

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 15TH OF MARCH 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.

APOLOGIES: Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services
Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. PRESENTATION BY MR. BRYAN GAYNOR ON THE PORTLAOISE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Mr. Bryan Gaynor delivered an update on the Biodiversity Plan for Portlaoise for 2023-2028 including the objectives of the plan, grassland management and various pictures of the areas around Portlaoise

Also in attendance were Mr. Gerry Browne, Portlaoise Town Team & Ms. Fiona MacGowan, B.Sc.Ph.d., Consultant Ecologist.

2. PRESENTATION BY MR. TREVOR HENNESSY, A/S.E. HOUSING ON SERVICED SITES

Mr. Trevor Hennessy, A/S.E., Housing Department delivered a presentation in relation to the four serviced sites which are currently available at Gleann na Glaise in Ballyroan including the criteria and proposals for same. Mr. Trevor Hennessy, A/S.E. responded to the various queries raised by the Members in relation to same.

3. KOLBE SCHOOL

Councillor Barry Walsh raised the issue regarding the recent announcement that the building for the Kolbe Special School has been put on hold. The Members requested that a letter issue as a matter of urgency to the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education & the Minister for Special Education requesting that the funding be immediately re-instated

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 15th OF FEBRUARY 2023

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th of February 2023 were confirmed as circulated.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 15th OF FEBRUARY 2023

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 15th of February 2023

6. SCHEDULE OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WORKS 2023

The Members were previously briefed on the above and the programme was adopted as circulated on the proposal of Councillor Willie Aird and seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

7. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 19/2023

Councillors Thomasina Connell, Caroline Dwane Stanley, Catherine Fitzgerald, Marie Tuohy, Barry Walsh, John Joe Fennelly & Willie Aird raised the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council allow the use of an existing bench in Portlaoise town area, that will then be painted Daffodil Yellow by the local Men's Shed. Once painted, they will place a QR Code plaque, with all relevant logos, on the bench that will link people directly to Irish Cancer Society supports and services. Benches are a place of rest but also a place of reflection. A place where people take time to think things through and set things straight. The Irish Cancer Society have contacted all the Portlaoise MD councillors for their support and have commented that people aren't aware of the volume of supports and services that the Irish Cancer Society provide and this project represents a way of putting a visual reminder of those supports right in the heart of our communities"

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 the Portlaoise MD Councillors to choose a bench in a suitable location for this initiative. It was further agreed that the Chairman of the Portlaoise MD would liaise with the officials to pick an appropriate location for this. Councillor Fennelly requested that a similar initiative be examined in other towns in the County for next year.

Notice of Motion No: 20/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council repair all damaged rubbish bins within Ballyroan village including a new bin on the new footpath to the G.A.A. Grounds"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will make arrangements to repair all damaged rubbish bins within Ballyroan village including a new bin on the new footpath to the G.A.A. Grounds

Notice of Motion No: 21/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council encourage participation in the Picker Pals programme throughout the Portlaoise MD"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council's Environment Awareness Officer is organising this campaign with the Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications (DECC) and local national schools countywide. This campaign is promoted countywide and the Tidy Towns Groups were also contacted to nominate schools for the programme. There are the 33 classrooms from 25 different schools enrolled on the programme this year. These breakdown as 10 classrooms funded by Laois County Council, 15 funded by the DECC, 1 classroom funded by a corporate sponsor and 7 classrooms reusing their pack from last year. Participating schools are located in Portlaoise, Abbeyleix, Mountmellick, Ballybrittas, Mountrath, Crettyard, Portarlinton, Summerhill, Borris-In-Ossory, Stradbally and Rosenalis.

Notice of Motion No: 22/2023

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That this Council install a raised table at the middle junction in St Brigids's Place and give an update as to when the ramp at the front of the Estate will be installed"

This Notice of motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a traffic calming ramp will be installed in the vicinity of No. 1 St. Brigid's Place in the coming weeks. The Portlaoise MD Office will liaise with

the Road Design Section regarding an appropriate traffic control/calming solution at the junction in the vicinity of No. 45 & No. 29, St. Brigid's Place

It was further agreed that the stop lines in the vicinity of No. 45 & 29 St. Brigid's Place would be highlighted with buff coloured anti-skid surfacing as an interim measure.

Notice of Motion No: 23/2023

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

"That this Council and the NTA give an update as to when the two bus shelters at Killminchy will be installed"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a request for tender has been published for the construction of bus shelters at Kilminchy and the timeline for their installation will be determined following appointment of the successful contractor.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Service advised that the best estimate for timeframe of delivery would be the end of June 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 24/2023

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

"That this Council install a public light outside of Hayden's public house in Spink as this junction is very dark"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Road Design Section of Laois County Council will review the current lighting provided at this location and make arrangements for the provision of additional/improved lighting at the junction as required.

Notice of Motion No: 25/2023

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

"That this Council erect extra signage at Gorman's Cross, Ballypickas as there has been a number of accidents at this location"

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 on site with Councillor Fennelly to examine the issue at this location with a view to installing extra signage as appropriate.

Councillor Fennelly requested that Laois County Council examine the possibility of installing signage that incorporates flashing lights at this location. Councillor Fennelly also indicated that he would make arrangements for the Sergeant from the Abbeyleix Station to meet Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. on site and Councillor Barry Walsh would be also in attendance.

Notice of Motion No: 26/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install safety measures on the walkway/cycle lane at Rankin's Wood”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will install interim measures to increase the cyclists awareness of oncoming intersection with the vehicular roadway. A permanent solution will be put in place as part of the future works on Phase II on the Triogue Way. It was also agreed that Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Senior Engineer & Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer would meet the residents in relation to proposed measures.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services indicated that interventions would be designed by the Capital Projects Office and sent to the Portlaoise MD for installation at the earliest opportunity.

Notice of Motion No: 27/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council move the sign at the pedestrian crossing at County Hall”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Wille Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet with Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald at this location.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald expressed concerns regarding the visibility of oncoming pedestrians at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 28/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council be complimented on the work done at Rathleague and to examine the possibility of installing a safe crossing for children coming off the footpath into the Portlaoise GAA Club"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the compliments are noted and will be relayed to the staff concerned. The request for the provision of a crossing will be examined in the context of the prevailing conditions and the applicable relevant standards for the design and installation of such measures.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services detailed the range of road safety measures that were introduced as part of the recent works at this location and further advised members that pedestrian crossings are not permitted by any of the applicable design standards for roads with a posted 80 km/h speed limit. Members were advised that an independent Stage 3 Roads Safety Audit was soon to be undertaken on the completed scheme and that any issues highlighted or additional measures proposed in this regard would be considered by the Council for implementation.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed that Laois County Council commence the review of speed limits and that a special once off review of this speed limit be proposed – an update was requested for the next meeting of the Municipal District. There was full agreement by the Members to initiate this process if in order to do so.

Notice of Motion No: 29/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion-

"That Laois County Council liaise with Transport Infrastructure Ireland once again in relation to the installation of a ghost island in Rossleighan, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that a meeting has been held on site with Councillor Aird to

examine the issues. Following on from this meeting a request has been made to the newly appointed T.I.I. Road Safety Inspection Engineer for a meeting at the location to review concerns highlighted.

Notice of Motion No: 30/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council examine the lack of access to the swimming pool for those who need assistance getting in and out of the pool at Laois Leisure, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council supported the installation on 8th March 2023 of a new poolside hoist at Portlaoise Leisure Centre which will greatly improve access to the pool.

8. Correspondence

The following correspondence was circulated to the Members which had been received since the last meeting of the Municipal District:

- (i) Correspondence from Minister Darragh O' Brien, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in response to the Notice of Motion passed in relation to the requirement for medical certification for social housing priority. The Members noted the response and requested that a further letter issue to the Minister in this regard seeking that the legislation be amended in this instance.
- (ii) Correspondence from Minister Stephen Donnelly, Minister for health in response to the Notice of Motion passed in relation to the out of hours/Midoc service. The Members noted the response but requested further clarity on the 'out of hours' aspect of the service being provided and also the future security of the service.

9. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 19th of April 2023.**

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services