

**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in The Sports Hall, Leisure Centre, Cavan at 2.00p.m.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly, Cathaoirleach presiding

Present; Councillors M. Argue, W. Bennett, C. Brady, P. Brady, B. Fay, A. Fitzpatrick, J. P. Feeley, C. Kelly, C. Lovett, P. McDonald, P. McVitty, S. O'Reilly, 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  
B. Jennings, Director of Service  
M. McNally, A/Head of Finance  
L. McGavigan, Senior Executive Officer  
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

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**1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 9 March 2020.**

**Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 9 Marta 2020 a dhearbhu.**

It was;

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor P. McVitty

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of meeting of Cavan County Council held on 9 March 2020 be hereby approved”

**2. Disclosures of Interests (Section 177 Local Government Act 2001)**

Noted.

**Note Minutes of Committee Meetings**

**3. To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meetings held on 17 February, 5 March and 30 March 2020.**

Noted

**Note Members' Reports from Conferences / Training events**

**4. To note members' reports from conferences and training events (*Section 142 and Section 143 of the Local Government Act 2001; Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2014 Part V Section 5 (1)*).**

Noted.

**Correspondence**

**5(a) To note Circular and Questionnaire regarding the review of Corporate Plans for 2015-2019 from the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)**

Noted.

- (b) To note AILG Plenary Members' Activity Report for May 2020.**

Noted.

- (c) To note reply from Department of Justice and Equality in relation to Parental Alienation.**

Noted.

- (d) To note replies from RCSI Hospital Group and Health Service Executive regarding (i) waiting times in Cavan General Hospital and (ii) Home Care Packages and other community resources.**

Noted.

- (e) To note reply from TII regarding the N3 at Maghera and Whitegate.**

Noted.

- (f) To note reply from Teagasc regarding the requirements of the Green Certificate and related entitlements.**

Noted.

- (g) To note reply from Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to insurance in the Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) sector.**

Noted.

- (h) To note replies from the Office of the Minister for Justice and Equality and Garda Headquarters regarding the new Garda operating model.**

Noted.

**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. Consideration of Annual Financial Statement 2019 under Section 108 of Local Government Act 2001.**

It was;

Proposed by Councillor P. Brady

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

"that the Annual Financial Statement 2019 under Section 108 of Local Government Act 2001 be hereby considered"

**8. Approval to additional Revenue Expenditure 2019.**

It was;

Proposed by Councillor B. Fay

Seconded by Councillor C. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that additional Revenue Expenditure 2019 be hereby approved”

**9. Approval Transfers to Capital 2019**

It was proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

and Resolved:

“that Transfers to Capital 2019 be hereby approved”.

**10. Statement of Rate Collection 2019.**

Noted.

**11. Overview of Financial position at 31 May 2020.**

Ms. Margaret McNally, A/Head of Finance outlined in detail the financial position of Cavan County Council as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020. She stated that Covid-19 will have a huge impact on the local authority’s finances going forward. She stated that the collection of rates will be a severe financial challenge to the Council and it is anticipated that the Council could lose up to €8.5m in rates in 2020. She stated that there is also lost income in parking fines, planning fees and income from visits to the Museum and Theatre. She stated that the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team are examining the costs to date.

Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive stated that the Council is operating in an uncertain environment and it is hoped to get a €2m rates waiver from the Department which will still leave a huge gap in finances. He stated that going forward services may have to be cut as the finances will not be there.

**12. N3 Virginia Bypass – To approve a Section 85 Agreement between Cavan County Council and Meath County Council, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 14 of Roads Act 1993.**

It was proposed by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor W. Bennett

and Resolved:

“that N3 Virginia Bypass, Section 85 Agreement between Cavan County council and Meath County Council in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 14 of Roads Act 1993 be hereby approved”.

- 13. To approve the disposal of plots of land at Corgarry, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan containing 0.348 hectares of land to Kingspan Limited, Dublin Road, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan for the sum of €7,600 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. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor S. O'Reilly

and Resolved:

“that the disposal of plots of land at Corgarry, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan containing 0.348 hectares of land to Kingspan Limited, Dublin Road, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan for the sum of €7,600 pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000 be hereby approved”.

- 14. In accordance with 134(A) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as inserted by Section 50 of the Local Government Act 2014) adoption of the 2020 Annual Service Delivery Plan.**

It was proposed by Councillor C. Brady

Seconded by Councillor J.P. Feeley

and Resolved:

“that the 2020 Annual Service Delivery Plan be hereby approved”.

- 15. In accordance with Section 221 Local Government Act 2001 as amended adoption of the 2019 Annual Report.**

It was proposed by Councillor P. McVitty

Seconded by Councillor B. Fay

and Resolved:

“that the 2019 Annual Report be hereby approved”.

### **Update on County Development Plan**

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service updated the members on the County Development Plan process stating that the review of the County Development Plan is expected to take two years to complete and commences with a public consultation phase asking the public and interested bodies for their input into the strategic issues in the County. He stated that public

consultation meetings will be held mid-July in each Municipal District subject to Covid 19 compliance. He stated that the consultation meetings will be advertised through local media. He stated that submissions will have to be made by August 2020 and then a report will be brought before the members for a decision to be made on the draft development plan.

### **Frontline Workers**

Councillor M. Argue complimented Ireland as a nation on how the coronavirus was maintained. She stated that great credit must go to the Taoiseach, Minister for Health, Oireachtas members and the Chief Medical Officer for the way they controlled the spread of the virus. Councillor M. Argue expressed a sincere thank you to all our frontline workers particularly those in Cavan who went above and beyond the call of duty to help control the virus. Councillor Argue expressed her disappointment with an article written in the Anglo Celt picked up on by National Newspapers which published inaccurate and misleading information about Cavan General Hospital and the way it undermined frontline workers.

### **Votes of Sympathy**

- Councillor Clifford Kelly on the death of his brother Eddie Kelly.
- Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service on the death of his mother Mrs. Bridie Connaughton
- Councillor Philip Brady on the death of his Aunt Mrs. Rose White in America
- Councillor Patricia Walsh on the death of her sister-in-laws, Ms. Mary McNamara and Ms. Helen Walsh.
- Councillor Madeleine Argue on the death of her brother-in-law Mr. Gerry Argue
- The Smith Family Lavey on the death of Seamus Smith, former Chairman Lavey GFC
- The Kelly Family Virginia on the death of Mr. Brendan Kelly, former Principal of Virginia College.

A minute's silence was held in memory of the deceased.

### **Vote of Congratulations**

- Ms. Deirdre Donnelly, Food Co-ordinator and her team on securing a grant of €12,000 for Cavan Food Network.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly welcomed Councillor S. Smith to the meeting and stated that all Councillors were delighted to see him back.

Councillor S. Smith thanked his fellows Councillors, Executive of Cavan County Council and staff for their well wishes during his illness.

## **MEMBERS' ITEMS – JUNE**

### **1. North South Interconnector**

Councillor C. Kelly asked the Director of Service, Mr. Brendan Jennings if there had been any communication or discussions between Cavan County Council and Eirgrid or ESB in relation to the North South Interconnector.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service informed the members that since the last Council meeting, there has been no communication or discussions between Cavan County Council and Eirgrid or the ESB.

### **2. That Cavan County Council call on the Minister for Employment Affairs & Social Protection, the Minister for Community & Rural Affairs and the Minister for Education & Skills to introduce a Student Summer Job Scheme.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that in the 1990's the Government ran a successful scheme which removed the eligibility of students for unemployment assistance during the summer months. Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that a student summer job scheme would accommodate those who cannot find a job and have no means to support themselves heading into a fresh college term come September. Councillor Feeley stated that the type of work offered through the scheme could be beneficial to voluntary and community groups. Councillor J.P. Feeley noted that the largest sectors that provided part-time summer work was the hospitality sector, and by virtue of the restrictions brought about by the Covid 19 Pandemic, was also one of the worst sectors affected. Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Minister for Employment Affairs & Social Protection, the Minister for Community & Rural Affairs and the Minister for Education & Skills to introduce a Student Summer Job Scheme.

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

### **3. That Cavan County Council –**

**(i) Acknowledges the great work done by all elements of the Health Service the public sector agencies including Cavan County Council and others involved in dealing with the Covid-19 Pandemic and the adherence by the public to the evolving advice given to tackle the spread of the virus**

**(ii) Ask the Minister for Health in conjunction with the Chief Medical Officer and HIQA to examine the factors which had led to the high rate of infection in County Cavan relative to other similar Counties and to consider what lessons can be learned for the future.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley acknowledged the great work of our frontline staff during the pandemic. He congratulated Cavan County Council's community response team for the way they helped those cocooning throughout the County during the pandemic. He stated that there was a huge global response within various agencies in tackling the Covid-19 crisis. He stated that people really rose to the challenge in communities and acted above and beyond the call of duty. Councillor Feeley stated that looking back there are lessons that can be learned and maybe it is worth looking at different incidents that happened. He stated that he is not putting the blame on anybody as he is quite sure people made decisions best available to them at the time. He stated that the Government could look at how they would deal with Nursing Homes again.

Councillor J.P. Feeley acknowledged the great work done by all elements of the Health Service, the public sector agencies including Cavan County Council and others involved in dealing with the Covid 19 pandemic and the adherence by public to evolving advice given to tackle the spread of the virus. Councillor Feeley proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Health in conjunction with the Chief Medical Officer and HIQA asking them to examine the factors which had led to the high rate of infection in County Cavan relative to other similar Counties and to consider what lessons can be learned for the future.

Councillor P. McDonald seconded Councillor J.P. Feeley's proposal.

**4. That Cavan County Council call on the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection to amend the Covid Payments to provide equality for workers resident in the North.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection to amend the Covid Payments to provide equality for workers resident in the North. Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that we cannot have people from the North working and paying taxes in our jurisdiction and then not entitled to the same Covid payment as those working and living in this jurisdiction.

Councillor S. O'Reilly seconded Councillor J.P. Feeley's proposal. Councillor O'Reilly asked that self employed over sixty-six be added to the proposal as they also felt discriminated against.

Councillor P. McVitty supported the motion.

**5. Downgrading of Midwifery Led Unit at Cavan General Hospital**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick stated that there should be no question raised as to the future of the midwifery led unit in Cavan General Hospital as it is one of only two such units in the Country. Councillor A. Fitzpatrick stated that those attending the MLU in Cavan but living in Monaghan could attend a clinic on the HSE's St. Davnet's Campus. He stated that the Government's National Maternity Strategy of 2016 advocates the expansion of midwifery

led services at maternity hospitals nationally and the RCSI hospital group now seem to be going against this. Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that Deputy Niamh Smyth got confirmation from the Minister of Health stating that the local MLU will continue to be fully operational. Councillor Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health and the RCSI expressing relief that the MLU will be maintained and operated at Cavan General Hospital.

**8. Alleged threat to continuation of midwifery led maternity unit at Cavan General Hospital.**

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly stated that the Government fully supported the MLU and he welcomed the commitment of funding for an additional Advanced Midwifery Practitioner at Cavan General Hospital.

**9. That Cavan County Council call on the Minister for Health and the HSE to ensure that the RCSI Group retain and develop the Mid-Wife Led Unit at Cavan General Hospital.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley on behalf of the Fianna Fáil Group questioned the role of the RCSI in recommending the move. He stated that the unit had stopped taking new referrals from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June and only restarted the process after the Minister's intervention. He stated that it looked like the RCSI had taken a definite approach to close the MLU in Cavan General Hospital.

Councillor M. Argue stated that to merge maternity services at Cavan General Hospital was never a plan and that the MLU was never going to close.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that he was not disputing what the Minister said but the RCSI took a different approach and had to be called in.

**6. To ask Cavan County Council to write to the Minister for Transport to provide a road map for the opening of Driving Test Centres.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport asking that a road map be provided for the opening of Driving Test Centres. Councillor A. Fitzpatrick stated that there are currently 500 waiting on driving tests in County Cavan. Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that in rural Ireland people need their driver's licence to travel to work.

Councillor W. Bennett seconded Councillor A. Fitzpatrick's proposal.

## **7. To ask Cavan County Council to investigate ways to provide Lifeguards in various swimming hot spots throughout the County.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick called on Cavan County Council to investigate ways to provide Lifeguards in various swimming hot spots throughout the County. Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that figures released by Water Safety Ireland showed that 105 people drowned in 2019, and that a total of 1,200 drowned in the last ten years meaning an average of ten every month. He stated that eight out of ten drownings occurred within the victim's own home County. Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that drowning is the second biggest cause of accidental death among children in Ireland, and drownings occur more commonly among adolescent males engaged in summer water-based activities and children aged between one and four years. Councillor Fitzpatrick felt that the death toll could be reduced in lifeguards were appointed to monitor busy areas. Councillor Fitzpatrick asked the Council to develop a register of lifeguards, Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that this year more than any ever with Covid 19 travel restrictions and people's fear of travelling abroad will mean more people will be spending holiday time by our rivers and lakes. Councillor Fitzpatrick acknowledged the tight financial constraints under which the local authority is operating which will worsen due to the economic impact of Coronavirus.

Councillor M. Argue supported the motion and stated that during the months of July and August supervised swimming lessons take place on many lakes throughout the County.

Councillor P. McDonald highlighted the fact that there were lifebuoys missing from lakes, stating that a stolen lifebuoy is a stolen life.

Councillors S.P. O'Reilly, S. O'Reilly and T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion.

**The meeting concluded at 3.15p.m.**