

**MINUTES OF THE GRAIGUECULLEN/PORTARLINGTON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th OF JUNE 2021 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN
CHONTE, PORTLAOISE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT MS. Aisling Moran Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Mr. Aidan Mullins M.C.C.
Mr. Paschal McEvoy, M.C.C.
Mr. Pdraig Fleming, M.C.C.
Mr. P.J. Kelly, M.C.C.
Mr. Ben Brennan, M.C.C.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance
Mr. Philip McVeigh, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

**(1) Confirmation of the Minutes of the May meeting of the Graiguecullen
Portarlington Municipal District held on the 19th of May 2021**

On the proposition of Councillor Aidan Mullins seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously agreed the minutes of the May meeting of the Graiguecullen/Portarlington Municipal District held on the 19th of May 2021 as circulated.

Councillor Aisling Moran, Cathaoirleach raised an issue regarding the protocols for the opening of the N80 Maidenhead Realignment Scheme on the 11th of June 2021. It was agreed that the matter would be tabled for discussion at the next CPG meeting scheduled for the 21st of June 2021.

(2) PROGRESS REPORT

The report was noted, and the Members complimented Mr. Philip McVeigh, Senior Executive Engineer and all the team on the works that had been completed since the last meeting.

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance confirmed the following to the Members:

40/2021 - Land Adjacent to Congress Terrace, Portarlington

The land is part zoned residential and open space and the open space element is currently underutilized and not maintained. The Planning Department will review the zoning for this site in the context of the review of the Portarlington Local Area Plan in 2022.

42/2021 - Taking in Charge of Crossneen Manor, Graiguecullen

The Planning Department has advised that discussions are still ongoing with the Developer in order to resolve issues such as a retention permission for a pumping station and other works like undertaking a c.c.t.v. survey.

66/2020 - Cill Beg Manor, Stradbally

The Developer was issued with a snag list in October 2020. Due to Covid restrictions works could not commence. A letter has now issued to Mr. Trevor Whelan (Droughill Builders) advising them that unless the works are completed within 28 days, the Council will engage its own Contractors to complete the works and use any and all cash deposits lodged with the Council to complete the works .

73/2020 – Clarmallagh Estate

We are awaiting transfer of funds to execute the C.C.T.V. survey which will determine the extent of works (if any) on the foul sewer and surface water networks. The developer has contacted Planning with a view to preparing a site resolution plan. Discussions regarding this will be had with the developer and his agent within the next week.

It was requested that an update be sought on the following: -

- Pumping Station in Graigueavern
- Supply of electricity to the phone box in Ballybrittas / Defibrillator – it was noted that Mr. Farhan Nasiem, A/S.E.E. is following this matter up with Killaree Lighting Services.

(3) NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 64/2021

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council be requested to get the buildings that belong to them and the HSE at the back of a private house in Doonane removed immediately”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming. The Members were advised that correspondence has issued to the HSE in relation to the dispensary building. A further update will be available for the next meeting.

Councillor Brennan expressed concern regarding the state of the building, and it was agreed to write to the HSE regarding same.

Notice of Motion No: 65/2021

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council give a date as to when the drain and lay-bys will be done on the New Line Road and the steel bollards replaced at Newtown Cross”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming. The Members were advised that the drain and lay-by works are scheduled to be carried out in the coming weeks. The new steel bollards at Newtown Cross will be installed in July.

Notice of Motion No: 66/202

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council give an update on the blocked culvert in the Swan Village as it is backing up into a private house”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming. The Members were advised that the Council has investigated this location and repair works involving the installation of a 20-metre length of new drainage pipework have now been completed.

Notice of Motion No: 67/2021

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That this Council remove the remainder of the tree at Grange, Stradbally and replace it with a wall”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that Road Design will arrange a site meeting with the elected member and Area Engineer to identify the exact issue.

Councillor Aisling Moran requested that we write to the TII to ask them to address the Councillors at a future meeting of the Municipal District regarding various issues of concern.

Notice of Motion No: 68/2021

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That this Council investigate the flooding at Kyle, Timahoe with a view to resolving same”

This Notice of Motion of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming. The Members were advised that the Council will investigate the flooding at this location with a view to carrying out the improvement works needed.

Notice of Motion: 69/2021

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That this Council issue a warning to the public of the danger of Black Grass seeds. This seed has been found in wildflower seeds”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor P.J. Kelly. The Members were advised that the advice on wildflowers from the Laois Heritage Office, in line with the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is that wildflower seeds should not be planted outside of garden patio pots. By simply reducing mowing, amazing wildflowers like Dandelion, Clovers, Self-heal and Bird’s-foot-trefoil will occur naturally year after year at no cost. These common flowers provide the nutrients our insects need. By returning pockets of natural grassland meadows and verges, no matter how tiny, the collective benefit to wildlife is enormous. They’re a long-term and sustainable solution to the biodiversity crisis. It’s tempting to plant what we humans like to look at, rather than doing what our declining pollinators actually need. Most wildflower seeds are imported from other countries and are not native. There is a huge risk of accidentally bringing in pest species like Black grass that, if spread, would be devastating to the Irish agricultural industry. If individuals or groups decide to buy wildflower seed, it should be sourced carefully, and should only ever be planted in a garden and not in the wider landscape. It’s a colourful ‘horticultural action’, it’s not a ‘biodiversity action’. In our lawns, verges, towns, villages, and parks, we can help bees and biodiversity by not planting wildflower seed. Instead, we can reduce mowing and allow our beautiful natural Irish meadows to return with native flowers that are meant to be there, without the risk of importing pest species. For those who really want to plant wildflower seeds, “Pots for Pollinators” is a new initiative with NBFC approval to encourage them to do this in a safe and effective way – leaflet is attached. Laois County Council has now formally signed up as a partner in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and we look forward to working with Elected Members and Communities in rolling out actions that will benefit pollinators and all biodiversity. More information and guidance is available here: <https://pollinators.ie/wildflower-seed/>

Notice of Motion No: 70/2021

Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council carry out road safety improvements works at Barrowhouse National School (new Autism Unit being opened in September 2021) and at the T Junction (where 85% of the traffic comes from for the school) leading up to the Church and the School”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that the Council is arranging to have these road safety improvement works carried out at the school in the coming weeks. The works will involve the installation of new road markings on the roadway outside the school as well as new road markings and road signage at the nearby T-junction.

Notice of Motion No: 71/2021

Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council examine what measures can be taken to relieve the flooding at Pimlico, Fallaghmore, Ballyadams”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan. The Members were advised that the Council will arrange to meet with the Elected Member at this location to review options to resolve this flooding.

Notice of Motion No: 72/2021

Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council consider extra safety measures at the Crossroads at the Ball Alley, Wolfhill including repairs to the blocked gully near the church to stop the water flowing down the road and damaging it”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that the Council is currently arranging to install additional road markings and signage at this Crossroads. We will also investigate the gully near the Church to resolve the drainage issue at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 73/2021

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council repair the damaged bridge wall at Knockbeg / Shrule”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan. The Members were advised that Laois County Council is currently arranging to carry out these bridge repair works as part of a wider programme of bridge improvement works over the coming months.

Notice of Motion No: 74/2021

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council carry out road drainage works at Ballinagar to resolve flooding problems”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan. The Members were advised that drainage improvement works will be carried out at this location by the end of June 2021. The works will involve the installation of new road gullies, drainage pipework and a soakaway located in the grass verge.

Notice of Motion No: 75/2021

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council carry out pothole repairs on Melbourne Lane in Luggacurren”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pádraig Fleming. The Members were advised that the Council has inspected this road and has recently carried out repairs on the section of the roadway that is a public road. This section of road could be considered for further surfacing in next year’s roads programme.

Notice of Motion No: 76/2021

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

“That Laois County Council instruct Coillte to cut back roadside hedges at Rathdaire Lake Road from Bellgrove to Rossmore crossroads as soon as the nesting season is over”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy. The Members were advised that the Council will carry out a road safety inspection on this length of the roadway with a view to contacting the landowner.

Notice of Motion No: 77/2021

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

“That Laois County Council repair the electronic speed limit sign going into Emo Village from New Inn Cross”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aidan Mullins. The Members were advised that this sign has been reported to the maintenance contractor and will be repaired.

Notice of Motion No: 78/2021

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

“That Laois County Council carry out repair work on severe dips on the road between the Montague Hotel and the Coillte Christmas tree sales site in Ballybrittas”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aidan Mullins. The Members were advised that the Council has applied to DTTA for funding to repair this section of the R445 (former N7) in 2021. The DTTA’S funding allocations for 2021 have not yet included this section of the R445. The Council will continue to seek funding for these works.

Notice of Motion No: 79/2021

Councillor Aidan Mullins proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council give an update on the taking in charge of Meadows Way Estate in Graiguecullen”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that a site meeting was held with Brian Greene on behalf of the Developer with a view to arranging CCTV and as constructed drawings. It is expected that these will be in place by the end of July 2021.

Notice of Motion No: 80/2021

Councillor Aidan Mullins proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

“That Laois County Council install additional lighting and traffic calming measures at the dangerous junction for Killenard on the Lea Road outside Portarlington”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor P.J. Kelly. The Members were advised that a Safety Scheme Funding application will be submitted for the installation of new streetlights at this location for 2022.

