**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in The Council Chamber, Courthouse, Cavan on Tuesday 11th April, 2023 at 2.00p.m.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley, Cathaoirleach presiding

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

M. McNally, A/Head of Finance

L. McGavigan, Senior Executive Officer

C. McEntee, Financial Accountant

E. McGinn, Senior Staff Office

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

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

**Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 13 Marta a dhearbhú.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor P. Walsh

Seconded by Councillor C. Brady

And

Resolved;

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

**Votes of Sympathy:**

* Councillor T.P. O’Reilly proposed a vote of sympathy to the family of the late Brian Cahill former member of Cavan County Council from 1974 to 1985. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that Mr. Cahill was a great community man and a member of the Crested Knights showband. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that Mr. Cahill was a former President of Cuchulainn’s GAA and a great contributor to cultural and social life in the Mullagh area. Councillor O’Reilly offered his sympathy to the Cahill Family on the death of Brian.
* Reverend David Nixon on the death of his mother Mrs. Ethel Nixon, Blacklion.

A minutes silence was held in memory of the deceased and the meeting was adjourned for five minutes.

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

Noted**.**

1. **To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 9th February 2023**

Noted.

1. **To note Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee meeting on Housing, Social Inclusion and Corporate Services held on 9 December 2022**

Noted.

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

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

Noted.

**Correspondence**

**6.(a) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Finance regarding insurance for**

**community groups and community events.**

Noted.

**(b) To note reply from the Office of the Assistant National Director – HSE and the**

**Office of the Minister for Health regarding access to General Practice services**

**In Cavan and the lack of new doctors in rural towns and villages.**

Noted.

**(c) To note reply from Road Safety Authority regarding opening hours of the**

**National Drivers Licence Service (NDLS).**

Noted.

**(d) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Health regarding timelines for**

**Recognition and registration of occupational therapists.**

Noted.

**(e) To note reply from Office of the Minister for Agriculture regarding the Low**

**Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS) measure of TAMS 3.**

Noted.

**(f) To note reply from RCSI Hospital Group and Ireland East Hospital Group**

**regarding car parking charges at hospitals.**

Noted. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly expressed his disappointment with the response.

**(g) To note reply from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government &**

**Heritage regarding an extension to the retirement age of retained firefighters.**

Noted.

Councillor P. McVitty asked that a reminder letter be sent to Minister Anne Rabbitte T.D. in relation to the Holy Family School, Cootehill.

Councillor P. Walsh asked that a further letter be sent to the Minister for Justice in relation to the Siege of Jadotville.

Councillor S.P. O’Reilly proposed that a letter be sent to Minister Kieran O’Donnell, Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning in relation to no replies being received from letters sent to relevant Ministers. Councillor S.P. O’Reilly stated that it is important that when Local Authorities send a letter to a Minister in relation to a motion placed on a Council agenda that a reply is received.

Councillor S. O’Reilly seconded Councillor S.P. O’Reilly’s proposal.

**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. **Approval of nominee to Cavan Local Community and Development Committee under Section 128C(3)(b) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 – Mr. Conor Craven, Local Enterprise Office replacing Ms. Marcella Rudden, Local Enterprise Office.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor S. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the replacement of Ms. Marcella Rudden, Local Enterprise Office by Mr. Conor Craven, Local Enterprise Office as nominee to Cavan Local Community and Development Committee under Section 128C(3)(b) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 be hereby approved”.

1. **To approve the LCDC 2022 Annual Report under Section 128(b)(i) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the LCDC 2022 Annual Report under Section 128(b)(i) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 be hereby approved”.

1. **To approve nomination to Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board (Education and Training Boards Act 2013).**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that the nomination of Councillor Áine Smith to Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board (Education and Training Boards Act 2013) be hereby approved”.

The Cathaoirleach requested Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service to advise of the current situation with regards to the nomination of a member to Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board. Mr. Doyle advised that following on from the passing of Councillor Sean Smith, the members decided at the March 2023 meeting of Cavan County Council to nominate Councillor Áine Smith as his replacement. Mr. Doyle advised that the Council has since received advice from the Educational and Training Board to the effect in nominating a 5th member who is female, they need to formally consider the provision regarding gender balance as outlined in SI 141 of the 2019 Act. On the proposal of Councillor C. Kelly and seconded by Councillor P. Walsh the members having considered the gender provisions of SI 141 of the 2019 Act and the fact that no remaining male elected members are available for nomination to the Educational and Training Board, the members resolved to formally nominate Councillor Áine Smith to the 7th and final position on Cavan Monaghan Educational and Training Board.

1. **Consideration of the Annual Financial Statement 2022 under Section 108 of the Local Government Act 2001.**

Ms. Margaret McNally, A/Head of Finance gave a detailed presentation to the members on the Annual Financial Statement 2022. Ms. McNally noted that the revenue expenditure for 2022 amounts to €80,897,895, transfers to reserves amounts to €6,417,753 giving total expenditure of €87,405,648. Ms. McNally noted that the revenue income amounts to €58,601,658, income from rates amounts to €18,335,641, income from local property tax €10,162,938 and transfers from reserves amounts to €305,759 resulting in total income of €87,405,996. Ms. McNally stated that the net position on revenue account for 2022 is a surplus of €349 increasing general reserve at 31/12/2022 to €1,743,917. Ms. McNally stated that this represents a satisfactory outcome for 2022 on revenue account and reflects the ongoing prudent management of the Council’s finances in challenging conditions. Ms. McNally acknowledged the work of the Financial Management Accountant, staff in Agresso, Rates and Finance, Chief Executive Officer,

Directors of Services, Section Heads and Elected Members in preparing the 2022 Annual Financial Statement.

The members in turn complimented Ms. McNally and her team in finance for the detailed annual financial statement presented to them.

The members considered the Annual Financial Statement 2022 under Section 108 of the Local Government Act 2001.

1. **Approval of Additional Revenue Expenditure 2022**

It was

Proposed by Councillor S.P. O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor C. Brady

And

Resolved;

“that additional revenue expenditure 2022 be hereby approved”.

1. **Approval of Transfers to Capital 2022**

It was

Proposed by Councillor S O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that transfers to capital 2022 be hereby approved”.

1. **Statement of Rate Collection 2022.**

Noted.

1. **To approve the borrowing of €2.7m, in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2001, and subject to Ministerial sanction, for the purposes of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor S O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor C. Kelly

And

Resolved;

“that the borrowing of €2.7m, in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2001, and subject to Ministerial sanction, for the purposes of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project. be hereby approved.”

**Votes of Congratulations:**

* St. Mary’s Brass and Reed Band, Kingscourt on representing County Cavan at the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in New York.
* Members of Cavan Defence Force who represented County Cavan at the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in New York.
* Chief Executive Officer, Tommy Ryan and Cathoirleach John Paul Feeley on their promotion of Cavan Calling 2023 during their time in America.
* East Cavan Eagles basketball time on their success throughout the year and on reaching an All-Ireland Semi-Final.
* Cavan County Hurling Team on winning the Division 3 national league final.
* Cavan County Football Team on winning the Division 3 national league final.
* Cavan u14 girls football team on reaching the Ulster Final. They play Armagh on Saturday 22nd April in Monaghan in the Ulster Final.

**Good Friday Agreement**

Councillor C. Kelly asked if Cavan County Council had any plans to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. Councillor C. Kelly proposed that as Cavan is an Ulster County, we should mark the occasion.

Councillor S. P. O’Reilly seconded Councillor C. Kelly’s proposal and stated that as a border county, we cannot let this momentous occasion pass. Councillor S.P O’Reilly suggested that the Chief Executive and Director of Service, Mr. Eoin Doyle look into doing something in the County Museum to mark the occasion.

Councillor T.P O’Reilly concurred with all that was said and stated that it would be important to mark the occasion.

Councillors P. Walsh, P. McDonald and S. O’Reilly supported Councillor C. Kelly’s proposal.

Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive Officer stated that Cavan County Council will do something and stated that he had already spoken to the Cathaoirleach on the matter. He stated that they will look at doing something in the Museum and incorporate the George Mitchell Bridge.

Councillor J.P. Feeley noted that the issue had been discussed at the Corporate Policy Group meeting and all members felt it was important to mark the occasion. He stated that the Council need to do something substantial and recognisable.

**MEMBERS’ ITEMS**

**16.1 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

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

stated that a letter was received from Eirgrid asking to meet with Elected Members to

update them on the project.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that Eirgrid intends meeting with all Local Authorities in or

around the same time and Cavan County Council would be happy to facilitate them at

the May meeting preferably in the afternoon.

**Eviction ban**

**To ask Cavan County Council to call on the Government asking them to extend the ban on evictions until the end of the year.**

Councillor P. McDonald proposed that Cavan County Council call on the Government to extend the ban on evictions until the end of the year. Councillor McDonald stated that there is a serious issue coming for thousands of households across the country who have eviction dates looming. He stated that the eviction ban needs to be extended until the end of the year to give families a chance to arrange alternative accommodation which in turn will give the Government a chance to make additional social and affordable homes available.

Councillor S. O’Reilly seconded Councillor P. McDonald’s proposal and stated that she had been approached by families expressing fears of being made homeless. Councillor S. O’Reilly stated that there is no accommodation to be found in Co. Cavan. Councillor S. O’Reilly noted that one hundred and twelve households presented homeless to Cavan County Council in 2022, compared to seventy two in 2021 and of the one hundred and twelve only twenty two households were provided with emergency accommodation so where did the other ninety families end up.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that there are two sides to every story and only one side of the argument was being portrayed. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that landlords are in trouble too with some in negative equity due to tenants not paying their rent. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly agreed that there is a housing crisis and more social housing needs to be provided. He stated that the Croí Cónaithe programme should increase houses onto the market.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that he too is aware of tenants not paying their rent and that the Residential Tenancies Board is not a satisfactory system. Councillor Feeley acknowledged that there was an underspend in the housing budget last year and stated that this was down to construction sites being closed during Covid.

Councillor P. Walsh stated that young couples are not able to qualify for a mortgage, yet they are paying big money on rent.

Councillor Kelly asked that the Director of Service give a presentation to the members at the June meeting on the different ways to qualify for housing.

The members agreed to write to the Minister for Housing to oppose the lifting of the no fault eviction ban until the end of the year.

**16.2 To ask Cavan County Council to write to Minister James Browne, T.D., to ask him to provide and clarify the findings of a review carried out on firearms licencing in Ireland and to ask him to engage with representative groups on this matter.**

Councillor C. Lovett proposed that Cavan County Council write to Minister James Browne, T.D., to ask him to provide and clarify the findings of a review carried out on firearms licencing in Ireland and to ask him to engage with representative groups on this matter. Councillor Lovett stated that current laws are antiquated and while they do need to be modernised, those impacted most must be consulted with.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion and stated that the Minister should meet with the groups involved.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion. She stated that the Minister is willing to meet organisations and it would be important to meet before the review takes place.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion stating that this is an important issue for those involved in gun clubs. He stated that in June 2022 a committee was established with experts in the field and an online platform will be set up in due course to meet with members of different organisations.

Councillors Áine Smith, P. McDonald, W. Bennett, A. Fitzpatrick and P. McVitty supported the motion.

**16.3 That Cavan County Council ask the HSE, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that a proper General Practice service is restored to the Swanlinbar area.**

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that Swanlinbar is without a permanent GP service since October 2022. He stated that without a permanent GP service people will be left without consistent service. Councillor Feeley stated that a short term locum has been allocated to Swanlinbar Health Centre for the past number of months and is only available from Monday to Thursday which is insufficient. Councillor Feeley noted that medical card holders are entitled to a service five days a week. Councillor Feeley stated that the position had been advertised on several occasions, but the position had not been filled long term. Councillor Feeley proposed that Cavan County Council write to the HSE, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that a proper General Practice Service is restored in the Swanlinbar area.

Councillor Áine Smith supported the motion to call on the HSE to recruit a general practitioner to Swanlinbar.

Councillor P. McVitty supported the motion and asked that the representatives from the Council on the HSE forum raise it at the next meeting.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that there is a shortage of doctors countrywide.

**16.4 To ask Cavan County Council to write to the relevant Ministers to implement a feed in subsidy to supplement commercial gas prices up to 12c per kWh of biomethane injected into the national gas grid. This is required in order to fall in line with the UK and other European countries renewable energy policies thus, making anaerobic digestion an economically viable option and incentivising the decarbonising of Ireland’s gas network.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council write to the relevant Ministers to implement a feed in subsidy to supplement commercial gas prices up to 12 cent per kWh of biomethane injected into the national gas grid. He stated that this is required in order to fall in line with the UK and other European countries renewable energy prices thus, making anaerobic digestion an economically viable option and incentivising the decarbonising of Ireland’s gas network. Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that if the Government do not give a subsidy it will not be economically viable and we will be discouraging investors.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and noted that Ireland needs to make anaerobic digestion an option. He stated that there are seventy to eighty anaerobic digesters in the six counties with only three in the South of Ireland.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that Ireland is way behind the rest of Europe when it comes to anaerobic digestion.

Councillor P. McDonald and C. Lovett supported the motion.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick thanked the members for their support.

**16.5 To ask Cavan County Council to assist the national ambulance service to register defibrillators throughout the County by allowing a registration form to be accessed on the Cavan County Council website.**

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick proposed that Cavan County Council assist the national ambulance service to register defibrillators throughout the County by allowing a registration form to be accessed on the Cavan County Council website. He stated that the registration of defibrillators would allow that national ambulance service to direct those in need to their closest defibrillator upon calling emergency services. Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that those who register a defibrillator should receive an email reminder to change the battery and pads.

Councillors C. Brady, P. McDonald, P. Brady, C. Kelly, P. Walsh and T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service stated the Council would co-operate and update their website.

**16.7 I am calling on the Minister for Justice to give an update on the employment of staff to help speed up asylum applications.**

Councillor P. McDonald proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Justice asking that he give an update on the employment of staff to help speed up asylum applications. He stated that the application process is taking too long, and we need to integrate refugees into Irish life. He stated that Minister Harris allocated €18m to increasing staff to deal with asylum seekers and wants to know what the update is on same.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that there is a whole array of knowledgeable and educated people coming into Ireland with trades and we need to integrate them into the work force.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick supported the motion.

Councillor J.P. Feeley concurred with all and stated that Gardaí need to do checks on places to address those coming into the Country with no documentation.

**16.8 To ask Cavan County Council to write to the Minister for Justice asking him to adjust the basic pay for Garda recruitment at the point of entry.**

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Justice asking him to adjust the basic pay for Garda recruitment at the point of entry. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that the force has embarked in a high profile recruitment campaign to attract more gardai but wages are too low to encourage recruitment. Councillor T.P. O’Reilly stated that potential applicants need to be able to afford a house and have a career that pays them adequately which is not the case with the current pay scale.

Councillor C. Brady seconded Councillor T.P. O’Reilly’s proposal.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion.

**16.9 Women’s Health – Need for improved Women’s Health Services.**

Councillor Áine Smith requested that improved services be made available for women’s health particularly in endometriosis. Councillor Smith noted that at least one in ten women have issues conceiving and unfortunately endometriosis may be only picked up in some women at this stage. Councillor Smith stated that the disease is as prevalent as diabetes but yet it is poorly understood. She stated that there is not enough publicly funded research dedicated solely to reproductive health. Councillor Smith also stated that most women affected with endometriosis are forced to seek medical attention abroad due to the lack of knowledge and resources in Ireland. Councillor Smith stated that Ireland should mirror an educational programme called “Me Programme” which is taught to young girls in New Zealand to educate them about the signs and symptoms of endometriosis. Councillor Áine Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health asking that more investment be put into clinical treatments for women and also write to the Minister for Education asking her to consider including the education of endometriosis in the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum at both junior and senior cycle.

Councillor P. Walsh seconded Councillor Á Smith’s proposal. Councillor P. Walsh noted that stage four level of endometriosis is like a cancer, stating that it grows and hurts like a cancer.

Councillor C. Brady and M. Argue supported the motion.

Councillor J.P. Feeley stated that it was a worthy motion and noted that it is terrible to be unwell and not correctly diagnosed.

**16.10 The need to improve follow up services for children following an Assessment of Needs.**

Councillor Áine Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Health asking him to improve follow up services for children following an assessment of needs. Councillor Smith stated that children with additional needs who require physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and other interventions should receive these services when they need them. Councillor Smith stated that a shortage of staff makes it impossible to utilise these services to their true potential. Councillor Smith stated that more people need to be trained in these roles and proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Further and Higher Education asking that additional places for these courses be made available at third level.

Councillor C. Lovett supported the motion and stated that follow up on assessment of needs is very important.

Councillor P. McVitty supported the motion and noted that people who train in England cannot operate in Ireland and wondered why.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and noted that those who qualify in England need to apply for permission to practice in Ireland which is a process that can take up to a year to complete. She stated that this is currently being looked at by the Government.

Councillors M. Argue, P. Walsh, C. Kelly, A. Fitzpatrick and T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion.

**Item 16.6 was deferred.**

The meeting ended at 4.30p.m.

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

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