

# Vótáil **1** cllr Paul LAWLESS

## Supporting our farmers

Without farmers, there is no food. Ireland has the best quality produce in the world. Paul is committed to protecting the agricultural sector.

# AONTÚ

### Paul will:

- Advocate for fair pricing and protect the nitrates derogation.
- Oppose policies that undermine family farms.
- Defend against harmful EU regulations and trade deals that threaten Irish farmers such as the Mercosur deal that would force Irish producers to compete with lower standard imports, and the EU Nature Restoration deal that would mean an area the size of County Cork being re-wetted and unavailable for farming.



## Business in Mayo: Protecting our SMEs

Almost 600 restaurants have closed since the Government hiked VAT rates to 13.5%. Small businesses in Mayo are closing at alarming rates due to rising costs. We must protect small businesses before it is too late. Paul will fight to reduce VAT to 9% for small businesses. As a councillor, Paul is already working to reduce business rates.

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At the count centre in Castlebar following the Family & Care referendums in March 2024.

Paul Lawless stood alone as the only politician in Mayo to think outside the political groupthink box.

### MAYO RESULTS

Family Referendum:  
NO 75.5%

Care Referendum:  
NO 78.5%



## MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT!

Independent pollsters predict that Cllr. Paul Lawless is in a strong position to secure a Dáil seat for Mayo. Help make this a reality. Mayo has waited too long for proper representation.

Paul is ready to be your strong voice in Leinster House, standing up for our region's needs and working toward a better future for all.

Aontú supports the unity of the Irish people, the human right to life of everyone, born and unborn, and economic justice so that all families can confidently raise their children to their full potential.

For assistance on local issues, contact Paul: Tel 086 086 5117 Email paullawlesspc@gmail.com

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## Vote Paul Lawless: A New Energetic Voice for Mayo

Paul Lawless was elected to Mayo County Council in June. On behalf of the people of Mayo he has since stood firmly against unnecessary and wasteful expenditure by Government.

A dedicated campaigner, he has fought for better conditions for firefighters, a stronger Garda force and justice for the farming and fishing communities. Paul led the Mayo University Hospital campaign and founded the Mayo Cataract Bus in 2019, helping hundreds regain their sight and independence.

Paul also ran in the 2020 general election, securing 3,375 votes. Paul holds a Master's in Business Administration (M.B.A) and a Bachelor's in Physical Education and Mathematics (B.Ed.)



# AONTÚ Mayo

## Critical infrastructure: Mayo deserves more

Mayo deserves representatives who prioritise our county. Dáil representation has long been dominated by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, offering only breadcrumbs to Mayo.

Mayo's infrastructure ranks amongst the least developed in Europe. Since 2016, the northern and western regions have received less than 10% of total infrastructure investment and under 6% in respect of large-scale projects (over €20 million). This lack of investment in the regions has contributed to the emergence of a city-state in Dublin, which is causing acute difficulties there.

We have missed out on essential infrastructure, including the Western Rail Corridor, a motorway network, safe roads, sports facilities, active travel initiatives, and the advancement of a strategic development zone at Knock Airport.

Mayo has been taken for granted as Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael prioritise other regions. It is time to demand real investment in Mayo.

No major Irish airport has a rail connection. Let's make Knock Airport the first. It would do wonders for our region.



Aontú Leader  
Peadar Tóibín TD

## Addressing crime in Mayo

Gardaí in Mayo are struggling to address rising crime rates due to declining numbers. The Castlebar Garda station still lacks a Chief Superintendent and a Superintendent, while Claremorris is the only full-time Garda station from Cong to Charlestown, leaving the region exposed.

**Paul will:** • Ensure appropriate numbers of senior Gardaí are operating in Mayo. • Increase the number of Gardaí and full-time Garda stations in Mayo (Mayo received just one recruit in 2023). • Improve Garda working conditions and retain our valuable officers. • Introduce tougher sentencing for burglaries and anti-social behaviour.



## Proactive immigration reform: Addressing Ireland's challenges

Ireland is experiencing the highest per capita rate of asylum-seeking in the EU despite being an island nation on the periphery of Europe. We are expected to cope with 25,000 to 30,000 asylum and international protection applicants each year. Amidst a housing and homelessness crisis, Ireland cannot sustain these numbers. We must proactively address the issue of migration.

**Aontú will:**

- Address pull-factors by aligning benefits with those of other European countries.
- Establish an Irish Border Agency to manage immigration effectively.
- Enforce deportation orders (Aontú uncovered that 85% of deportations orders have not been enforced).
- Deny entry to individuals with criminal records
- End the practice of bypassing planning processes for IPAS centres. All citizens should be treated fairly under the law, and wealthy accommodation providers should not be exempt from planning regulations.

## Healthcare in Mayo: A system that works

Bed capacity in Mayo has effectively remained static over the past 20 years despite a rising and ageing population and an exponential increase in health spending. The Emergency Department at Mayo University Hospital is regularly at breaking point with nurses and doctors crying out for help. The fact that elderly patients are being left on trolleys and chairs for days is a disgrace.

**Aontú will:**

- Expand the Emergency Department at Mayo University Hospital.
- Establish an activity-based funding model to reward and boost productivity, ensuring funding reaches front-line services rather than layers of middle management in the HSE.
- Fight to reduce waiting lists at Mayo University Hospital while also expanding the cross-border initiative to ensure no one faces excessive delays for basic healthcare.
- Protect regional GP services from closure.
- Develop a five-year workforce plan to ensure sustainable healthcare services and to protect front-line workers.
- Advocate for a dedicated mental health service with a multi-year budget.



## Making home-ownership possible: A housing strategy for Mayo:

The current Government's housing policies are failing. The lack of affordable housing is creating a social catastrophe for our young people. We need a radical change in policy to make homeownership a reality in Mayo again.

**Aontú will:**

- Zone more land. We will reverse the Government's misguided policy of de-zoning.
- Reduce VAT on building products. €500,000 to build a family home is unsustainable.
- Invest in housing infrastructure. Water and wastewater infrastructure constraints are hindering housing delivery in Mayo.
- End tax advantages for vulture funds & Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS). 42% of all new home sales in 2023 were block purchases.
- Streamline the planning process. Families should not have to jump through hoops to build.
- Build more social and private housing.

## Rural drivers: Ending the war

The government hiked fuel taxes to push people toward public transport that simply does not exist in Mayo. Ireland has some of the highest fuel prices in Europe, with circa 55% of petrol & diesel costs per litre made up of taxes (excise duty, carbon tax, VAT, and the NORA levy). The tax burden will only increase with the planned carbon tax hike in Autumn 2024. Rural residents, who rely heavily on their vehicles and have no viable alternatives, are being unfairly targeted. It is time to end the war on rural drivers.

## Garda vetting: Streamlining the process

As a volunteer, Paul understands how overly bureaucratic the Garda vetting process is and how it is effectively discouraging volunteerism. Paul will work to streamline the system so that a single vetting clearance can serve multiple organisations.

## From cataract bus to priority health bus: Paul is delivering for Mayo

**MAYO CATARACT BUS** Five years ago, Paul launched the 'Cataract Bus,' a lifeline for Mayo patients, providing fast, life-changing cataract surgeries to

hundreds of elderly and vulnerable residents. Instead of waiting years in near blindness, patients received treatment within weeks, restoring their independence.

The government's cruel decision to half the cataract reimbursements rate threatens this vital service for those who cannot afford it - a shameful move in the midst of our healthcare waiting-list crisis. Paul will continue to fight for cataract patients in Mayo.

**PRIORITY HEALTH BUS: HELPING MAYO'S PATIENTS** Building on the success of the Cataract Bus, Paul also set up and operates the Priority Health Bus, helping Mayo residents access a range of essential treatments. These include hip and knee replacements, foot procedures, muscle repairs, breast reductions, hysterectomies, carpal tunnel surgeries and more.

If you or someone you know is on a waiting list, please contact Paul for more information or to book a place on the next bus.

## Childcare costs: like a second mortgage. Parents deserve better

Aontú is a pro-family party. Childcare costs are crippling families with many paying over €1,200 per month. The core funding model is not working for providers or families.

**Paul will work to:**

- Increase funding and capitation payments for childcare.
- Ensure fair pay for early childcare staff to address shortages.
- Reduce the administrative burden on providers.
- Introduce a tax credit for parents of preschool children.
- Implement a "Baby Boost" payment to support parents in the early months of a child's life.



Paul in Belfast with Mayo Cataract group

## Government spending: Aontú demands accountability

The government's record on overspending is staggering:

- €336,000 for a bike shed.
- €1.4M on a security hut.
- €2M on a Dáil printer.
- €300M on Dublin Metro without breaking ground.
- €2.2B on the National Children's Hospital with no children treated.
- €22M wasted on faulty ventilators costing €50,000/year to store.

This blatant disrespect for taxpayers' money will continue unless we demand accountability.

## Do you trust the current government to wisely spend the €14 billion Apple tax money?

We must ensure it is spent effectively. Paul will make sure taxpayers' money delivers value. In Mayo County Council, Paul has already pushed for a radical review of international junkets and challenged a potential €700,000 spend on the council chamber.

## Revitalising our towns: Addressing dereliction and sparking economic growth

Mayo has the second-highest rate of dereliction in Ireland. The commercial vacancy rate in Mayo is 17.3% (GeoDirectory survey, 2024). Many central buildings in our towns have been abandoned for decades.

**Aontú will:**

- Implement tax incentives for new businesses that occupy previously derelict properties in town centres.
- Provide tax incentives on the sale of derelict buildings.
- Establish a refurbishment grant for commercial buildings.