

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 27TH
OF NOVEMBER 2023 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE**

PRESENT:	Councillor	Paschal McEvoy	In The Chair
	Councillors	Willie Aird	Paddy Bracken
		John Joe Fennelly	Marie Tuohy
		James Kelly	Caroline Dwane Stanley
		John King	Aidan Mullins
		Catherine Fitzgerald	Seamus McDonald
		P.J. Kelly	Ollie Clooney
		Padraig Fleming	Aisling Moran
		Conor Bergin	Ben Brennan
		Barry Walsh	Thomasina Connell

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messrs John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services, Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services, Ms. Carmel McNicholl, A/Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, Administrative Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

149. VOTES OF SYMPATHIES

The following Votes of Sympathies were agreed:

- (i) The Cross Family, Newtown, Rathangan, Co. Kildare on the recent death of Mr. Joseph Cross, father of Laois County Council Water Services Fitter, Mr. Joe Cross
- (ii) The O' Neill Family, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny on the recent death of Mr. Michael O' Neill, nephew of Councillor Ben Brennan
- (iii) The Flavin family, Killeen East, Kildangan, Co. Kildare on the recent death of Ms. Shannon Rose Flavin, daughter of Ms. Trish Flavin, Laois County Council My-Pay Department
- (iv) The Keogh Family, Castlegate, Portarlinton, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Brian Keogh, husband of Ms. Mary Keogh, Portarlinton Enterprise Centre Manager
- (v) The Bowe Family, Capponellan House, Durrow, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Donal Bowe
- (vi) The Dunphy Family, The Mill, Upper Oldtown, Rathdowney, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Margaret Dunphy
- (vii) The Bergin Family, Gurteen, Ballacolla, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Mary Bergin
- (viii) The Delaney family, 31 Kirwan Park, Mountmellick, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Mary Bridget Delaney
- (ix) The Conroy Family, Cooltoran, Portlaoise, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Michael Conroy
- (x) The Kavanagh Family, Lehaunstown, Cabinteely, Dublin on the recent death of Mr. Niall Kavanagh, son of the late former Member of Laois County

- Council, Mr. Larry Kavanagh and brother of former Member of Laois County Council, Mr. Laurence Kavanagh
- (xi) The Scully Family, Ballyfin Road, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Tom Scully.

150. MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER MEETING HELD ON THE 23RD OF OCTOBER 2023

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously agreed the minutes of the October meeting held on the 23rd of October 2023.

151. MINUTES OF THE STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING HELD ON THE 13TH OF NOVEMBER 2023

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed the minutes of the Statutory Budget meeting held on the 13th of November 2023

152. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH OF OCTOBER 2023

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously agreed the report on CPG meeting held on the 16th of October 2023.

153. REPORT ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN OCTOBER 2023

On the proposition of Councillor Ollie Clooney seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed the reports on Municipal District Meetings held in October 2023.

154. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 IN RESPECT OF FREEHOLD COMPRISING 0.0496 HA AT 17. ST. JOHN'S SQUARE, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.0496 ha at 17 St. John's Square, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Borris Little for a consideration of €300.00.

155. CONSIDERATION OF CIVIC RECEPTION TO ABBEYLEIX TIDY TOWNS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CORPORATE POLICY GROUP ON THE 22ND OF NOVEMBER 2023

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh, the Members unanimously agreed to accord a Civic Reception to Abbeyleix Tidy Towns as recommended by the Corporate Group on the 22nd of November 2023 in recognition of their recent success of being crowned Ireland's Tidiest Town in the National Tidy Towns Competition 2023.

156. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2023

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Monthly Management report for October 2023. The Director of Services responded to the various queries raised by the Members.

157. TRAINING AND CONFERENCES

The Members were circulated with a copy of the conferences and training for ratification and same was agreed on the proposition of Councillor Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

158. CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was circulated which was received since the last meeting:-

- (i) Correspondence from the Board of Laois Leisure and the Chairperson of Laois Offaly Families for Autism in relation to Notice of Motion No: 49/2023 regarding allocated time for the LOFFA group in the Portlaoise Swimming Pool
- (ii) Correspondence dated the 2nd of November 2023 from Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, T.D., Minister of State for Financial Services, Credit Unions and Insurance in relation to Notice of Motion No: 46/2023
- (iii) Correspondence from Clare County Council dated the 14th of November 2023 in relation to a resolution passed with regard to the introduction of Primary Medical Certificates (PMCs) to all individuals with physical disabilities

159. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 51/2023

Councillor Conor Bergin proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications & Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D to extend the Local Hackney Pilot scheme to rural areas across County Laois as a matter of priority”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to Minister Eamon Ryan in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 52/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council prepare a report on the implications and plans for dealing with trees affected by Ash dieback disease in public areas”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Ash Dieback in public (urban) areas is not a significant issue in County Laois, arising from the fact that the common Ash Tree has never been grown in urban areas. The Ash Tree is considered a more rural-type tree. If, however, an issue is identified in public parks or a housing estate etc., it

will be dealt with appropriately and the Council's Landscape Architect is available to advise and support any specific, identified, areas of concern regarding Ash Dieback.

Notice of Motion No: 53/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council consider the significant social and economic value of Social Enterprises for communities across County Laois and that Social Enterprises have dedicated support and assistance when required from a designated senior Council Official”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Social Enterprises are being increasingly recognised as an effective means for delivering community, social and economic development through innovative, integrated, and cooperative methods and operations. They are of great importance to Laois and to local communities as they typically bring about economic benefits such as job creation (often for those who are marginalised); community benefits such as social inclusion or education; and policy benefits such as service delivery or active citizenship. For anyone interested in starting a social enterprise, supports are available from many different organisations such as Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Offices, Local Development Companies / Partnerships etc. The Local Enterprise Office will continue to advise/support anyone looking at setting up a social enterprise in the County. In addition the Community Development Department will continue to offer support through its various grant schemes and through its administrative support to the LCDC which has overseen the LEADER programme in Laois. A number of Social Enterprises have been supported through the Town and Village Renewal programmes ranging, for example, from Ballinakill Swimming Pool to Bloom HQ and Killeshin Community Centre.

Notice of Motion No: 54/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council recognise the importance of core funding to support the LGBT community in County Laois and also to write to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland, Mr. Roderic O’ Gorman, T.D., seeking funding supports for services specific to each County in Ireland”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to Minister Roderic O’ Gorman in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 55/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council give an update on the provision of the Laois Domestic Abuse refuge”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Padraig Fleming. The Members were advised that Laois County Council continues to work with Laois Domestic Abuse Service in relation to the provision of a new site for the service provision and associated

accommodation. Laois County Council have a suitable site acquired however to advance this project we are currently in discussion with both LDAS and the Dept of Housing in relation to the funding and methodology for project management of the build and operation. We will brief the elected members once we have finality on this issue.

Notice of Motion No: 56/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council call on the Minister of Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D. to extend the Mammogram Screening Programme to the Over-70’s”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to Minister Stephen Donnelly in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 57/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications & Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D to urgently enact long overdue legislation to regulate and improve the safer use of electric scooters”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to Minister Eamon Ryan in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 58/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council highlight the online portal available to the public to report street lighting faults, in the interest of road safety, pedestrian safety along with personal, home and business security benefits especially in the winter months”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will publicise through our website and social media platforms the existence of a portal to report public lighting faults.

Notice of Motion No: 59/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice

“That Laois County Council please clarify the announcement that Mr. Darragh O’ Brien, T.D. Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage recently made in relation to the grants that are now available for septic tanks and when will the application process commence”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that the recent Ministerial announcement provided that, effective from the 1st January 2024, the maximum grant will increase to €12,000 (from €5000) and the requirement that the grant only apply to pre-January 2013-registered septic tanks is

removed. There are other, current, eligibility criteria that limit the number of septic tanks to which the grant applies. The Minister’s announcement is silent in respect of these eligibility criteria. A Circular is to be provided by the Department, prior to 1st January 2024, to advise all eligibility criteria for the grant from that date forward.

Notice of Motion No: 60/2023

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council call on the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications & Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan T.D to put into law a new set back distance from residential dwellings. This is to ensure that quarries will not get planning permission within a certain distance of homes as is the case in other European Countries”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy. The Members were advised that a letter would issue to Minister Eamon Ryan in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 61/2023

Councillor P. J. Kelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council contact the Minister for the Environment, Climate Communications and Transport Mr. Eamonn Ryan. T.D. with a view to extending the burning of bushes deadline until January 31st. 2024. The wet weather has not been suitable to carry out this task on farmlands”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a letter would issue to Minister Eamon Ryan in this regard.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: _____
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
CORPORATE AFFAIRS

