to be seen but if you are sick enough you will stay.

 Councillor P. Brady and W, Bennett supported the motion.

**Votes of sympathy:**

* Councillor T.P. O’Reilly on the death of his uncle Mr. John Carolan, Virginia.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly wished the Cathaoirleach and the Chief Executive an enjoyable and constructive trip to America to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day.

 The meeting ended at 5.25p.m.

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

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