

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 19th OF APRIL IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

PRESENT: Mr. Barry Walsh, Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C.
Ms. Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.
Mr. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.
Ms. Marie Tuohy, M.C.C.
Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services
Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 15TH OF MARCH 2023

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the minutes of the Portlaoise Municipal District meeting held on the 15th of March 2023 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 15TH OF MARCH 2023

Councillor Barry Walsh, Cathaoirleach and the Members referred to the recent announcement in relation to the Koble School and were delighted to hear that there was a satisfactory outcome in the matter.

3. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously expressed a vote of sympathy to the Brown family, Heathfields, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. David Brown, son of Portlaoise Station Officer, Mr. James Brown. The Director of Services on behalf of the management and staff of the Portlaoise Municipal District associated himself with the Vote of Sympathy.

4. PRESENTATION BY MR. DAVID CLARKE, INTEGRATED SERVICE OPERATIONS – EAST/NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE ON NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE FOR PORTLAOISE

Mr. David Clarke, Integrated Service Operations – East/National Ambulance Service delivered a presentation on the National Ambulance service on the National Ambulance Service for Portlaoise. Mr. Clarke was accompanied by his colleagues Mr. Noel Lynch, Operational Resource Manager for Portlaoise & Mr. Pat Smyth, Assistance Chief Officer for the Midlands.

The presentation included the following update:

- Current Situation Pre-Hospital Care
- Demand v Capacity
- The Future Direction of the National Ambulance Service
- The National Ambulance Service Infrastructure Development Plan
- Rosters for Portlaoise Emergency and Rapid Response Vehicles for Tullamore

Mr. Clarke responded to the various queries raised by the Members.

5. NAMING OF ROUNDABOUTS ON THE WESTERN ORBITAL ROUTE

The Members were given details of the above. It was noted that the Heritage and Street Art Sub-Group of the Town Team made a recommendation regarding the naming of the seven roundabouts on the Western Orbital Route (Fr. Brown Avenue to Fairgreen) as follows:-

- Lucy Franks – Fairgreen (N80)
- Helen M Roe – Fairgreen (Western Orbital)
- Anne Jellicoe – Clonrooske
- William Dargan – Ballyfin Road
- Bartholomew Mosse – Harpur’s Lane
- Patrick ‘Honest Patt’ Lalor – Mountrath Road (Rockdale)
- Arthur Jacob – Old Knockmay Road/Clonminam

The proposed naming was also approved by Portlaoise Town Team and the Laois County Council Naming and Memorials Committee at their meeting dated the 11th of April 2023. The Members of the Portlaoise Municipal District approved the naming of the above roundabouts on the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy.

6. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 31/2023

Councillor Wille Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to remove the overhanging hedge on their property on Green Mill Lane at the junction with the Ridge Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has recently agreed terms whereby the Council will acquire a property at the junction of Ridge Road and Greenmill Lane. Conveyancing is ongoing regarding the transaction. Once concluded, safety - related works will be arranged.

Councillor Willie Aird asked that Laois County Council consider altering the existing boundary of the property in order to facilitate a walkway from Ridge Road to Greenmill Lane.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested an update on the implementation of actions arising from the safety audit carried out previously on Green Mill Lane and to be delivered as part of the Triogue Way.

Notice of Motion No: 32/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council to install a speed radar sign between the cross at Horan's and Ross, Ballyfin"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make myself available to meet Councillor Aird on site to identify a suitable location for an 80 kph speed radar sign in the vicinity of Horan's Cross and Ross, Ballyfin.

Notice of Motion No: 33/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County council engage with the ESB to resolve the serious issue of faulty lighting on the Dublin Road adjacent to the church"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that ESB have been notified by Laois County Council of an electricity supply fault on the supply side and efforts are being made to have the repairs required expedited.

Councillor Aird indicated that this is a very serious situation. Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley also advised the meeting that a similar situation exists at Jessop Street and needs to be examined. It was agreed to get an update on both locations.

Notice of Motion No: 34/2023

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update on the two burnt out Council owned houses in Lakeglen – when will phase one of the demolition begin, when will the site be cleared and secured and when will the rebuilds start"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the rebuilding of these two houses is subject to final Department funding once the insurance fire claim settlement has been reached. The insurance fire claim settlement is due to be finalised in early Q2 2023 and Department approval should follow shortly after. Once Department funding approval is confirmed Phase 1(demolition works) can commence immediately. Once demolition works are completed rebuilding works can then commence.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley advised that it is almost one year since these houses went on fire. The Residents Association have appealed that the matter be clarified and resolved as soon as possible. Councillor Dwane Stanley requested that the matter be expedited – that the one or both houses be demolished and the site be cleared for the moment. Councillor Dwane Stanley requested Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services to make contact with the Insurance Company for a response time on the matter.

Notice of Motion No: 35/2023

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update on when the following 2 vacant Council owned houses will be brought back into use, one in Clonrooske View and one in Parnell Crescent, Knockmay, also an update on the private owned derelict house in Parnell Crescent Knockmay"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that both local authority houses at Parnell Crescent and Clonrooske View are currently undergoing works and will be allocated in the coming weeks. In addition, the Council has inspected a privately owned property in Parnell Crescent with a view to acquiring same and is currently awaiting a valuation in order to progress the acquisition.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested an update for the May meeting in relation to a timeline as to when these three properties will be ready for tenancy.

Notice of Motion No: 36/2023

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council request a meeting with TII to discuss the upgrade and three roundabouts that's badly needed and overdue for the Mountmellick Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that experts, appointed by Laois County Council have analysed the Mountmellick Road Junctions and made a recommendation to TII to provide roundabouts at each of the three existing priority junctions. A meeting with TII in this matter will be requested.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested that Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Service expedite this matter with the TII. Mr. Walton, Director of Services advised that a meeting is scheduled with the T.I.I. in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 37/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District carry out road safety works at the Rock of Dunamaise to include the installation of a 'Stop' sign and white lines at the approach road coming from the Portlaoise direction"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will make arrangements to install road markings and signage as requested in the vicinity of the Rock of Dunamaise.

Notice of Motion No: 38/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District repair and re-surface the Downs Lane so that pedestrians can utilise this route into the Peoples Park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Roads Office will make arrangements to carry out repairs to the Downs Lane.

Notice of Motion No: 39/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District provide a discounted monthly parking rate for users of Laois County Council's long stay car parks"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird.

The Members were advised that the long-stay parking rate in Portlaoise, at the Civic Plaza (100 spaces) and at the Church Street/Triogue Car Park (67 spaces), is €2.40 per day. Patrons, paying daily over a 5-day working week, pay €12/week. For regular all-day parkers, a rate of €2 per day for the working week is available i.e. €10 per week. Parking, at this discounted rate, is payable in advance, in banks of 3 months, 6 months or 12 months. In this way, a discounted monthly parking rate is already available.

It was agreed that this would be promoted/advertised more widely on social media.

Notice of Motion No: 40/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Laois County Council Roads Department introduce as standard practice the installation of double yellow lines in front of footpath tactile pavers throughout the district. There have been some instances reported to me regarding cars parking in front of these tactile pavers preventing pedestrians and those with disability impairments from safely accessing footpaths"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make myself available to meet with Councillor Walsh to examine priority locations where illegal car parking is impacting on pedestrians at uncontrolled crossing points in the Portlaoise MD.

Notice of Motion No: 41/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide an update on the repair of two lights at the GAA side of the new footpath in Ballyroan"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that work on the repair of the lights in Ballyroan has been completed - public lighting at the GAA club is now operational.

Notice of Motion No: 42/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council contact the Department of Rural & Community Development and ask If and when the next review of Clár Maps will be. Parts of areas within the Portlaoise MD such as Ballyroan, Ballinakill, Abbeyleix & Colt should be included within approved zones. All have active development committees which deserve support and help to encourage inward investment and aid to promote rural living & job creation. Can the Department also outline their criteria for determining Clár zones"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that this request has been raised with the Department of Rural & Community Development and a response is awaited in relation to same. Members will be updated once a response is received.

Notice of Motion No: 43/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council examine the traffic flow arrangements currently in place for residents of Rinnucini entering and exiting the estate onto the Dublin Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Road Design Section of Laois County Council will examine the current arrangements and meet with Cllr Tuohy to establish the extent of the issues at this entrance onto the Dublin Road

Notice of Motion No: 44/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council seek to improve visibility, safety and room for traffic to meet around Colt Bridge, Raheen and that the bridge be prioritised on the Programme for Bridge Works for 2024 and if there is a cancellation or funds remaining for this year that it be included this year"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install 'slow' road markings on the approaches to the bridge. Subject to agreement with the Members here today, Colt Bridge will be prioritised on the application for funding for bridge works in 2024. Should additional funding become available in 2023, we will carry out works at Colt Bridge.

Notice of Motion No: 45/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council contact the Department of Education to visit Portlaoise and meet local representatives and representatives of local primary schools to discuss the serious shortage of school places"

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

Councillor Fitzgerald indicated that this is a very serious issue and requested that Laois County Council seek an urgent meeting with the Department of Education to discuss the matter.

Notice of Motion No: 46/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council consider moving the Stop sign at Church Avenue (New Library) and allow traffic on the Main Street right of way"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Road Design Section is amenable to this request, subject to the inclusion of measures that retain low traffic speeds at the intersection.

Notice of Motion No: 47/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council bring the bye-Laws required before us to change the speed limit at Portlaoise GAA/Rathleague Road to enable us to install a pedestrian crossing to the grounds"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that following recent completion of works at Rathleague, a Stage 3 Road Safety Audit is to be undertaken. The Audit will be handed by early May. Once provided, more detail will be available and next steps advised.

A Speed Limit Review Group has been established by the Minister for Transport, to review the framework for the setting of speed limits and to make specific new requirements in the matter of speed limits. The group is due to publish its findings/recommendations and this will advise and underpin the next Speed Limit Review, to be undertaken in County Laois.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that he will revert to the Members with proposals to address the issue of concern, that being the provision of a pedestrian priority road crossing at Portlaoise GAA Club. Such provision may still be possible, without recourse to a Speed Limit Review.

Notice of Motion No: 48/2023

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council re-align the yellow box outside the entrance to Abbeyleix Community Nursing Unit & the Health Centre at Ballinakill Road, Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to refresh the road markings at the Abbeyleix Community Nursing Unit & Health Centre at Ballinakill Road, Abbeyleix.

Notice of Motion No: 49/2023

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council re-instate the footpath at the Ballyroan Road, Abbeyleix from Scoil Mhuire National School for 100 metres"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will liaise with the utilities contractor that carried out works at this location and make arrangements for the permanent re-instatement of the footpath on the Ballyroan Road, Abbeyleix from Scoil Mhuire National School.

Notice of Motion No: 50/2023

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give a timeframe for works to be completed at Sweetview, Abbeyleix and also a date for the meeting with the residents in this area"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has prepared a Road Safety Impact Assessment to advise and underpin road safety interventions at Sweetview. A determination on a funding application is awaited.

7. Correspondence

It was noted that no correspondence had been received since the last meeting of the Municipal District.

8. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 17th of May 2023.**

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services