

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 18TH OF JANUARY 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. Willie Aird, M.C.C.
Mr. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.
Mr. Noel Tuohy, 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 7TH OF DECEMBER 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the minutes of the meeting held on the 7th of December 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

2. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS

The Members expressed a vote of congratulations and well wishes to Mr. Martin Dunne on his forthcoming retirement from Laois County Council after almost 50 years of service.

The Members passed a vote of congratulations to the Cathaoirleach of Laois County Council, Councillor Thomasina Connell and her partner Tristan on the recent birth of their baby boy Thomas.

3. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Greene family on the recent death of Mr. Tony Greene, St. Brigid's Place, Portlaoise.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 7TH OF DECEMBER 2022

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 7th of December 2022.

5. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 01/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide a salt bin at Ballypickas GAA car park for use by the community during freezing weather conditions"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will make arrangements to provide a salt bin at Ballypickas GAA Car Park for use by the community during the winter season.

Notice of Motion No: 02/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council review building rainwater drainage in Bridge Street Portlaoise. The existing downpipes are drained through surface channels in the footpath instead of normal underground drainage pipes. This causes potential slip hazards for footpath users"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will examine surface water drainage from buildings on Bridge Street, Portlaoise and will report to the MD with proposals to address any issues as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 03/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council review the structure of two bridges at Dooary Cross roads, Ballyroan. It appears that's some of the underlying structures are showing signs of erosion"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet with Councillor Walsh on site to examine the two bridges at Dooary Crossroads, Ballyroan.

Notice of Motion No: 04/2023

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

"That this Council include on their Drainage Programme entrance at Tunduff, Abbeyleix as there is a serious problem with surface water entering the property"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will examine the drainage issue on the L16565 at Tonduff (R32 CP74) for considering this location for funding in the 2023 Road Drainage Works Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 05/2023

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

"That this Council improve the car parking spaces available in front of Thornberry Estate, Abbeyleix. The roadway is very narrow and it is not possible for larger vehicles to pass. This proposal has the support of residents who live in these houses"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet with Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the car parking in Thornberry with a view to developing proposals to resolve the issue.

Notice of Motion No: 06/2023

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

"That this Council repair the road surface on the Ballinakill Road, Abbeyleix from the back entrance to hospital to junction for Ballinakill"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise Municipal Roads Office is making arrangements to carry out road repairs at this location in the coming days.

Notice of Motion No: 07/2023

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

"That this Council contact the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., to ensure out of hours GP Services are put on a secure footing"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to Minister Stephen Donnelly in this regard. The Members also requested a letter issue to the HSE seeking an update on the extension of existing services post February 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 08/2023

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

"That this Council give an update on the progress of the 2 burnt out houses in Lakeglen and the cost to rebuild and include a start date for works to begin, also to clear the gullies and reinstate the markings on the ramps in the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the detailed design for the refurbishment of these 2 houses agreed by the Housing and Planning Departments was submitted to the Department for approval. This detailed design included for the demolition of the 2 existing fire damaged properties and construction of 2 new dwellings. LCC's Housing Department are currently addressing further design queries raised by the Department of Housing and once these design queries are fully addressed, LCC's Housing Department will proceed with the formal appointment of a Design Team. A tender for the appointment of Design Team is currently advertised and is due to close in February 2023. Once the Design Team is appointed this scheme will then be progressed to Part VIII planning and construction tender stage.

Councillor Dwane Stanley requested, in the interests of local residential amenity, that the two houses be demolished as a first phase to be followed later and separately by the replacement units. Clarity will be sought from the Housing Department.

Notice of Motion No: 09/2023

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

"That this Council cut back the trees in Carmody Way, De Vesci Court and Cosby Avenue in Fairgreen Estate, to cut back the vegetation that has completely overgrown the footpaths and clear the gullies in the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself

available to meet with Councillor Dwane Stanley on site to examine the trees in Carmody Way, De Vesce Court and Cosby Avenue in Fairgreen Estate with a view to addressing any issues that pose a significant risk. The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will make arrangements to clear the road gullies.

Notice of Motion No: 10/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council accord a Civic Reception for athlete Mary Mullhare"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Notice of Motion will be referred to the Corporate Policy Group Meeting scheduled for the 23rd of January 2023 for consideration.

Notice of Motion No: 11/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council resurface Crookedy Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will examine this location for consideration for funding in the 2023 Roadworks Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 12/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council relieve the flooding on a corner in Clonad on a byroad that leads onto main Abbeyleix Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will examine the drainage issue on the L26961 (R32 R6YV) at Clonad with a view to considering this location for funding in the 2023 Road Drainage Works Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 13/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council as to when work will commence on the refurbishment of the roadway from the gates of the cemetery to the Calvary as money is already provided in the budget for these works"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that a tender for this work was published in Q4 of 2022 and no responses were received. It is proposed to retender for the work in Q2 of 2023.

The Members requested the possibility of having this matter re-examined and the Community Department to be consulted regarding same.

Notice of Motion No: 14/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council to address the serious situation that has arisen on the lands on the Abbeyleix Road opposite the ESB training school where Respond propose to build as huge volumes of water are coming out onto the footpath and the Main Road and adjoining properties"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Roads Office are liaising with the Housing Section to access the lands, examine the issue with a view to carrying out works in the short term to alleviate the drainage issue at this location.

On a similar note, Caroline Dwane Stanley requested an update on surface water management issues regarding a site on the Mountrath Road. An update from the planning building control office is to be sought.

Notice of Motion No: 15/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council to address the situation at the junction of the R425 and the R426 in relation to public lighting due to the volume of traffic using this junction"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Roads Section will review traffic volumes and turning movements at the junction with a view to making an application to the Department of Transport for any lighting requirements.

Notice of Motion No: 16/2023

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council clear an area at the pedestrian entrance to the Town Park to be used as an area of reflection for those bereaved during Covid times as per a previous Motion”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that further to a meeting with Councillor Tuohy in Pairc an Phobail, Portlaoise in December 2022, the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will develop planting and landscaping proposals for this area with a view to creating the 'area of reflection' for those bereaved during Covid-19.

Notice of Motion No: 17/2023

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council avail of an area in the Linear Park to be used as a Dog Park”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office are currently developing proposals for this area with a view to creating a Dog Park in the Triogue Linear Park in Portlaoise. It is intended that a Dog Park would be a suitable green area where dog owners can safely exercise their pets off the lead.

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. advised the members that a map would be made available to identify the Dog Park & the Cycle Park.

Notice of Motion No: 18/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Portlaoise Municipal District ensure that the surfacing works to be undertaken at the back lanes in Saint Brigid’s Place, Portlaoise are given priority in the allocation of CIS funding so that these works can be undertaken in early 2023”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Roads Section expect to receive confirmation of funding under the Community Involvement Scheme by

March of 2023. The back lanes of St. Brigid's Place will be examined once funding details are received.

Notice of Motion No: 19/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District provide an update as to the Parking Audit to be undertaken in Portlaoise Town Centre"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise Parking Study has commenced and is due to be completed before the end of April 2023. Once complete, the final Report and Recommendations will be presented to the Elected Members.

Cllr Fitzgerald raised a previously discussed issue of parking in Jessop Court and it was confirmed that previous agreed arrangements for non-resident parking during business hours was not conditional on the parking review and would be implemented shortly.

6. Correspondence

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services, outlined to the Members that correspondence had been received from Mr. David Clarke, Integrated Services Manager East, National Ambulance Service with the Health Services Executive in response to Notice of Motion No: 185/2022, as follows:-

"That this Council request an update from the HSE on the Ambulance service for Portlaoise and the number of ambulances available to service the area"

Mr. Clarke indicated that he has commenced a new role as Integrated Services Manager for the East of the Country, as part of a significant re-structure of the National Ambulance Office, and would be happy to attend the March Meeting of the Municipal District to brief Members on deployment levels and associated response times for the Portlaoise area. It is his intention also to highlight some of the significant changes which will be taking place within the organisation over the first six months of 2023. The Members agreed to same for the March Meeting of the Municipal District.

7. Fix Date for Next Meeting

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

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services