**Minutes of Virtual Meeting of Cavan County Council held on Microsoft Teams on Monday 10th January 2022 at 2.00p.m.**

Councillor C. Kelly, Cathaoirleach presiding

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

B. Fay, J.P. Feeley, C. Lovett, P. McDonald, P. McVitty, S. O’Reilly,

S.P. 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 Administrative Officer

 E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

Councillor C. Kelly welcomed all to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

1. **To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 6th December 2021.**

**Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 6 Mi na Nollag a dhearbhu.**

 It was

 Proposed by Councillor P. McVitty

 Seconded by Councillor S. Smith

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of meeting of Cavan County Council held on 6 December 2021 be hereby approved”

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

Noted.

**Votes of Sympathy**

* The Farnham Family on the death of Lady Farnham. It was noted that although the

Farnham Family have not resided in the County for some years, Lady Farnham retained a strong connection with County Cavan and was a stalwart supporter of Cavan County Museum, entrusting the Farnham Collection to the museum’s catalogue. Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive stated that Lady Farnham was a very impressive individual, who served as a lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth 11 and, fittingly, accompanied her on her historic visit to Ireland in 2011. It was proposed by Councillor W. Bennett that a letter of sympathy be sent to Mrs. Savina Donohoe, former curator of Cavan County Museum as Lady Farnham was a personal friend of Savina.

* The Richie Family, Blacklion on the death of Kathleen. Ms. Richie touched the lives of

all sections of the community in Blacklion through her selfless tireless work.

* The Halton Family, Griffith Park, Cootehill on the death of Mr. Jimmy Halton father of

former Town Councillor Mr. Paddy Halton.

* The Timmins Family, Belturbet on the death of Mrs. Margaret Timmins in her 105th

year.

* The Macken Family Kingscourt on the death of Mrs. Nuala Macken.
* The Mackey Family, Lurgan on the death of Breen Mackey.
* The Mitchell Family, Ballyconnell on the death of Fr. Kilian Mitchell.

A minutes silence was held in memory of the deceased.

**Note Minutes of Committee Meetings**

**3. To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 2 November 2021.**

Noted.

**4. To hear presentation from National Broadband Ireland regarding roll out of broadband**

 **in County Cavan.**

Mr. Niall Beirne, National Broadband Ireland gave a detailed presentation to the members in

relation to the roll out of broadband in County Cavan. Mr. Beirne thanked Mr. Daniel Peeters, Broadband Officer, Cavan County Council for all his help to date. Mr. Beirne noted that the National Broadband Plan is the largest ever telecommunications project undertaken by the Irish State. He stated that it aims to radically transform the country’s broadband landscape through the delivery of quality, affordable high-speed broadband to all parts of Ireland where such services are not available commercially. He stated that it is a seven year build programme, currently scheduled to be completed in 2026. He stated that NBI will ensure that all people and businesses have access to high-speed broadband, no matter where they live or work. He stated that while there had been some delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the rollout locally is progressing mostly to plan with 16,159 premises in the County to be connected, which represents 38% of the total premises in the County. He stated that the Government will invest €64m in delivering the NBP to County Cavan. He stated that twelve broadband connection points and nineteen schools have also been connected. He stated that so far 3,600 in the Cavan town area have been connected, with progress in other areas expected this year. He stated that surveys are underway in other parts, with progress being made in the Kilnaleck area and parts of Cavan served by the exchange in Clones. He stated that this was representative of every County and work is taking place across the Country at the same pace but noted the company had missed its targets for last year by 20,000. Mr. Beirne noted that elected representatives have an important role in ensuring Local Authorities are working with all relevant stakeholders in ensuring smooth roll-out of the National Broadband Plan. He stated that members of the public can easily determine if they are in the intervention area or not via NBI’s Eircode search function. He stated that if members of the public are not in the intervention area but still cannot get high speed broadband from broadband providers in their location, the Department of Communications has a process to review and this review can potentially move premises from the blue part of the map to the amber part of the map. He stated that public representative can email national broadband Ireland at reps@nbi.ie if they have an issue.

Councillor J.P. Feeley thanked Mr. Beirne for his presentation and acknowledged the work being done by Mr. Daniel Peeters, Broadband Officer, Cavan County Council. Councillor Feeley stated that NBI should be ashamed of the abysmal national broadband plan and the Government need to look at it again. Councillor Feeley noted that thousands of premises in the County face waits of close to five years to be connected under the plan. Councillor Feeley acknowledged that the pandemic has hampered the roll-out but noted that the backlog caused will not be made up due to the way NBI is behaving.

Councillor B. Fay stated that older people are devastated as they had invested in laptops and tablets during the pandemic but now cannot utilise them due to lack of adequate broadband.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick acknowledged the work done in putting the 12 connections broadband points in place throughout the County last year which are very important to those working from home at this time due to the pandemic.

Councillor P. McDonald stated that NBI should work with the ESB to use its existing infrastructure.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly commended NBI on the work done so far.

Councillor P. Walsh welcomed the broadband in Cavan town for students who could not attend college last year and could now work from home.

Councillor C. Kelly stated that there is a lot of frustration and anger out there due to people having no broadband.

Councillor S. Smith stated that rural areas need to be looked after as going forward there will be a lot more people working from home.

**5. Note Members’ Reports from Conferences / Training events**

 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**

**(i) To note reply the Minister for Planning and Local Government in relation to a reform**

 **of the planning system.**

Noted.

**(ii) To note reply from Tusla in relation to refuge accommodation in Co. Cavan**

Noted

**(iii) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding crisis in hospitals.**

Noted.

**(iv) To note reply from the Department of Social Protection regarding support for**

 **childcare workers.**

Noted.

**(v) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Education in relation to the**

 **introduction of legislation regarding bullying in schools.**

Noted.

**(vi) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration**

 **and Youth in relation to support and intervention in the Early Years Sector.**

Noted.

**(vii) To note reply from the Minister for Further and Higher Education regarding**

 **proposed changed to the issuing of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme**

 **(CSCS) for skilled workers.**

Noted.

**(viii)To note reply from Coillte in relation to designating recreation forests in Co. Cavan**

Noted.

**(ix) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration**

 **and Youth in relation to the provision of a refuge for victims of domestic violence in**

 **Co. Cavan.**

Noted.

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

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

 ***Act 2014)*.**

Noted.

Councillor J.P. Feeley asked why it took three days to resolve a repair request from a vulnerable tenant. He noted that the fault did not lie with the officials of Cavan County Council Housing Section but with the contractor hired to do the work. Councillor Feeley stated that an apology from the local authority should issue to the tenant. Mr Doyle Director of Services acknowledged that there was a regrettable delay in this matter and that a letter of apology from the council would issue to the tenant.

**8. To approve disposal of plot of land containing 0.130 hectares or 0.321 acres at Drumhecknagh, Cavan to Wayne and Rhonda Poyntz, Drumhecknagh, Cavan for the sum of €2,100, 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 W. Bennett

 Seconded by Councillor T, Smith

And

Resolved;

“that the disposal of plot of land containing 0.130 hectares or 0.321 acres at Drumhecknagh, Cavan to Wayne and Rhonda Poyntz, Drumhecknagh, Cavan for the sum of €2,100, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act 2000, be hereby approved”.

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

**1. That Cavan County Council provide an update on the North South Interconnector.**

Councillor C. Kelly asked the executive of Cavan County Council if there had been any recent updates on the North South Interconnector.

 Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service informed the members that there had been no communication with Eirgrid or ESB Networks since the last Council Meeting in December,

**2. Progress report on Local Improvement Schemes.**

Councillor P. McVitty asked the Executive for an update on Local Improvement Schemes in County Cavan.

 Mr. John McKernan, Senior Engineer, Roads Section Cavan County Council informed the members that 2021 had the highest local improvement scheme allocation of funding received to date. He stated that a total of €1,119,000 was received from the Department of Rural and Community Development, €289,000 in May 2021 and €830,000 in August 2021. He stated that 22 schemes were completed in 2021 and the works were carried out by a combination of Council staff and contractors. He stated that there are currently 242 applicants on the LIS list. He stated that the Council have 20 applications fully assessed and are ready to be done as soon as funding is received. He noted that there are 94 applications partially assessed and a further 128 unassessed. Mr. McKernan noted that it would take €11.5m to complete the outstanding applications.

Councillor P. McVitty thanked Mr. McKernan for his presentation and acknowledged the money received from Minister Humphrey’s Department last year. Councillor McVitty felt that this funding should be coming from the Department of Transport and not the Department of Rural and Community Development.

 Councillor S. P. O’Reilly asked if a lane was done ten to fifteen years ago do they now have to make a new application to touch up the lane or can it be done without a new application.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley complimented the Council on the work done on LIS applications over the last twelve months.

 Councillor S. Smith proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Transport seeking funding for LIS Schemes.

 Councillor P. McVitty seconded Councillor S. Smith’s proposal.

 Mr. Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service stated that the additional funding received in 2021 was most welcome and the Council have made a case for additional funding to do the 20 lanes that are now ready for completion. He stated that the applications are assessed in chronological order as per the SPC.

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

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick asked the executive for an update on the East West Link stating that this is now going on 20 years, and it is necessary to get this road improved.

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

Councillor C. Kelly asked the executive for an update on the East West Link and if any money had been granted for same.

 Mr. John McKernan, Senior Engineer, Roads Section informed the members that the findings of a strategic study into the development of an East West Dundalk to Sligo route was published in December 2001 and noted that the route corridor identified with the greatest potential to meet the objective and to serve the needs of the study area was Sligo to Manorhamilton to Enniskillen to Cavan to Cootehill to Carrickmacross to Dundalk. He stated that the section of the route from Cavan to Dundalk was identified as strategically important for the future economic development of the Border Region. Mr. McKernan stated that in 2009 Cavan County Council, in conjunction with Monaghan and Louth County Councils, commenced the process to advance the improvement of the Regional Roads that form the strategic route from Cavan to Dundalk. He stated that consultants were appointed in 2009 to review the 2001 strategic study and to complete a constraints study, route selections and preliminary design. He noted that a preliminary design was completed in 2012 and the scheme was subsequently suspended. He stated that a review of the scheme commenced in 2018 with the drafting of a Stage 1 Preliminary Appraisal by the consultants working on the scheme and following a review of the draft preliminary appraisal, the Department of Transport requested the completion of a risk-based analysis for the route to identify the high-risk priority sections. Mr. McKernan stated that a risk-based analysis is a means of determining the collision risk of a section of road using a road safety statistical model. He stated that the model used for this scheme was the TII Risk Based Geometric Design (RibGeom) which is based on an analysis of data from the National Road Network. He stated that the model takes multiple factors into account when considering the level of risk for a road segment, including traffic volumes, length, junctions, skid resistance, lane width and curvature. He stated that it then generates a risk profile of each segment of road which is used to identify the sections of road with the highest collision risk. Mr. McKernan informed the members that the risk analysis report is currently being finalised by the consultants. He stated that the high-risk priority sections identified in the report will be developed as individual projects going forward. He stated that the route will be upgraded on an incremental basis by each County subject to funding being available. He stated that a Stage 1 Preliminary Appraisal will be required for each project and submitted to the Department of Transport for approval.

Councillor S. O’Reilly thanked Mr. McKernan for the presentation and asked if we

would get a substantial allocation from the Department this year.

Mr. McKernan stated that he could not see a substantial allocation this year and

stated it could be two or three years before there is funding for construction.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick stated that it was great to see a start being made but noted

that it is a pity we must put up with just doing a few stretches of it at a time over

the next ten years.

**5. Mobile phone coverage in Cavan General Hospital.**

Councillor P. McVitty noted the lack of mobile phone coverage at Cavan General Hospital and stated that patients are having to leave the building to get phone coverage to ring relatives and loved ones. Councillor McVitty stated that currently with visiting restrictions in place due to Covid means that many patients must go long periods without seeing family or friends and mobile phones are the only way they have of keeping in contact with their loved ones. Councillor McVitty proposed that the Council write to the Manager in the hospital and see if they are doing anything to rectify the problem.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that everyone relies on mobile phones and suggested that the Council take the matter up with mobile phone companies.

 Councillor M. Argue supported the motion and noted that the coverage in the accidental and emergency section of the hospital is particularly bad.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and noted that the issue is going on for years with little or no progress.

 Councillor S. Smith supported the motion and asked that the Council write to the HSE to take urgent action on the matter.

 **6. That Cavan County Council call on the HSE to urgently review the contract for General Practice and other supports for GPs so that practices can be sustained and essential services maintained in every community.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council call on the HSE to urgently review the contract of General Practice and other supports for GPs so that practices can be sustained, and essential services maintained in every community. He stated that there are long running advertisements for doctors in towns and villages and doctors not coming forward to take up those positions. He stated that doctors should be encouraged to stay in Ireland and contracts for GP services should be updated as the current one is in place since 2019. He noted that in England and Wales there has been at least five different versions of the GP contract since the last review in this country. He stated that if our primary care system was working properly we would have a lot less pressure on our hospitals. Councillor Feeley stated that in Blacklion the single practitioner does not envisage a replacement for him when he retires. He stated that people are 30% less likely to go to out of hours service than to their own GP. He stated that the position for a GP was advertised three times for Swanlinbar and yet nobody has been assigned.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and urged that solutions be found to encourage GPs to locate to rural areas.

 Councillor S.P. O’Reilly supported the motion but criticised the position in relation to out of ours GP services locally, as they require patients to travel to see a doctor. He stated we are dealing with a GP centre in Castleblayney, Ardee, Cavan town and Navan. He noted that the primary care centre in Virginia is at capacity and unable to look after normal day to day facilitation of patients because the doctors are under pressure. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that GPs should band together to set up co-operatives in local areas to ensure people can see a doctor close to their own homes.

 Councillor P. McVitty supported the motion and asked the members of Cavan County Council who sit on the HSE Forum to take the matter up at the next meeting.

 Councillor S. Smith supported the motion and acknowledged the investment put into health centres in west Cavan in recent years. He stated that we now have the infrastructure but no personnel. Councillor S. Smith seconded Councillor J.P. Feeley’s proposal.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion.

**7. That Cavan County Council write to the Department of Education requesting that Hepa filters or equivalent be put into all classrooms with one million adults and children going back to school.**

Councillor B. Fay proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Department of Education requesting that Hepa Filters or equivalent be put into all classrooms with one million adults and children returning to school after the Christmas Holidays. He stated that parents are concerned over conditions in schools, windows opened constantly and children coming home sick every other day. He stated that it is costing parents a fortune on antigen tests and measures need to be put in place. Councillor Fay stated that we are now two years into the pandemic and schools still have no Hepa filters. He stated that the Government need to roll out a system similar to the roll out of CO2 monitors. He stated that under health and safety regulations school temperatures should not be lower than sixteen degrees and noted that some schools are as low as six and seven degrees.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and stated that the Government need to put Hepa filters into schools.

 Councillor S.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and welcomed the fact that children are allowed wear their coats in school.

 Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and stated that there are huge challenges currently in the education sector. He stated that over €60m has been allocated to schools for minor works before Christmas and it is up to schools to do what they want with it.

 Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion.

**8. That Cavan County Council write to an Tanaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment requesting urgent supports for the tourism, hospitality and music sectors.**

Councillor B. Fay stated that the hospitality sector is currently on its knees and called proposed that Cavan County Council write to an Tanaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment requesting urgent supports for the tourism, hospitality, and music sectors. He stated that several gigs have had to be cancelled due to closing time of 8pm. He stated if we want businesses to survive in this industry they must be supported.

 Councillor S. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that a lot of publicans had their stock ordered before Christmas and then they were hit with the blow of premises closing at 8pm. Councillor O’Reilly noted that Christmas is the time when restaurants and pubs make their money and yet again they were denied of this.

 Councillors S.P. O’Reilly, P. McDonald and P. Walsh supported the motion.

**9. That the Minister for Communications and ComReg urgently review the service provided by Eir when faults occur to landline services.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Communications and ComReg asking them to urgently review the service provided by Eir when faults occur to landline services. Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that he raised an issue with Eir over a landline that had been damaged during the recent storm. He stated that he was told by Eir that the repair was not possible at the time because there was no wire in stock. He stated that this was a disgrace and questioned if Eir is capable of managing it’s network and providing a service. Councillor Feeley noted that during the storm thousands of people were without electricity and yet ESB networks could have everyone back between two to three days.

 Councillor B. Fay supported the motion.

 Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and stated that it took over six months to get a phone installed for a member of her family.

**10. The urgent need to upgrade broadband exchanges in the county and the operation of the National Broadband Scheme.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley noted that a lot of broadband exchanges we have at the minute are at full capacity. He stated that in conjunction with the local enterprise office we should find out where these points are at capacity. Councillor Feeley proposed that the Council write to Eir and ask that they urgently upgrade the broadband exchanges in the County and the operation of the National Broadband Plan.

 Councillor S. Smith seconded Councillor Feeley’s proposal.

 Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that no allowances are currently being made for new houses being built in an area. He stated that two extra points should be put in each area to allow for additional dwellings.

 **Any other business**

 Councillor S.P. O’Reilly acknowledged and extended his thanks to the staff working in the test centre in Castlesaunderson over Christmas noting that they were under immense pressure with the increase in Covid numbers.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly asked who made the decision to hold the meeting online rather than in person. Councillor C. Kelly explained that it was agreed at the Corporate Group Meeting to hold the meeting online due to rise in Covid numbers. He stated that other Councils were also holding their meetings online. He stated that the February meeting will be in Hotel Kilmore.

 Councillor B. Fay welcomed the rural regeneration development funding for Belturbet Town masterplan and thanked Director of Service Brendan Jennings and Senior Administrative Officer, John Donohoe for all their help and support in making the application.

 Councillor C. Kelly thanked the nursing staff and frontline staff in our hospitals for the great work they have done under tremendous pressure during Covid 19. He stated that it was time the Government acknowledged their good work.

 Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service informed the members that due to the current Covid situation the meeting in relation to the Development Plan will not take place on the 14th and 15th February. He stated that the Council meeting is planned for 9.30am on 14th February and the meeting on the draft development plan will take place immediately afterwards and again on Tuesday 15th February.

 Councillor T. Smith congratulated Denn GFC on winning the Junior Ulster Final.

The meeting concluded at 5.30pm.

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

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