

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 15TH OF FEBRUARY 2023 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.
Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.
Mr. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.

APOLOGIES: Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.

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

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 18TH OF JANUARY 2023

On the proposition of Councillor Thomasina Connell seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th of January 2023 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 18TH OF JANUARY 2023

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 18th of January 2023.

3. ROADS RESTORATION PROGRAMME 2023

The Members were circulated with a copy of the draft Restoration Improvement Grant (Strengthening) & Restoration Maintenance Grant (Surface Dressing) Programme 2023 and it was noted that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. had briefed the Members on the Programme. On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously agreed the Roads Restoration Programme 2023 as circulated.

4. CYCLING SURVEY PORTLAOISE – FINDINGS

Ms. Aine O’ Connor delivered a presentation on the cycling survey for Portlaoise and briefed the Members on the key findings of the survey. Ms. O’ Connor also detailed some projects that Laois County Council will advance in 2023 with a view to supporting a culture shift towards cycling and more active forms of travel.

5. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 01/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District review the lighting at Lake Vale, Kilminchy with a view to the installation of additional lighting as the area is very poorly lit"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Lake Vale, Kilminchy has not been taken in charge. Notwithstanding this, the Road Design Office will arrange to meet with Councillor Connell on site to assess the public lighting at this location and identify a solution.

Notice of Motion No: 02/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District carry out investigations as to the suitability for single storey Social Housing for Older People on a portion of the field in the ownership of Laois County Council located between the rear of Saint Brigid's Place, Borris Little and Highfield Meadows, excluding the portion of lands currently being considered for use by Saint Francis School"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Housing Section of Laois County Council are currently examining the potential of the site from a housing perspective. Topographical surveys are required given the topography of the land relative to neighbouring residential estates to assess this potential. We continue to work with St. Francis School with regard to the future development of the land bank.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services responded to the various queries raised. It was noted that this was the subject of a previous Notice of Motion whereby, it had been agreed that he and Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services would liaise with School Management and Architects for St. Francis School in the matter. Various discussions had been conducted and the principles agreed by both parties. A final layout for the proposed development was emerging and would be available in the short term.

Notice of Motion No: 03/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District immediately repair the lighting at the National Enterprise Park near the roundabout and entrance to Crossfit/Unlaoised as it is causing a serious risk to runners and walkers as the pathway is in complete darkness and it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to use this fantastic amenity"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Local Authorities appointed Public Lighting Contractor has been made aware of this outage and have been requested to attend to it as soon as possible.

On a point of clarification, Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services noted that there were 30 to 40 lights in this area, provided in the period 2007 – 2009, which had never been connected to the power supply. This includes the 6 or 7 lights referred to in the Notice of Motion. Now that the road and the adjoining roads are part of the public road network, Laois County Council has issued an order for all the lights to be made operational.

Notice of Motion No: 04/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council carry out urgent repairs to footpath outside Supervalu in Lyster Square"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will meet Councillor Walsh on site to review the location and make arrangements to carry out necessary works under the 2023 Councillors discretionary footpath funding.

It was confirmed that localised works will be carried out to address the issues raised in the Notice of Motion.

It was further noted that there are broader plans to continue the rehabilitation and upgrade of Lyster Square, with funding provided under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (Round 2).

It was also noted that a Notice of Motion in relation to footpath restoration works was raised at a recent Council Meeting and correspondence issued to the Department in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 05/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council jet all blocked gullies in Ballyroan Village"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to carry out jetting works in Ballyroan Village over the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 06/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council seek an update from the HSE regarding if or when will the Health Centre in Ballinakill be re-opened"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a letter issue to the HSE in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 07/2023

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

"That this Council carry our repair works to the footpaths in O Moore Place, clean the gullies and replace the old litter bins with new ones"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will meet Councillor Dwane Stanley on site to review the location and make arrangements to carry out essential footpath repair works under the 2023 Councillors discretionary footpath funding. The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to carry out jetting works in O' Moore Place over the coming weeks. Arrangements will also be made to replace the litter bins.

Notice of Motion No: 08/2023

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

"That this Council contact the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage and request that he change the requirement for a medical certificate to be completed as part of the housing application form for people with medical issues or disabilities"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 09/2023

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

"That this Council include the R432 road in Ballinakill in the Roads Programme from the two trees out to the GAA grounds also lower the dropped kerb outside the entrance to the GAA Club and reinstate the road markings out as far as Heywood"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a section of road on the R432 Ballinakill in the vicinity of the pedestrian crossing towards the Laurel House has been included on the draft Restoration Improvement Programme for re-surfacing in 2023, subject to confirmation of the 2023 Regional and Local Road Grant allocations from the Department of Transport. Re-surfacing of the road on the R432 in the vicinity of the two trees towards the GAA grounds may be considered as an extension of these works should further funding become available. The dropped kerb at the entrance to the GAA Club will be examined and arrangements will be made to carry out works as required. The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to refresh the road markings on the R432 on the Ballinakill Road out to Heywood in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 10/2023

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

"That this Council enter into discussions with the South East Beekeepers Association who are looking for a site for their beehives - one proposal from the group is the old water treatment plant at Tullyroe, Abbeylax"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Council is currently working through a process regarding the transfer of assets to Irish Water / Uisce Eireann. Irish Water / Uisce Eireann will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of same. The usage of this site or a portion thereof by the Beekeepers Association is premature pending the completion of this process. Should Cllr Fennelly or the Beekeepers Association suggest alternative publicly owned locations for this

initiative, the council would welcome the opportunity to explore these options further.

Notice of Motion No: 11/2023

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

"That this Council contact the Department for Housing, Planning & Local Government to seek a review of its 245 planning licences as telecommunication masts come under this licence - this licence system does not give the public any involvement in the application process"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in this regard.

Councillor Fennelly made reference to a mast erected in Ballinakill, beside a Bring Bank Site and, whilst there is no definitive objection to the infrastructure, it had been erected with no information/consultation. Cllr Fennelly stated his dissatisfaction with legal provision whereby Section 245 (Planning and Development Act(s)) Licences can be processed without any recourse to local consultation/information. Councillor Fennelly stressed that locals are not necessarily objecting to the provision, but that the site chosen, on an important approach to Ballinakill, is unsuitable.

Notice of Motion No: 12/2023

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

"That this Council give a timeframe for drainage works to be commenced at Monaclear, Ballinakill"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that this location was included as an application for funding under the Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience Works Programme 2023. Laois County Council is awaiting confirmation of funding under this schemem from the Department of Transport. It is expected that the allocations will be confirmed by the end of Q.1 of 2023.

In the absence of Councillor Aird, Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motions:-

Notice of Motion No: 13/2023 – Councillor Willie Aird

“That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to resolve drainage issues in Roskelton on the L6693”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that drainage works at this location will be carried out under the Road Drainage Works Programme 2023

Notice of Motion No: 14/2023 – Councillor Willie Aird

“That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to clean the wooded area on along the linear walk in Clonad adjacent to the Abbeyleix Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to carry out maintenance and litter picking works to the wooded verge/area on the L26961 at Clonad adjacent to the amenity area.

Notice of Motion No: 15/2023 – Councillor Willie Aird

“That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to install street lighting in Liogard, Mountmellick Road, Portlaoise and to trim the trees in the estate before the closed period commences on March 1st 2023”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Road Design Public lighting staff will arrange for the current lighting provision within the estate to be assessed for suitability. Tress within the estate that are impacting on the existing lighting provision will be included for trimming at the earliest opportunity.

Notice of Motion No: 16/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install a pedestrian crossing on Millview across from the car road St. John's Sq. to the remembrance park”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that a member of staff from the Road Design Office will arrange to meet Cllr Fitzgerald at this location to assess the need, requirement and suitability of the measure proposed. Following the assessment, the identified measures required will be programmed for implementation as necessary.

Notice of Motion No: 17/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council resurface the road in Beechfield"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that a section of road on the L81017 Beechfield has been included on the draft Restoration Improvement Programme for re-surfacing in 2023, subject to confirmation of the 2023 Regional and Local Road Grant allocations from the Department of Transport.

Notice of Motion No: 18/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update on any progress on the Ratheven/Rathnamanagh junction"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that further to a previous Notice of Motion, an application was prepared for the Department of Transport to fund footpath and safety works at this location.

It was agreed that an update would be made available for the next meeting.

6. PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING MEMBER OF PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT, COUNCILLOR NOEL TUOHY

A presentation was made to Councillor Noel Tuohy following his resignation. The Members paid tribute to Councillor Tuohy on his contribution to Portlaoise Municipal District over the last number of years and extended every good wish to him going forward. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services thanked Councillor Tuohy for his dedication and professionalism over his period with the MD and extended best wishes on behalf of the Management and Staff of the Portlaoise Municipal District.

7. Correspondence

There was no correspondence for noting since the last meeting of the District.

8. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 15th of March 2023.**

Signed: _____
Cathairleach

Director of Services