

**Minutes of Meeting of Cavan County Council held in The Council Chamber, Courthouse,  
Cavan on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 2.00p.m.**

Councillor P. Brady, Cathaoirleach, presiding

Present; Councillors M. Argue, W. Bennett, C. Brady, B. Fay, J.P. Feeley,  
A. Fitzpatrick (online), 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  
E. Doyle, Director of Service  
M. McNally, A/Head of Finance  
J. McKiernan, Senior Engineer  
L. McGavigan, Senior Executive Officer  
E. McGinn, Senior Staff Officer

---

Councillor P. Brady welcomed all to the meeting.

**1. To confirm Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.**

**Miontuaririsci cruinnithe 11 Meán Fomhair 2023 a dhearbhu.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor S. O'Reilly

Seconded by Councillor P. Walsh

And

Resolved;

“that minutes of monthly meeting of Cavan County Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
be hereby approved”

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

Noted.

**3. To note Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

Noted.

**4. To hear overview of the Draft Climate Action Plan (Bróna Keating, Climate Action Coordinator).**

Ms. Bróna Keating, Climate Action Coordinator gave a presentation to the members on the Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. Ms. Keating outlined the draft vision and mission for Cavan's Climate Action Plan stating that Cavan County Council will be a climate resilient and low carbon organization that inspires, leads and supports ambitious action to achieve a Climate Neutral Local Economy. She stated that the Council will lead by example, support and inspire climate action across the county to ensure that Cavan remains an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business by mobilizing action at a local level. Ms. Keating stated that the Council will

actively interact with citizens, businesses and communities to enhance understanding of climate change, promote climate literacy and facilitate the necessary shifts in behaviour. Ms. Keating outlined the strategic goals:-

- (i) Governance and leadership, Cavan County Council will provide robust leadership, governance and commitment to climate action to achieve our vision, mission and goals in line with national policy.
- (ii) Built environment and transport, Cavan County Council will pursue climate actions to increase climate resilience of the built environment and transport to achieve our emissions reduction targets.
- (iii) Natural environment and green infrastructure, Cavan County Council will strive to enhance the natural environment of County Cavan to work in support of nature based solutions for climate resilience and emissions reductions whilst promoting enriched biodiversity.
- (iv) Communities: resilience and transition, Cavan County Council will support and empower communities to activate on climate action with enhanced sustainability and resilience.
- (v) Sustainability and resource management, Cavan County Council will influence and create a sustainable resource conscious culture within County Cavan.

Ms. Keating stated that the next step with the draft plan is public consultation, and this will remain open for six weeks and one day. She stated that in December the Chief Executive's report on submissions will be circulated. She stated that the findings from the report will be presented to the Environment SPC in December. The plan will then be brought before the full Council at the January/February Council meeting for adoption. She stated that the deadline for adoption is the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

The members in turn thanked Ms. Keating for her informative presentation.

### **Votes of Sympathy:**

- The Miney Family, Ballinagh on the death of former Councillor Philip Miney who served on Cavan County Council during the years 1991 to 1998.
- The McKay Family, Cavan town on the death of Mrs. Eithne McKay former teacher at Cavan Vocational School, now Breifne College and wife of the late John McKay, former CEO of Cavan Vocational Educational Committee.
- The Mealiff Family, on the death of Ross Mealiff proprietor of the Hotel Kilmore, Cavan and former Clones Town Councillor.
- The Nolan Family, Blacklion on the death of Mr. Jim Nolan. The late Jim Nolan dedicated a huge amount of his time to Cavan Burren Park.
- The O'Reilly Family, Dunboyne, Co. Meath on the death of Councillor Damien O'Reilly.

The meeting was adjourned for ten minutes in memory of the deceased.

- 5. 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 Further and Higher Education regarding youth emigration.**

Noted.

- (b) To note reply from the Office of Minister Roderic O'Gorman, T.D., regarding necessary services and resources to help communities accommodate incoming refugees.**

Noted.

- (c) To note reply from the Office of Minister Roderic O'Gorman, T.D., regarding supports for foster carers.**

Noted.

- (d) To note reply from Ladies Gaelic Football Association regarding the provision of minimum basic standards of care and welfare for female players.**

Noted.

- 7. To approve attendance of members at AILG training to be held in the Hotel Kilmore on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor T.P. O'Reilly

Seconded by Councillor S.P. O'Reilly

And

Resolved;

"that the attendance of Councillors J.P. Feeley, Á Smith, P. Walsh, P. Brady, W. Bennett, C. Brady, T Smith, V. Smith, T.P. O'Reilly, P. McVitty and M Argue at the AILG training to be held in the Hotel Kilmore on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and C. Kelly and S. O'Reilly in Tralee on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2023, be hereby approved".

- To approve attendance of members at LAMA training to be held in Tuam, Co. Galway on 25 and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

It was

Proposed by Councillor T.P. O'Reilly

Seconded by Councillor S.P. O'Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors C. Brady, W. Bennett, T.P. O’Reilly, V. Smith T. Smith, P. McVitty, M. Argue, S.P. O’Reilly, B. Fay, P. Walsh, C. Kelly, Á. Smith and P. Brady at LAMA training to be held in Tuam, Co. Galway on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be hereby approved”.

**To approve attendance of members at Daniel O’Connell Summer School to be held in Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor T.P. O’Reilly

Seconded by Councillor S.P. O’Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the attendance of Councillors C. Brady, W. Bennett, P. McVitty, M. Argue, P. Walsh, C. Kelly, Á. Smith, J.P. Feeley and P. Brady at Daniel O’Connell Summer School to be held in Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be hereby approved”.

**8. Member’s Question – Councillor John Paul Feeley**

**To ask Cavan County Council to clarify where the official Taxi Ranks are in Cavan.**

A reply was issued to Councillor J.P. Feeley prior to the meeting.

**9. Member’s Question – Councillor Sarah O’Reilly**

**To ask Cavan County Council the total number and location of LIS roads approved for funding this year:**

**(a) What Standard/Specification the roads will be finished to,**

**(b) The number of roads Cavan County Council will be using its own resources to carry out preparatory works on i.e. Drainage/Preparation.**

A reply was issued to Councillor S. O’Reilly prior to the meeting,

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

**10. To note Chief Executive’s monthly report (Section 51 Local Government Reform Act 2014).**

Noted.

**11. Approval of nominees to Cavan Local Community and Development Committee under Section 128C (3)(b) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014:**

**i. Beth McEntee, Community Voluntary Sector replacing Bridget Boyle Community and Voluntary Interests**

**ii. Gayathri Devi Soman, Social Inclusion replacing Charlie Smith, Social Inclusion.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor T.P. O'Reilly

Seconded by Councillor S.P. O'Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the replacement of Bridget Boyle, Community and Voluntary Interests by Beth McEntee, Community Voluntary Sector and the replacement of Charlie Smith, Social Inclusion by Gayathri Devi Soman, Social Inclusion to Cavan Local Community and Development Committee under Section 128C (3)(b) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 be hereby approved”.

**12. To approve overdraft accommodation in the sum of €9,000,000 for year ending 31 December 2024.**

It was

Proposed by Councillor C. Kelly

Seconded by Councillor T.P. O'Reilly

And

Resolved;

“that the

“that overdraft accommodation in the sum of €9,000,000 for year ending 31 December 2024 be hereby approved”.

**Votes of Congratulations:**

- Cuchulainn Ladies on winning the County Junior Football Final
- Cuchulainn u12 girls on winning the Division 1 final.
- Kieran Callaghan Chairperson, Cavan County Board, IRFU Kingspan and Cavan Rugby for bringing the Ulster Rugby match against Glasgow Warriors to Kingspan, Breffni Park.
- Leona Maguire on being part of the European Golf Team who won the Solheim Cup
- Ballyhaise Ladies on winning the County Intermediate Final
- St. Finbarr's u16 girls on winning Division 4 final.
- Cavan Tidy Towns on Cavan Town being named as the tidiest town in the County, winning the overall County Award in the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition.
- Drumlane Ladies on winning the County Senior Final.
- Munterconnaught GAA on winning the Junior Championship Shield Final.
- Cullys Craft Bakery, Áine Chocolates Ltd, Drummully Boxy, Ice Cream Treats and Liffey Meats on winning awards at the Blas na hÉireann awards 2023.
- Terry and Madeleine Argue on celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

- Mr. Eddie Butler former Anglo Celt journalist for winning the Best News Series award at the recent Local Ireland Journalism Awards.

Councillor C. Kelly wished Kingscourt the best of luck in the County Senior Football Final to be played in Breffni Park on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

### **Retirement of Chief Executive, Mr. Tommy Ryan**

Councillor J.P. Feeley wished Mr. Ryan a happy retirement noting that it was a difficult decision to make after giving forty years of service to Local Government. Councillor Feeley noted that Mr. Ryan's interest in farming, hurling and football will keep him busy throughout his retirement years. Councillor Feeley stated that one of the most important signs of a person's character is how they treat others around them, and Mr. Ryan treated everyone with equity.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly wished Mr. Ryan all the best in his retirement and stated that it was a pleasure to be in the company of Mr. Ryan especially offsite on visits abroad to places like Wurzburg and to watch him meet with the diaspora which he did with a common touch.

Councillor M. Argue wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and paid tribute to the supporting role paid by Mr. Ryan's wife Ann. Councillor Argue noted that Mr. Ryan's successor will have big boots to fill.

Councillor C. Kelly wished Mr. Ryan good health and happiness in his retirement and praised Mr. Ryan for leaving the County in a healthy financial state which could not be said for every Local Authority in the Country. He stated that Mr. Ryan was always a gentleman and always very courteous and helpful.

Councillor B. Fay wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and noted that Mr. Ryan put his heart and soul into everything he did for County Cavan.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly wished Mr. Ryan a long and healthy retirement and stated that it was a pleasure working with him. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that the people of Mullagh will never forget Mr. Ryan for all his hard work and help to bring the relics of St. Killian back to Mullagh at some stage in 2024.

Councillor S. O'Reilly thanked Mr. Ryan for all he did for County Cavan and noted that he will be leaving on a high note following the success of Cavan Calling and Cavan Day.

Councillor P. McDonald wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and thanked him for all his help during his term as Cathaoirleach in 2017.

Councillor C. Lovett congratulated Mr. Ryan on his retirement and thanked him for his many years of service to Cavan County Council.

Councillor Á. Smith wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and thanked him for the kindness he had shown to her since March. Councillor Smith stated that her late father Sean Smith had great respect for Mr. Ryan.

Councillor P. McVitty wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and noted that Mr. Ryan was always at the end of the phone to help which meant a lot to the elected members. Councillor P. Walsh wished Mr. Ryan, his wife Ann and family years of health and happiness and thanked him for all he did for County Cavan during his years as Chief Executive.

Councillor T. Smith wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and noted that he was great at selling County Cavan to the diaspora. He stated that the highlight for him was when Mr. Ryan honoured Pete Briquette at the Boomtown Rats Concert in Cavan during Cavan Calling.

Councillor W. Bennett wished Mr. Ryan well and noted that it was very easy to get on with him and thanked him for all he did for County Cavan.

Councillor V. Smith wished Mr. Ryan every success and happiness in his retirement. He stated that Mr. Ryan was always very helpful and easy to work with.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick congratulated Mr. Ryan on his forty-six years of service to local government and wished him the best in his retirement.

Councillor C. Brady thanked Mr. Ryan for the great work he did in County Cavan without bringing politics into it. Councillor Brady wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and years of good health and happiness.

The Directors of Service in turn thanked Mr. Ryan for his leadership, commitment and solid sense of teamwork throughout his time with Cavan County Council. They thanked him for thinking outside box when it came to delivering big projects and match funding them. They wished Mr. Ryan well in his retirement and years of good health and happiness ahead.

Mr. Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive described his career as a great journey, the highlight of which was coming to work in Cavan in 2015. He stated that it was a privilege to work in County Cavan and noted that while it was not always easy his keenness for strategies and reports was sometimes questioned. Mr. Ryan stated that he greatly appreciates the dedication and commitment shown by the elected members, staff and community in County Cavan. He stated that during his time in Cavan many projects have been delivered and there are still more in the pipeline to deliver. Mr. Ryan thanked the eight Cathaoirliagh that he served with and noted that they all had one objective, to represent the people of their locality and County Cavan. Mr. Ryan explained that while people did not always agree with the direction in which things moved, the ultimate intention was to always do what was best for the County. Mr. Ryan thanked the Management Teams past and present and complimented them for their dedication, loyalty and support to him. Mr. Ryan stated that he does not micro manage but gives them their own head. Mr. Ryan thanked the staff of Cavan County Council both indoor and outdoor for their willingness and flexibility and for the way they dealt with all changes. Mr. Ryan stated

that he was looking forward to retiring but was sad at the same time. He stated that he felt the time was right to retire with a local election around the corner and a new corporate plan looming. Mr. Ryan wished the elected members well in the forthcoming elections.

Councillor P. Brady on behalf of the County and its people, thanked Mr. Ryan for his service to County Cavan and wished him good health and happiness in his retirement.

### **Number of items on agenda**

Councillor S. O'Reilly queried the number of items an elected member can place on the agenda as she noted that one member had five items on the agenda and another member had four. She stated that in the past she was asked to remove an item as she was only allowed three items.

Councillor P. Brady stated that each member was allowed three items. He stated that in relation to item 1 the member was looking for a report. He noted that with the other item the member was one of numerous Councillors who had the item on the agenda from a municipal district.

Councillor Brady stated that going forward the item on the North South Interconnector may need to be placed on the agenda as a question and asked for no more motions with parts (i) and (ii).

## **MEMBERS' ITEMS – OCTOBER MEETING**

### **13.1 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. Councillor Kelly noted that there are letters being circulated to landowners in the area at the minute.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Service stated that a copy of the letter issued to landowners had been sent to the Council for their information. He noted that the letter was in relation to planning compliance and that the ESB was intending to proceed with delivering the project. He stated that prior to this a meeting is being sought with planners in all three counties.

### **13.2 In relation to the Government announcement some weeks back that those building new houses in rural Ireland will be exempt from costly County Council development levy fees and Irish Water connection fees until April 2024, to seek clarification from Irish Water regarding water connection fees.**

Councillor C. Kelly noted that in relation to a recent government announcement those building new houses in rural Ireland will be exempt from costly County Council development levy fees and Irish Water connection fees until April 2024. Councillor C.



Kelly proposed that Cavan County Council write to Irish Water to seek clarification regarding water connection fees.

**13.21 That Cavan County Council request urgent funding from Irish Water to re-route the main foul line on the R178 due to constant issues with overflow in the interests of public health.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to Uisce Eireann urgently requesting that they re-route the main foul line on the R178 due to constant issues with overflow in the interests of public health. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the main sewer line on the Moynalty Road passes underneath the carpark of the Mullagh Community Sports Centre before connecting to the Mullagh waste water treatment plant. Councillor O'Reilly asked for the pipe to be relocated outside of the carpark as the situation is currently at crisis point.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly seconded Councillor S.P. O'Reilly's motion.

Councillors P. McDonald and S. O'Reilly supported the motion.

Mr. John McKernan, Senior Engineer stated that connection fees still had to be paid and that development levy fees were waived. He stated that you pay the fee and then look for a refund and there are documents to be submitted with the application.

Councillor C. Kelly proposed that the Council write to the Minister to change this system and get the waiver straight away instead of having to pay and then look for a refund. Mr. McKernan, Senior Engineer informed Councillor S.P. O'Reilly that Uisce Eireann is investigating the line using cameras and the Council is awaiting a further update.

**13.3 To request Cavan County Council to write to the Minister expressing disappointment that Group Water Schemes have been excluded from the water connection waiver scheme.**

Councillor C. Kelly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage expressing disappointment that Group Water Schemes have been excluded from the water connection waiver scheme. He stated that it is unfair not to give the same facility to private schemes.

Councillor W. Bennett seconded Councillor C. Kelly's proposal.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that it is unfair to those who provide themselves with their own home in rural areas.

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

**13.4 To discuss proposed Direct Provision Centre in Cavan.**

Councillor S. O'Reilly stated that she visited the proposed direct provision centre site in Castletara and was shocked to see how unsuitable the site is. She stated that the site is located down a narrow lane with no public lighting, no footpaths, no public transport and

no local amenities. She stated that currently there is a peaceful protest at the location strongly supported by all the community. Councillor O'Reilly expressed her disappointment that communication, consultation and engagement from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth was and still is extremely poor, not only with the local community but also with Cavan County Council officials and elected representatives, showing a total disregard for respectful and sincere community engagement. Councillor S. O'Reilly noted that the property owner made no contact with the local community. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the Bailieborough Cootehill Municipal District elected members met with relevant Council executive members to see what was going on and to gather a factual account of events. She stated that at the meeting it was discovered that the Department disseminated incorrect information adding to fears within the community and severely damaging trust.

Councillor A. Fitzpatrick supported the motion and noted that public consultation should have taken place. He stated that the Department is not dealing with the situation in a meaningful manner, and they are not listening to the community. He stated that the people of Castletara are willing to have families there, but the proper resources need to be in place.

Councillor V. Smith supported the motion and noted that he spoke with one lady who stated that there would be thirty-two people moving in at the back of her house and she was not happy with this.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and stated that this area is not suitable for accommodation for these people.

Councillor C. Kelly supported the motion and noted that there were also protests over the suitability of the property formerly known as the White Horse Hotel in Cootehill to accommodate Ukrainian Refugees and it is now entering its thirty fourth week. He stated that he could not understand the thinking of Minister Roderic O'Gorman's department to try to house asylum seekers in the middle of the country with no facilities.

Councillor P. McDonald supported the motion and stated that this was about the people in the community and not a political game.

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

**13.20 That Cavan County Council give a detailed account of protocols and communications if any given by Department of Justice and state agencies regarding the placing of persons in temporary accommodation throughout the County.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that temporary accommodation is a countrywide problem and had become a money-making exercise for some and called on the local authority to begin examining planning and fire certificates for each facility. Councillor O'Reilly asked the executive if it was given prior notice if a refugee was a criminal or arsonist, a

paedophile, or a rapist. He stated that there were people leaving prison and being placed in temporary accommodation having served their time for serious offences, yet the local community was not informed of same. Councillor O'Reilly also questioned if asylum seekers are being vetted before being provided with accommodation in Ireland. Councillor S.P. O'Reilly asked Cavan County Council to give a detailed account of protocols and communications if any given by the Department of Justice and state agencies regarding the placing of persons in temporary accommodation throughout the County.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and stated that no paedophile has done time until the day they die.

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

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service stated that the Council was as equally uninformed about the proposal to site direct provision accommodation in Castletara.

Mr. Eoin Doyle, Director of Service informed Councillor S.P. O'Reilly that the Council generally would be told before placing people in accommodation and informed Councillor O'Reilly that he would talk to him later in relation to any further questions he had.

Mr. Brendan Jennings, Director of Services stated that planning and fire certificates generally are matters of enforcement and that he could not address a specific case at the meeting.

### **13.5 To discuss proposed new speed limits.**

Councillor S. O'Reilly noted that new proposals will shortly be brought to Cabinet by Minister of State for Road Safety, Mr. Jack Chambers following a review of speed limits. Councillor O'Reilly noted that Mr. Chambers announced this review following a spate of very sad and tragic accidents on our roads recently. Councillor O'Reilly stated that she felt the review was impulsive and not fully thought through, a knee jerk reaction to an issue that is much more complicated. Councillor O'Reilly stated that speed can be a factor, but it is not the only issue that contributes to the loss of lives on our roads. She stated that Mr. Chambers has not mentioned the state of our rural roads and felt that this was because he might be pointing his finger at the government themselves for the shocking inadequate funding allocated to local authorities to resolve these issues. Councillor O'Reilly stated that punishing every single motorist in the Country, who in the main, are responsible road users is not the answer. Councillor O'Reilly stated that there is no mention of dangerous driving, use of mobile phones, drugs, drink, cyclists or suicides. Councillor O'Reilly asked where the Gardaí are in all of this, are they resourced enough to properly police dangerous driving or are they choosing the easy

option too. Councillor O'Reilly stated that it is very easy to place yourself inside the 50km limit with a speed gun.

Councillor S. O'Reilly proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Transport and impress upon him the urgent need for adequate roads funding in budget 2023.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that in the last number of weeks there had been an increase in fatalities on our roads. Councillor Feeley stated that it is important to look at the facts and the wider issue regarding road deaths. He stated that there are deficiencies in the number of Gardaí policing our roads. Councillor Feeley stated that he does not support the changes to speed limits.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and noted that speed vans do not seem to park at black spots anymore.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that if NCTs must be done on cars then our roads should be roadworthy.

Councillors C. Kelly, P. McVitty and T. Smith supported the motion.

### **13.6 To discuss the proposed disbandment of community policing.**

Councillor S. O'Reilly stated that Garda morale is currently at an all-time low and there is something seriously amiss within our garda rank and file. Councillor O'Reilly stated that joining the Gardaí was once a highly sought after profession where new recruits were happy to have an opportunity to settle in and do their job. Councillor O'Reilly stated that policing is no longer seen as an attractive career and new recruits are resigning at a high rate. She stated that it is very difficult for young people to work alongside senior colleagues doing the same job and getting paid less, particularly with the current house prices and cost of living. Councillor O'Reilly noted that with the rise in serious incidents, hundreds of Gardaí are being assaulted every year. Councillor O'Reilly proposed that the Council write to Minister Paschal Donohoe T.D. to deal with the situation immediately.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly seconded Councillor S. O'Reilly's proposal and stated that one of the greatest attributes is knowing to admit when you are wrong, and Commissioner Harris needs to do this. He stated that there is currently a threat to community policing in his own area, which had played a crucial role across the county during the pandemic and stated that Commissioner Harris had put his own personal ambition above the people under his guise.

Councillor B. Fay supported the motion and stated that the Country needs more community policing units at the minute not less.

Councillor P. McDonald, T.P. O'Reilly, P. Walsh, P. McVitty and C. Kelly supported the motion.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion and stated that Commissioner Harris needs to go and stated that if this does not happen then the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee needs to intervene. Councillor Brady stated that Gardaí are getting tied up in paper work rather than working on the beat.

**13.7 Need to support homeowners through mortgage relief support.**

Councillor Á. Smith noted that the war inflicted by Russia on Ukraine has caused huge difficulties throughout the world and we see daily the increased cost of living for every household, and most of this stems directly from the increase in energy costs. Councillor Smith stated that interest rates have risen for mortgage holders threefold in the last two years and the knock-on effect in interest rates have a direct bearing on people preparing to build or buy a home. Councillor Á Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Finance requesting that the government introduce a mortgage interest relief scheme to help offset additional financial costs that affect a large proportion of our population.

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

**13.8 The need for the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Transport to deal with the difficulties arising from ash dieback both on farms and along public roads.**

Councillor Á Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Transport asking them to deal with the difficulties arising from ash dieback both on farms and along public roads. Councillor Smith stated that farmers should receive compensation for any loss incurred. Councillor Smith noted that previous responses were inadequate, and a problem had arisen since where dying or dead ash trees were gathering along roadsides.

**13.12 To discuss ash dieback disease and the consequences for landowners along the roads.**

Councillor T. Smith seconded Councillor Á Smith's proposal and noted that this matter had been raised at a previous Ballyjamesduff Municipal District meeting where it was agreed to raise the topic at the main Council meeting. Councillor Smith noted that ash dieback disease can have serious consequences for landowners along the roads.

Councillor W. Bennett supported the motion and stated that the Council need to be proactive on this matter especially along public roads.

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

**Extension of meeting time to 5.30pm**

It was proposed by Councillor C. Brady and seconded by Councillor W. Bennett that the meeting be extended to 5.30p.m.

### **13.9 Restricting the use of mobile phones and other devices among primary school pupils.**

Councillor Á Smith proposed that Cavan County Council write to Ms. Norma Foley, Minister for Education asking that she roll out a “no smartphone” pledge for all primary schools in County Cavan like the one adopted by eight primary schools in Greystones, Co. Wicklow. Councillor Á Smith stated that technology is an incredible tool and younger children are spending too much time on devices which leads to anxiety, depression, and mental health problems. She stated that the use of these devices reduces social interaction and communication skills among young people. Councillor Smith noted that children need more physical activity and this in turn helps them sleep better and reduces obesity. Councillor Smith referred to the Greystones project where she noted that parents’ associations agreed to a no smartphone voluntary code until the children start secondary school and this was supported by parents of children in every class throughout the eight primary schools.

Councillor C. Kelly seconded Councillor Á Smith’s proposal.

Councillor P. Walsh supported the motion and stated that she has serious concerns as a grandparent to the amount of time young people spend on devices.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion and noted that we all engage too much with screens instead of interacting with each other.

Councillor C. Brady supported the motion and noted that some parents use devices as a babysitting facility for their children. Councillor Brady stated that parents need to be informed and educated about devices as they are bowing to the pressure.

Councillor T.P. O’Reilly supported the motion and noted that no child in primary school needs a mobile phone.

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

### **13.10 To ask the Department to set up more Driving Test Centres because of the long delay in getting a driving test.**

Councillor P. McDonald stated that the average waiting time in Cavan for a driving test is approximately seven months once a driver has completed the compulsory twelve lessons and held a learner permit for six months or more. Councillor McDonald stated that there are not enough driving testers employed to keep the service fit for purpose. He stated that the Government need to implement a fair system of investment to have a properly run sustainable service. He stated that currently a driving tester’s job is not a very attractive employment opportunity as it tends to be a temporary contract and people are assigned roles outside of their county of residence. Councillor McDonald said that we have a growing population and driving is a skill that everybody wants and needs. Councillor P. McDonald proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Department of

Transport and the RSA asking them to set up more Driving Test Centres and employ more driving testers because of the long delay in getting a driving test.

Councillor T. Smith supported the motion.

Councillor S. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that rural drivers need licences and tests as they do not have the same access to public transport as urban areas.

Councillor J.P. Feeley supported the motion.

### **13.17 To discuss slurry spreading**

Councillor W. Bennett proposed that Cavan County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture asking that the Government extend the date for slurry spreading to the end of the month. Councillor Bennett noted that the department had already agreed to extend the slurry spreading period by seven days on October 4<sup>th</sup> as the initial closed period was to commence on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Councillor Bennett noted that the first week of the extension had been blighted by heavy rain every day and most nights and it rained half of the second week. Councillor Bennett stated that the few days the weather was good it was hard for farmers to get contractors to carry out the slurry spreading. Councillor Bennett stated that the Department would need to look at the timeframe applied in future. Councillor Bennett also called for the government to meet commitments on payments to farmers under the TAMS scheme.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and noted that common sense needs to apply.

Councillor Á Smith supported the motion and noted that farmers are under extreme pressure particularly with the bad weather.

Councillor P. Brady supported the motion.

### **13.19 To request urgent action by TII regarding safety at commuter collection points on N3.**

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that a public protest over safety concerns at Whitegate Cross, Maghera is scheduled for Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October at 4.30pm. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the protest will be safe and will take place next to Whitegate fuels and noted that safety concerns at this point have been flagged going back almost a decade.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that urgent action by TII regarding safety at commuter collection points on the N3 needs to be taken before there is a fatality. Councillor O'Reilly stated that the current situation at Whitegate is chronic.

Councillor T.P. O'Reilly supported the motion and stated that Councillors did not want to be in the position of telling the executive that a tragedy would happen unless action was taken.

Councillors T. Smith, W. Bennett and P. Brady supported the motion.

Mr. John McKernan, Senior Engineer stated that TII, the NTA and Bus Eireann were all involved in a process in which consultation was taking place regarding all stops on the N3. He stated that this would include a feasibility options report covering all aspects including the potential provision of park and ride facilities. He stated that the Council hoped to obtain funding to carry out its own assessment and were optimistic of making progress on the project this year.

Councillor S.P. O'Reilly stated that Whitegate should be considered a standalone project given the urgency with which intervention is needed.

Item numbers 13.11, 13.13, 13.14, 13.15, 13.16 and 13.18 were deferred.

**The meeting concluded at 5.45p.m**