

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON Monday, 26th February, 2024 AT 2.15 pm.**

PRESENT:	Councillor John Keogh	PRESIDED
MEMBERS:	Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.	
OFFICIALS:	Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services Mark Keaveney, Director of Services Sean Mullarkey, Head of Finance Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services Greg O'Donnell, A/Director of Services Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator Claudette Collins, Staff Officer Darragh Kelly, Communications Officer	

Apologies:

20.24 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

There were no Disclosures of Conflict of Interest declared by Members.

21.24 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 21.01.2024

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Special Meeting of 01.02.2024

22.24 MATTERS ARISING

Matters Arising - Special Meeting held on 1st February 2024.

Cllr. Emer Kelly raised the matter of email correspondence received from An Post confirming their decision to retain services and the deployment of a Postmaster at their current location at The Square in Roscommon town.

Members welcomed the update as a step in the right direction but not the perfect solution and expressed the hope that services would be maintained at their current location on a permanent basis.

It was however stated that An Post were abdicating their responsibilities to the public with the news of the

retention of services that fell short of what was required. Fears were expressed for the future use of the current Post Office building and the possible contracting of services which, it was felt, would result in a loss of corporate governance of services. While services in Boyle were successfully contracted, the members were concerned for the operation of postal services in the county's smaller towns and villages.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to write to An Post management seeking their attendance at the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee seeking reassurances about the future of the postal network.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister Jack Chambers T.D. seeking that Postal services in Roscommon would not be moved in the future, ensuring the decision to maintain services in the current location was not a temporary measure.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister Jack Chambers T.D. seeking assurance that An Post will maintain existing services at the current location in Roscommon Post Office.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to write to An Post expressing their wish that if no contractor was found for the future operation of postal services in Roscommon town, An Post would continue to operate services on its existing site on The Square in the town.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly

SECONDED by Cllr. Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to write to An Post to request that in future, direct communication and consultation would be provided to Roscommon County Council elected representatives as well as Oireachtas representatives.

23.24 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for January 2024 noted.

24.24 DISPOSAL OF LANDS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

SECONDED by Councillor Kelly

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of property pursuant to the provisions of Article 206 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 of particulars of property which it is proposed to dispose of at the location in County Roscommon and to the persons set out in the schedule hereunder. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to dispose:

The Property: Site comprising 0.029 hA (0.072 Ac) at Sralea Td., Ballinasloe, Co. Roscommon

The person(s) from whom the land was acquired: Unknown

The person(s) to whom the land is to be disposed of: Chris Tuohy and Josephine Kilmartin, Sralea, Ballinasloe, Co. Roscommon

The consideration proposed in respect of the disposal: €500

25.24 PRESENTATION ON BULLYS ACRE FAMINE GRAVEYARD, ROSCOMMON TOWN - FR. BEIRNE

Fr. Francis Beirne, Chairperson of the County Roscommon Famine Commemorative Committee addressed the members regarding the famine graveyard in Bullys Acre, outside Roscommon town:

- The Famine or An Gorta Mór was one of the biggest tragedies of Irish history and had long-term consequences for generations, with starvation, eviction, emigration disease and death experienced during this time.
- Between 1841 and 1851 the population of County Roscommon decreased by 80,000 (31%)
- The Roscommon Workhouse housed 1,300 people with a further 900 people were waiting to use the facility and many people died there.
- Hundreds of famine victims who dies in the workhouse were buried in unmarked and uncommemorated graves in Bully's Acre and many more were buried there in subsequent years up to 1939. Bully's Acre is now an open field with no perimeter fence to designate it as a sacred burial ground.
- In 1999, a monument was erected near the site of the former Workhouse at Teach de hÍde. It is worth noting that this is one of the few workhouses in the country that is unaltered and intact.
- He proposed the Council should consider:
 - The development of an area in the reception area of the workhouse and Bully's Acre as an important cultural memory and its inclusion in the Roscommon Heritage Trail.
 - The designation of Bully's Acre as a recorded graveyard on the maps of the draft Roscommon town local area plan to be zoned as a public and community infrastructure
 - The provision of public access to the site of the graveyard and the construction of an appropriate memorial to mark the burial site.
 - The reinstatement of the physical link between the workhouse and the graveyard in line with active travel measures.
- The development of the site under any statutory plans by Roscommon County Council would give fitting long overdue recognition both to the site and the victims of the famine buried there.

Members welcomed Fr. Beirne's informative presentation and discussed the proposals at length.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Waldron
and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Dineen

That Roscommon County Council appropriately commemorate the victims of An Gorta Mór in the following manner:

- provide public access to Bully's Acre burial ground
- erect a secure perimeter fence to secure the scared burial site
- zone the site as public and community infrastructure
- construct an appropriate memorial as commemoration to those buried there
- develop the workhouse reception area and an important cultural memory and
- the inclusion of Bully's Acre as a tourist asset on the Roscommon Heritage Trail.

In response to the proposal the Cathaoirleach stated that a motion on this matter had been discussed at a previous Council meeting and the decision of the Members was to refer the matter to the appropriate Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) to develop a policy in the first instance. This would involve the input of the heritage officer and funding of such developments would also have to be discussed and considered. He also recommended that Fr. Beirne's proposals be considered at the next SPC.

The members were supportive of the presentation and the proposals in general but agreed that the matter had been sent to the SPC to formulate a policy that would cover all such sites across the county, citing the fact that there are Bully's Acre sites in the vicinity of a number of towns. They recognised the need to record all such sites, including ownership and access.

There was also some support for the proposal that this particular site have a perimeter fence erected in the meantime.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr. Waldron

And SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

That a perimeter fence be erected around Bully's Acre in Roscommon as a matter of urgency.

The Chief Executive thanked Fr. Beirne for painting a very vivid picture of the famine and its catastrophic consequences. He acknowledged Bully's Acre was a significant site in Roscommon town but said every parish in the county had been affected by the famine and there were Bully's Acre's across the county. Any proposed works for this or other sites would require a budget but it is important the SPC was first allowed to develop a policy. The fencing off of the Bully Acre's site is not insurmountable but as the area is landlocked, it will require access by means of right of way and a budget for such works will have to be funded by the Roscommon Municipal District

Director of Services, Mr. Mark Keaveney stated there needs to be a county wide policy in respect of all burial grounds with safe access and appropriate funding available to progress projects.

Responding to the discussions, Fr. Beirne said people from all over county Roscommon were buried at the Bully's Acre site in Roscommon town and because the site is a Cemetery, there is a perceptive right of way. He appealed for the site to be fenced off as a matter of urgency with the focus on the victims of the famine, a commemoration should be a policy.

Following a short recess, the Cathaoirleach reminded members that agreement had been reached at the previous October plenary meeting to defer any decisions to the SPC meeting, pending the development of a policy document on all famine burial grounds. It was confirmed that the next scheduled meeting of the SPC will take place on 4th April and it will be placed on the agenda for that meeting.

Cllr. Waldron then agreed that he would await the outcome of the SPC meeting but as he was not a members of this particular SPC he would like to be in attendance. Cllr Leyden, as Chairperson of the SPC confirmed that he would be welcome to attend the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Waldron could attend and speak at the SPC meeting.

26.24 PRESENTATION ON NORTHERN AND WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Denis Kelly, Director of the North Western Regional Assembly (NWRA), accompanied by Mr. Brendan Mooney, Programme Executive and Mr. John Daly, Economist.

Addressing the members, Mr. Kelly said the focus of the NWRA's work was on creating better places to work and live in the region, fostering business and economic competitiveness and serving as a platform for collaboration between local authorities and stakeholders. He acknowledged the contribution of the Roscommon County Council Representatives on the NRWA, Cllr. Orla Leyden and the current chairperson, Cllr. John Naughten.

Recent works undertaken by the NWRA included a Climate Action Plans Workshop and Training under the SMART regions initiative to optimise funding opportunities for the region.

He said there were eight key elements to the work of the NWRA, which includes

- The creation of compact urban centres,
- Improved digital connectivity,
- Connected public transport,
- Improved infrastructure,
- The promotion and support of the region's third-level institutions,
- Property solutions to encourage people to live and work in the region
- The creation of 'clusters' for community to share common benefits of connectivity and investment.

Recent submissions from the NWRA included a paper following the recent 'Regions in Focus' seminar, the National Bioeconomic Action Plan and a submission to the Regional Housing Authority, 2024.

The NWRA is the first contact point for the delivery of EU funding for the region and had been in existence since 1999. A total of €19m had been invested by Ireland in INTERREG funds with a total of €69m drawn down for the country. Under the fund, Mr. Kelly said there are three immediate project priorities, namely –

- The creation of a 'smarter region' for commercial and business growth, through ongoing research and development.
- Funding for the Warmer Homes Scheme through the SEAI to reduce energy costs for vulnerable householders while reducing emissions.
- The Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme, THRIVE, whereby 100% funding totalling €31m would be provided to groups and projects to develop heritage friendly projects with grants ranging from €40,000 TO €200,000.

Speaking in the context of the region's economy, Mr. John Daly said economic imbalances continued to persist between the Eastern/Midland and West/North-West regions. This is evident in the census figures of 2022 which revealed 49.3% of the population lived in the Eastern/Midlands region, and 17.6% living in the West/North-West region.

He said the NWRA region was performing at 218th out of 234 EU regions. Of the 43 projects listed as industrial in the region, the figure based on relative performance of other regions, should be 53 projects. Regional disparities had grown but what is required is positive discrimination for the region, the reduction of infrastructural deficits and the creation of greater regional autonomy.

Going forward he said that the revision of the National Planning Framework commenced in June 2023 and is due to be completed at the end of 2024 and new funding should follow.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the timely presentation, claiming greater investment was needed for the region as it is obvious there is a disparity between East and West.

Cllr. Naughten thanked the representatives of the NWRA for attending the meeting and the content of the presentation. He reiterated the message that investment is required in infrastructure in the region to positively discriminate to bring the region closer to parity with other regions or will be left further behind. We need to be able to avail of all opportunities to invest. He complimented Cllr. Leyden for her contribution to the Assembly. He concluded that there are opportunities if the region can get investment and is confident the area can thrive but national support is needed.

Cllr. Leyden also welcomed the presentation and described her role on the Assembly as a great learning experience but we need to also learn from our European neighbours and the parallels with northern countries in particular.

She suggested that the Council consider what other counties are doing to support the work of the Assembly

such as the creation of a designated European Officer in each local authority as there is a disconnect between the work of the Council and the NWRA. She also welcomed the THRIVE scheme that is 100% funded and this is what the people want.

The Members also welcomed the presentation and discussed as follows:

- The region is curtailed by the National Development Plan
- How much money has Roscommon County Council received in the past 10 years from the Assembly funding schemes?
- It was suggested quarterly reports of NWRA activities be fed back to Members at plenary meetings.
- An appeal was made for the reduction in delay times for applications availing of the Warmer Homes Scheme - the two year delay should be fast-tracked to 6 months.
- It was suggested the THRIVE initiative be rolled out to include smaller towns and villages.

The Chief Executive welcomed and acknowledged the contribution and ongoing work of the NWRA. He said it was critical the development of the N61 between Athlone and Sligo was part of the NWRA Economic Plan for the area, to encourage the designation of the N61 as a national primary route. He also encouraged the allocation of 100% grants as this would reduce the pressure on local authorities to seek borrowings to leverage funding. The county needs more 100% funded initiatives as it cannot afford more 90% funded schemes.

Responding to the issues raised, Mr. Brendan Mooney said Roscommon was a big beneficiary of EU funding including LEO (Local Enterprise Office) funding which supported SME training. He said the new THRIVE funding initiative was initially confined to towns and urban centres, and expansion of the scheme to rural areas would require agreement from the EU Commission and the Department of Rural Affairs. He confirmed in respect of the THRIVE initiative, Strand One is for projects that would be 100% funded while Strand Two was a competitive process to access a funding stream of €2.7m. Staff costs are included in the funding. Mr. Mooney confirmed he and representatives of the NWRA met with the Taoiseach in December to outline their objectives. He also confirmed he and his colleagues are advocates for the development and upgrading of the N61 route.

27.24 RAISING OF A LOAN FOR GRANTING OF HOUSE PURCHASE LOANS UNDER THE LAHL SCHEME, IN THE SUM OF €2M IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 106 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 AS AMENDED

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Dineen
SECONDED by Cllr. Crosby

It was **AGREED** to adopt the terms of the raising of a loan for the granting of Home Purchase Loans under the LAHL scheme, in the sum of €2,000,000 in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.

28.24 SCHEDULE OF UNCOLLECTED RATES FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

Section 26(1) of the Local Government (Financial Procedures and Audit) Regulations:

Head of Finance, Mr. Sean Mullarkey presented a report to the members on the level of rate arrears as of December 31st 2023.

Arrears of rates amounted to €1.46m, a decrease of €213.911 on the figure reported for 2022. The total rate demand for 2023 was €12.4m with an amount of €11.2m collected.

Support from the Department in the sum of €337,421 in respect of commercial rates income following the conclusion of valuation appeals by Global utilities was notified in 2022 and paid until 2023.

Adjustment for vacant premises, business closures, exemptions, uncollectable amounts and liquidated companies equated to €1.45m in 2023. The collection percentage for 2023 was 88%

The report was noted by the Members.

29.24 APPOINTMENT TO LOCAL COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly

SECONDED by Cllr. Callaghan

It was **AGREED** to appoint the nominee from the IFA Farming Pillar, Mr. Pat Leonard to the Local Community and Development Committee (LCDC) following the resignation of Mr. Jim O'Connor.

30.24 CORRESPONDENCE

Acknowledgments to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- **16th February, 2024** Acknowledgement of correspondence from Taoiseach, Mr. Leo Varadkar TD, regarding setting up a Single Authority regarding levels on the river Shannon

Replies to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- **12th February 2024** - Reply from Minister for Mr. Kieran O'Donnell, Minister of State for Local Government and Planning in response to Notice of Motion regarding the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.
- **20th February 2024** - Reply from Mr. Charlie Monologue T.D, Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in response to Notice of Motion regarding the Shannon Callow Flood Scheme

Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

23rd January, 2024 –Motion, Carlow County Council

"That Carlow County Council affirms the great work done by sports clubs throughout the country and acknowledges the lack of funding opportunities for sports clubs in non-clár areas in terms of bringing their carparks up to a good standard in terms of drainage, surfacing and Health and Safety compliance. We call on central government to provide such funding opportunities by either expansion of current schemes such as LIS or a new funding scheme."

30rd January, 2024 –Motion, Wexford County Council

"That Wexford County Council notes that both the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste have suggested that Israel is committing war crimes in Gaza.

30rd January, 2024 –Resolution, Sligo County Council

"That Sligo County Council calls on the Government to take a serious stance and introduce effective laws to prosecute those who wilfully break the law on bicycles, electric bicycles and electric scooters."

Cllr. Byrne urged colleagues to support the aforementioned notice of motion from Sligo County Council seeking enforcement of road traffic law violations caused by the improper use of E-Scooters. She said the matter had been raised at a previous meeting of the Joint Policing Committee (JPC).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to call on the Government to take a serious stance and introduce effective laws to prosecute those who wilfully break the law on bicycles, electric bicycles and electric scooters.

The Cathaoirleach said there was a lack of legislation governing the use of E-Scooters which he said, were being driven on footpaths, causing great risk. He said there was no requirement for insurance in respect of

their use and appealed for legislation to the introduced governing their use.

31.24 NOTICE OF MOTION

32.24 03.24 - INCENTIVE FOR HOUSE BUILDING IN COUNTY ROSCOMMON - CLLR. CROSBY

“That Roscommon County Council call on the Minister’s for Finance and Housing to introduce an incentive for housebuilding in Co. Roscommon like the Section 23 introduced in 2002 which had a huge beneficial impact when thousands of new homes were built in this County as a result of the incentive. Recent figures by the CSO have shown that new housing start in Co Roscommon are the lowest in the entire Country only one residential unit started for every 650 people living in this County compared to one start-up for every 80 people living in other areas, which is over 8 times greater.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:
This motion requires a resolution of the Council.

Cllr. Crosby, speaking on his motion, said that according to latest CSO figures, Roscommon had the lowest number of houses being built in the country and there are currently no more than 16 properties available to let in the county. He recalled the introduction of the Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme (Section 23) which encouraged housing building, and was a major success at the time. He said a similar scheme is now required to rejuvenate housing building, particularly for smaller towns and villages in the county and he is now calling on the Housing Minister Darragh O’Brien to introduce a similar scheme.

However members were guarded in their support of Cllr. Crosby’s proposals, with a number stating that the provision of a Section 23 like measure was not the answer. However members did agree some incentives or targeted measures were needed to be put in place to reignite the construction sector in the county. They suggested that a targeted investment scheme was preferable to a Section 23 type scheme.

Responding, Cllr. Crosby said Section 23 did a lot for the county in terms of development and could not be blamed for the subsequent ‘property crash’. He agreed to amend his motion to specify targeted incentives.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council call on the Ministers for Finance and Housing to introduce a targeted incentive for housebuilding in Co. Roscommon like the Section 23 introduced in 2002 which had a huge beneficial impact when thousands of new homes were built in this County as a result of the incentive. Recent figures by the CSO have shown that new housing start in Co Roscommon are the lowest in the entire Country only one residential unit started for every 650 people living in this County compared to one start-up for every 80 people living in other areas, which is over 8 times greater.

33.24 04.24 - THRIVE FUNDING APPLICATION- CLLR. LEYDEN

“That Roscommon County Council applies for THRIVE funding, Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme to bring Edenville House / Roscommon Military Barracks, Roscommon Town, a landmark heritage building (built c.1702) back into public use for the benefit of the community. THRIVE is 100% funded by the Government of Ireland and co-funded by the European Union. “

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

THRIVE (Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme) will support local authorities and their citizens to re-imagine town centres and to transform publicly owned vacant or derelict heritage buildings within those town centres through renovation, renewal, and adaptive reuse. THRIVE Strand 1 provides for the

preparation of an Integrated Urban Strategy and Project Pipeline Development. THRIVE Strand 2 provides for the Renovation and Adaptive Reuse of Vacant or Derelict Heritage Buildings based on the outcomes from Strand 1.

Roscommon County Council will apply for Strand 1 Integrated Urban Strategies and Project Pipeline Development funding.

Speaking on her motion, Cllr. Leyden said with €200,000 being allocated to each local authority through the NWRA, it was now appropriate to seek funding under the THRIVE Scheme for Edenville House as it is clear that the Council will be applying funding under Strand 1 of the scheme.

She said the house was acquired by the Roscommon County Council in 1990 and it is her wish that it be restored and brought back in use. A Conservation Order for the House was sought in 2004 with conservation works undertaken between 2008 and 2010. A Feasibility Study was carried out on the house as a potential flagship heritage project for the town and county. The Roscommon Town Team is now supporting and working on this project and it can be developed for the community and the project is citizen led. As a result of this recent funding announcement and with the support of the local Town Team, circumstances are aligning to enable redevelopment work to be funded and carried out. She urged the Council to propose this building for Strand 1 funding under the scheme.

Members supported the motion on the basis that 100% funding is available for such projects. It was noted that the funding stream is available to key towns and regional growth areas such as Roscommon Town and Monksland and the proposal will have to go through a defined process and consider all options. The late John Kerrigan, who had recently passed away, was remembered as a champion of the building being restored and used by the public.

Director of Services, Mr. Mark Keaveney acknowledged the importance and significance of the THRIVE Scheme. He said it was important an application is made under Strand 1 of the fund with the intention of seeking further funding under Strand 2. He cautioned that works could only take place with an integrated plan and that applications for funding were subject to a competitive process and there is no guarantee of securing sufficient funding and the use of the building will be a key factor in funding being sought and approved.

Responding, Cllr. Leyden said she hoped a meeting would soon take place between the Chief Executive, the Town Regeneration Officer, the Director of Services for Economic Development and the local Town Team. She said areas of interest regarding the use of the building had been identified to enable the resource cater for the whole of the community with a regional focus to attract visitors to the area.

34.24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

- The Chief Executive informed the Members that Caitlín Conneely will be the Returning Officer for the Local Elections in June 2024.
- The Chief Executive congratulated Castlerea Rose Festival and the Roscommon water Source Protection project on their success in winning overall awards at the recent LAMA Awards in Dublin.

35.24 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES AND TRAINING

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly

SECONDED by Cllr. Callaghan

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of training and conferences for attendance as circulated.

36.24 TRIBUTES TO THE LATE MR. JOHN CONNOR (1944 - 2024)

Cllr. Liam Callaghan, party colleague and friend of the late John Connor led tributes to the former T.D., Senator and Councillor. He also paid tribute to the late John Bruton, former Taoiseach, Minister for Finance and EU Ambassador to Washington. He said the late Mr. Bruton paid a major role in the formation of the Western Development Commission (WDC) as well as the negotiations that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

The late John Connor first gained public attention as a member of the Roscommon team that won the Macra na Feirme All-Ireland Cross Country Quiz in the early 1970's.

Mr. Connor began his working life as a Rate Collector and was also engaged in the management of local Group Water Schemes. First elected to Dáil Éireann in 1981, Mr. Connor contested as many as seven Dáil elections. He said among his achievements was the drainage of Breegogue River near Boyle. He described him as a man who could stand on any platform and said he served Roscommon with great distinction.

On behalf of the Fianna Fail members, Cllr. John Cummins described the late John Connor as a giant in political circles, one of many large figures in local politics at that time. He said the late John Connor always had the best interests of the county at heart.

Cllr. Cummins also sympathised with the Bruton family on the death of John Bruton.

Cllr. Crosby described the late John Connor as a personal friend for over 35 years and a committed politician. He said any political alliance or framework once devised by John Connor, could be trusted to endure.

Cllr. Naughten supported the sentiments already expressed in paying tribute to the late Mr. Connor and also to the late John Bruton who appointed his late father to the Senate. He said Mr. Connor loved robust debate in the chamber and was a strong advocate for the farming community and recalled the legendary rivalries on the canvas and great memories of the count the Hyde – a great time when people were more engaged in politics.

Cllr. Fallon wished to be associated with all of the commentary on the late John Connor who he described as a renowned orator with great skills and knowledge – a very honourable man who understood politics and was respected on all sides of the house. He also remembered the late John Bruton.

Cllr. Shanagher also paid tribute to the late John Connor and John Bruton as did Cllr. Dineen who said Mr. Connor left a big legacy in Roscommon.

The Cathaoirleach described John Connor as a well-informed politician and also extended his sympathies to the family of the late John Bruton.

37.24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - IFA PROTEST LETTER

The Cathaoirleach referred to the IFA Farmers protest 'enough is enough' campaign that took place earlier at Áras an Chontae before the Plenary meeting. A letter was circulated earlier to the members outlining the concerns of farmers and the increase in regulation at local, national and EU level.

The Members were requested to highlight the issues raised and seek a fundamental reset of how farm policy is devised and implemented both at the EU and in Ireland.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
SECONDED by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council supports the 'enough is enough' campaign. The Council recognises the significant contribution that farming, and the Agri-sector makes to the Irish and local economy. The Council acknowledges the income challenge on Irish farmers arising from the significant increases in the cost of doing business, regulatory costs and cuts in Basic Income support for farmers.

The Council calls on the Government to introduce no further regulations on farmers or any measures that may increase costs on farms without full negotiation and agreement with the Irish Farmers Association (IFA). The Council calls on the European Union and the Irish Government to provide additional stand-alone funding, separate to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to support farmers to undertake climate and biodiversity measures"

Cllr. Naughten confirmed that members met with the local farmers earlier. Financial supports has to be in the form of additional payments and not money transferring between farmers. Farmers accept there has to be change but need supports.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 25th March, 2024.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned