**22nd September 2020**

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

**Galway Settlement Sessions – October 2020**

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Dear Colleagues,

The Galway High Court sessions for the upcoming Michaelmas Term in October will not proceed at Galway Courthouse.

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 meetings be arranged for the week beginning the 19th October 2020 at the Ardilaun Hotel, Taylor’s Hill, Galway.

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. The settlement meetings will take place in a similar fashion to those which already took place at the Ardilaun Hotel, in July of this year.

In order for this to be successful a certain amount of planning will be required. We suggest that all cases which are ready for settlement should be considered and it is equally incumbent on Plaintiff Solicitors to invite settlement negotiations as it is on Defendant Solicitors.

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 Monday, the 12th October 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 deal with online remote rulings following the conclusion of the settlement meetings.

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

The settlement meetings are being arranged on the basis that the status quo remains as regards the government’s current guidelines in relation to public health and social distancing. Should any of the foregoing change to the extent that it will impact on the planned settlement meetings for October, members will be notified immediately.

Kind regards,

John Martin

Henry O. Bourke S.C.