**10 June 2020**

**RE: GALWAY SOLICITORS BAR ASSOCIATION AND BAR OF THE WESTERN CIRCUIT**

**Galway Settlement Sessions – July 2020**

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Dear Colleagues,

As you aware, the Galway High Court sessions were cancelled last month and the sessions scheduled to commence on 29th June 2020 will not proceed. At this stage it is not certain that the October High Sessions will take place or indeed how many cases could be listed in circumstances where public health and social distancing guidelines will have to be adhered to.

There are 282 cases in the Galway High Court list published earlier this week. In an effort to progress matters and to avoid a significant backlog developing, the Galway Solicitors Bar Association and members of the Western Bar are proposing that in lieu of the High Court sessions a structured week of settlement meeting be arranged for the week beginning the 20th July 2020.

Obviously these meetings cannot take place in Galway Court House. It is intended that a neutral spacious venue is secured (possibly a hotel premises) which can be sanitised and where social distancing can be observed. The meetings will need to be timetabled as the number of people present at any time in the area will have to be carefully controlled.

In order for this to be successful a certain amount of planning will be required. We suggest that solicitors now communicate with each other and identify those cases where a meeting can take place. The settlement meetings don’t necessarily need to be confined to the cases already set down in the Galway High Court list but it is suggested that those cases will be given priority.

When agreement has been reached between the parties that a meeting should take place the parties will be asked to email Ms Colleen Brownlee BL at  colleenbrownleebl@gmail.com with the following information:

1. the title of the case
2. the identity of the solicitors for all parties in the matter
3. the identity of Counsel retained for all parties

This information will need to provided to Ms. Colleen Brownlee B.L. no later than Friday the 26th June 2020. A timetable for the week will then be prepared with each matter being assigned a date and time slot. Absolutely no meetings will be facilitated outside of those timetabled.

We are exploring the possibility of having a High Court Judge attend in Galway at the end of the settlement week or, in the alternative, an online remote session with a High Court Judge for the purposes of making Orders and ruling cases, including infant cases, that have been settled during the settlement sessions.

The success of this initiative will be contingent upon a collaborative approach being take by all practitioners and we would ask that colleagues engage with each other as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

John Martin

Henry O. Bourke S.C.