

**MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
ARAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE, ON THE 31ST OF JULY 2017**

PRESENT: **Councillor Padraig Fleming** In the Chair

Councillors William Aird Paddy Bracken
Ben Brennan John Joe Fennelly
Catherine Fitzgerald John King
David Goodwin Tom Mulhall
Seamus McDonald Noel Tuohy
John Moran James Kelly
Mary Sweeney Aidan Mullins
Caroline Dwane Stanley

APOLOGIES: **Councillors** Paschal McEvoy Jerry Lodge
Brendan Phelan

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, Administrative Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary.

111. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Padraig Fleming, the Members unanimously agreed to extend a vote of sympathy to the following:

- Ms. Therese Kelly on the recent death of her mother, Mrs. Bridget Dunphy, Graiguegarron, Rathdowney, Co. Laois
- The O' Keeffe family on the recent death of Mr. Phil O' Keeffe, Cork Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

112. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to extend a vote of congratulations to Ms. Aoife McNicholl & Ms. Emer O' Sullivan who recently represented Ireland and finished sixth in the 2017 FIPFA World Cup recently in Florida, USA.

**113. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE MEETING OF
LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 26TH OF JUNE 2017**

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the Minutes of the June meeting held on the 26th of June 2017 were confirmed as circulated.

114. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 26TH OF JUNE 2017

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the Minutes of the AGM of Laois County Council held on the 26th of June 2017 were confirmed as circulated.

115. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 19TH OF JUNE 2017

On the proposition of Councillor Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor John King, the report on the CPG meeting held on the 19th of June 2017 was confirmed as circulated.

116. REPORTS ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN JUNE 2017

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the reports on the Municipal District Meetings held in June 2017 were confirmed as circulated.

117. REPORTS ON STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD IN JUNE 2017

On the proposition of Councillor John Moran seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the reports on the Strategic Policy Committee Meetings held in June 2017 were confirmed as circulated.

118. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001

(i) EXTENSION OF LEASE AGREEMENT ON ARAS EOGHAN COMMUNITY CENTRE, O' MOORE PLACE, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the extension of lease agreement on Aras Eoghan Community Centre, O' Moore Place, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Maryborough (comprising 1.977 acres) with Laois Community & Enterprise Development Company Ltd., to 31st of December 2020 for a consideration of €100.00 per annum

(ii) DISPOSAL OF 0.146 ACRES AT PATRICK STREET, DURROW

On the proposition of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.146 acres at Patrick Street, Durrow in the townland of Durrow Townsparks to Durrow Development Forum for a consideration of €50,000

119. PART VIII OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 2001, AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2010

The Members were circulated with the Part VIII Report on the proposed development of Portlaoise Public Library at Main Street, Portlaoise. The Chief Executive, Mr. John Mulholland briefed the Members on the proposed development and advised that the new library will be located on the site of the former Shaws Department store at the junction of Main Street and Church Avenue. It was noted that the floor area of the new library is c 1,500 sq. Metres with a ground floor area of c. 800 square metres and an upper floor area of c. 700 square metres.

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, the Members unanimously agreed to the proposed development in accordance with the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 as amended by the Planning and Development (Amendment Act) 2010.

120. LAOIS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017-2023 – SECTION 31 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000, AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2010

Mr. Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services referred to the following which were circulated to the Members on the 21st of July 2017:-

- Letter dated the 18th of July 2017 from the Minister summarising the background, measures proposed under the draft direction and procedural requirements pursuing to a Section 31 Direction
- A draft of the proposed direction

The Members noted that the net effect of the proposed Direction is to remove the 'setback distance' of 1.5 kilometres and to include areas 'open for consideration', i.e. the areas coloured yellow on Map 1.6.5. Those parts of the Development Plan which are subject to the draft Section 31 Direction will not come into effect until the 'Section 31' procedure has been completed.

The Chief Executive, Mr. John Mulholland advised that the notice of the draft Direction will be published and following a period of public consultation and consultation with the Elected Members a report will be prepared in accordance with Section 31(8) of the Act for consideration of the Minister.

It is intended that this matter will be tabled for discussion at a special meeting of the Council scheduled for the 11th of September 2017 at 2.30 p.m.

121. NOMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE PORTARLINGTON/GRAIGUECULLEN MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS TO THE PLACENAMES COMMITTEE

The Members were advised that at the last meeting of the Placenames Committee, it was agreed to seek a nominee from the Graiguecullen/Portarlington Municipal District in order to ensure representation from all Municipal Districts on the Committee. On the proposition of Councillor John Moran and seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed that Councillor Tom Mulhall be nominated to the Placenames Committee.

122. NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF PORTARLINGTON LEISURE CENTRE

The Members were advised that there are 12 Directors on the Board of Portarlington Leisure Centre. Under the CRO Regulations, a minimum of 3 Directors must resign by rotation annually. This year, 2017, the three Directors required to rotate are Councillor Pádraig Fleming, Tom Mulhall & Paschal McEvoy.

- Councillor William Aird proposed that Councillor Tom Mulhall be re-elected to the Portarlington Leisure Centre
- Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed that both Councillor Paschal McEvoy & Pádraig Fleming be re-elected to the Portarlington Leisure Centre
- Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed that Councillor Aidan Mullins be elected to the Portarlington Leisure Centre.

It was agreed to examine the possibility of an increase in the number of representatives on the Board. The matter to be listed for further consideration at the September meeting.

123. LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR JULY 2017 (IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIRCULAR LETTER LG 18/2014)

Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive briefed the meeting on this matter and the report for July was circulated. The report was unanimously agreed and noted. A number of queries were raised on the report and the Directors of Services responded to the various queries raised.

124. RATIFICATION OF CONFERENCES/ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING

It was noted that there were no conferences for ratification and Members were circulated with the list of forthcoming training and conferences for July 2017 which was agreed

125. CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was circulated which had been received since the last meeting of Laois County Council

- (i) Correspondence dated the 4th of July 2017 from the Minister for Health, Mr. Simon Harris in relation to Notice of Motion No: 15/2017
- (ii) Correspondence dated the 12th of July 2017 from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government in relation to Rent Pressure Zones
- (iii) Correspondence dated the 26th of July 2017 from the Housing Agency in relation to Rent Pressure Zones
- (iv) Correspondence dated the 10th of July 2017 from Transport Infrastructure Ireland in relation to Notice of Motion No: 22/2017
- (v) Correspondence dated the 12th of July 2017 from the Office of the Minister in relation to Notice of Motion No: 21/2017
- (vi) Correspondence dated the 31st of July 2017 from the Minister for Justice and Equality in relation to Notice of Motion No: 21/2017

126. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 23/2017

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council supports the drinks industry and hospitality sector which supports 2,536 jobs in Laois and is a critical component of our offering to tourists with tourism spend in Laois worth €34 million in 2016. This Council backs the ‘Support Your Local’ Campaign in calling for a reduction in excise tax on alcohol in budget 2018, in order to support local jobs, the hospitality sector and our local economy”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. It was agreed that a letter of support issue from Laois County Council.

Notice of Motion No: 24/2017

Councillor James Kelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council in light of the withdrawal by banks of over the counter cash services in local towns writes to the Minister for Finance urging him to expand the powers and remit of Credit Unions and Post Offices so that these institutions can provide the local services that the banks are taking away from our communities”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Minister in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 25/2017

Councillor James Kelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council writes to the management of Laois Leisure facilities requesting that persons over 65 years of age receive free access or a substantial discount to use the swimming pools in their establishments”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald. The Members were advised that both Portlaoise and Portarlington Leisure Centres currently offer a substantial Social Welfare Discount Scheme (which includes those in receipt of pensions). Additionally, very favourable group rates are provided to Active Retirement Groups. It would not be financially viable for either centre to provide free access to the Centre.

Notice of Motion No: 26/2017

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council provide a suitable green area designated as a dog park where dog owners can safely exercise their pets”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised that the matter will be referred for discussion to the SPC on Transportation, Environment and Emergency Services for further consideration.

Notice of Motion No: 27/2017

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council explore the possibilities and opportunities for providing suitable bus shelters in partnership with the service providers and other relevant agencies for the benefit of the numerous passengers who rely on such transport services throughout the County”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised that at the most recent SPC meeting of the Transportation, Environment & Emergency Services, a policy paper was introduced in relation to the provision of Bus Shelters across the County. This policy paper will be further considered by the SPC at their September meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 28/2017

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council strenuously oppose and lodge a formal objection to the proposed electoral boundary commission annexation of Portarlington into the Kildare South Constituency which would result in the disenfranchisement of over 10,000 Laois voters”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall. Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed a deputation to meet the Minister in this regard comprising of Councillor Tom Mulhall, Councillor Paschal McEvoy, Councillor Tom Mulhall & the

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Padraig Fleming. It was agreed to issue a letter to the Minister for Housing, Planning & Community seeking a deputation.

Notice of Motion No: 29/2017

Councillor Tom Mulhall proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council give an update on the number of vacant houses in the County”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John King. The Members were advised that Census 2016 states that there are 2853 vacant houses in County Laois. This compares to 3,277 vacant houses in the county in the 2011 Census. Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance responded to the various queries raised

Notice of Motion No: 30/2017

It was agreed that due to the absence of Councillor Jerry Lodge that this Notice of Motion be deferred to the September meeting of Laois County Council

Notice of Motion No: 31/2017

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

“That Laois County Members support the relocation of the Dunamaise College to a permanent site at the Old Convent Ground and to write to the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Richard Bruton and ask him to acquire this site”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Minister in this regard.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: _____
**DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
CORPORATE AFFAIRS**

