

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
ARAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE, ON THE 22ND OF OCTOBER 2018**

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Councillor	John King	In the Chair
	Councillors	William Aird	Paddy Bracken
		Paschal McEvoy	Padraig Fleming
		Catherine Fitzgerald	Brendan Phelan
		David Goodwin	Tom Mulhall
		Seamus McDonald	Noel Tuohy
		Ben Brennan	Pauline Madigan
		Mary Sweeney	Aidan Mullins
		Caroline Dwane Stanley	James Kelly
		John Joe Fennelly	

APOLOGIES: Councillor John Moran

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

179. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

The Members expressed a vote of sympathy to the Peters Family on the recent death of Mr. Tom Peters, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

The Members expressed a vote of sympathy to Ms. Muireann Ní Chonail, Arts Officer on the recent death of her mother, Mrs. Kitty O' Conaill, Blackrock, Dublin.

**180. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING OF
LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 24TH OF SEPTEMBER 2018**

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Minutes of the July meeting held on the 24th of September 2018 were confirmed as circulated.

181. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 17TH OF SEPTEMBER 2018

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the report on the CPG meeting held on the 17th of September 2018 was confirmed as circulated.

182. REPORT ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN SEPTEMBER 2018

On the proposition of Councillor Pauline Madigan seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed the reports on Municipal District Meetings held in September 2018.

183. PART VIII OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 2001 IN RESPECT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF 2 NO. HOUSING UNITS ON AN IN-FILL SITE PLUS ALL ASSOCIATED SITE DEVELOPMENT WORKS AT NO. 54 HILLVIEW, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously agreed to the Part VIII of the Local Government Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 in respect of the construction of 2 no. Housing units on an in-fill site plus all associated site development works at No. 54 Hillview, Portlaoise.

184. DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD AT 37 GLENKEEN PARK, FAIRGREEN, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councilor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold at 37 Glenkeen Park, Fairgreen, Portlaoise in the the townland of Clonreher for a consideration of €1.00

185. DISPOSAL OF SITE NO. 4 COMPRISING 0.074 HECTARES OF LAND AT CASTLETOWN

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of Site No. 4 comprising 0.074 hectares of land at Castletown in the townland of Churchfield for a consideration of €25,000

186. LEASE OF LAND AT LAOIS MUSIC CENTRE, FORMERLY SCOIL MUIRE BUILDING, CHURCH AVENUE, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously agreed to the lease of land at Laois Music Centre, formerly Scoil Mhuire Building, Church Avenue, Portlaoise in the townland of Maryborough for a consideration of €10,000 per annum.

187. PART 15 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001

Ms. Angela McEvoy, Senior Planner drew the Members attention to the requirement of Part 15 of the Local Government Act, 2001 in relation to Disclosure of Interest. Any member or any connected person who has a pecuniary or other beneficial interest on any item in the subject matter before the members today must disclose the nature of that interest and then withdraw fully from the meeting for as long as the matter is being discussed or considered.

188. CONSIDERATION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT ON THE ALTERATIONS TO THE DRAFT PORTLAOISE LAP 2018-2024 AND ADOPTION OF PORTLAOISE LAP 2018-2024

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Chief Executive’s Report on the material alterations to the Draft Portlaoise LAP 2018-2024. Ms. Angela McEvoy, Senior Planner briefed the Members on the submissions received (a total of 19 no.)

The first submission was from Kilkenny County Council (A1) – was noted by the Members.

A number of submissions were taken collectively as follows as they related to a common issue **Material Alteration No. 1: Togher, Masterplan**

C1	Mary Keegan
C7	Denis Donoghue
C9	Barry Donoghue
C12	Niamh & Richard Flynn
C13	Paul & Betty Duffin
C14	John & Susan Buggie
C15	Claire O’Donoghue Bracken
C16	Harry & Phyllis Ince
C17	Kieran & Eavonne Donoghue

Following a lengthy discussion in relation to the issues raised and acknowledgement that the land has been zoned since 2003 in the Togher area, Portlaoise, the members agreed with the Chief Executive’s Recommendation in relation to this submission on the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

C2	Atlantic Enterprises Ltd.	McCarthy O’Sullivan	Keville
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The members agreed with the Chief Executive’s Recommendation in relation to this submission, on the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor Pauline Madigan.

C3	Beladd Residents Association	Mary O’Brien
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Material Alteration No. 17: Summerhill Lane/Aaughnaharna. The members noted the Chief Executive’s Recommendation in relation to this submission.

C4	Kyle Estates Ltd.	BMA Planning
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Material Alteration No. 12: Centrepont. The members noted the Chief Executive's Recommendation in relation to this submission.

C5	Kellyville Ltd.	John Spain Associates
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Material Alteration No. 20: Mountrath Road, Portlaoise. The members noted the Chief Executive's Recommendation in relation to this submission.

C6	Bircrest Ltd.	Thornton O'Connor
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Material Alteration No.s 17, 18 & 22: Summerhill. The members noted the Chief Executive's Recommendation in relation to this submission.

C8	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
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Material Alteration No. 1: Togher Masterplan. The members agreed with the Chief Executive's Recommendation in relation to this submission on the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald.

C10	Whelan, Coughlin, McEvoy	Aidan O'Connell
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The Members did not accept the recommendation of the Chief Executive. A counter proposal was then proposed by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan to zone the lands for residential 2 as per the submission made.

A roll call vote was taken on '**Zoning the land to Residential 2**' which resulted as follows:

COUNCILLOR		FOR	AGAINST	ABSENT
FIRST NAME	SURNAME			
Willie	AIRD	X		
Paddy	BRACKEN	X		
Ben	BRENNAN	X		
Caroline	DWANE STANLEY	X		
John Joe	FENNELLY	X		
Catherine	FITZGERALD	X		
Padraig	FLEMING	X		
David	GOODWIN			X
James	KELLY	X		
John	KING	X		
Pauline	MADIGAN	X		
Seamus	MCDONALD	X		
Paschal	MCEVOY	X		
John Robert	MORAN			X
Tom	MULHALL	X		

Aidan	MULLINS	X		
Brendan	PHELAN	X		
Mary	SWEENEY	X		
Noel	TUOHY	X		

As a result of the Roll Call Vote, there were 17 votes in favour of the Chief Executive's Recommendation with 2 Members absent.

C11	Glendowns Residents' Association
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Material Alteration Ref. No. 19: Portrane House, Stradbally Road. The members noted the Chief Executive's Recommendation in relation to this submission.

C18	John Cowhig
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The issues raised do not relate to the Material Alterations which were on public display. Therefore, this submission is outside of the scope of what can be considered in this part of the Local Area Plan review process.

ADOPTION OF THE PORTLAOISE LAP 2018 – 2024

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously adopted the Portlaoise LAP 2018-2024 as presented.

189. PRESENTATION BY MS. MICHELLE DE FORGE, DIRECTOR, DUNAMAISE ARTS CENTRE ON THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE DUNAMAISE ARTS CENTRE

Ms. Michelle de Forge, Director, Dunamaise Arts Centre delivered a very comprehensive presentation to the Members on the activities of the Dunamaise Arts Centre. The Members complimented Ms. De Forge on her commitment to the Dunamaise Arts Centre and thanked the Board & Committee also for their contribution.

190. ADOPTION OF THE ELECTED MEMBERS IPAD POLICY

The Members were circulated with the Elected Members iPad Policy which applies to the iPads that have been allocated to the Elected Members of Laois County Council. The policy outlines the responsibilities in the use of the iPads by Laois County Council Elected members and also the responsibilities of staff and Elected Members in the management of the iPads. On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, the Members adopted the Elected Members iPad policy.

It was noted that the policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed periodically.

191. HEALTHY LAOIS PLAN – FOR NOTING

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Healthy Laois Plan 2018 – 2020 and same was noted by the Members.

192. LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2018

Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive briefed the meeting on this matter and the report for October 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.

193. RATIFICATION OF CONFERENCES/ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING

The Members were circulated with the list of conferences/training for ratification and forthcoming conferences/training which was ratified on the proposal of Councillor James Kelly and seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy.

194. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items of correspondence were circulated to the Members which had been received since the last meeting of Laois County Council:-

- (i) Correspondence received from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government dated the 1st of October 2018 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 18/2018
- (ii) Correspondence received from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government dated the 8th of October 2018 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 21/2018

The Members raised the issue regarding the Order of Malta and their accommodation requirements – it was agreed that Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services would follow up on this matter with a view to finding a resolution to the matter.

195. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 22/2018

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council request an up to date position for the manning of the tourism office going forward, unlike what happened during July and August where the office wasn’t staffed”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pauline Madigan. The Members were advised that Fáilte Ireland own the office and decided to withdraw their services some years ago. The office was subsequently leased from Fáilte Ireland by Laois County Council. The Tourist Office is now staffed through the **Tús – Community work placement initiative through the Laois Tourism Board**. Placements are for a maximum duration of 52 weeks, which means staff must be recruited each year. This year there was a delay in finalising that recruitment process which subsequently

caused the office to be closed for a short period. However, the County Council will be consulting with the Tourism Board as to ways to improve the service to Tourists visiting the town.

Notice of Motion No: 23/2018

Councillor William Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“Can this Council inform us as to what is the position regarding the provision of broadband in the County”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were given an update as follows:-

Eir – 300k rollout

Of the 300,000 homes to be connected by EIR nationally, Laois has approximately 5,833 of these to date 3,501 have been connected to high speed broadband

Virgin Media – Portarligton

- The contractors KN and VN are actively constructing networks in a number of locations throughout the town - (building the network in the locations Node 1 – 6).
- There are currently 6 Node (Street cabinets) locations throughout the town with each Node supplying 250 premises. It takes approx. 5 weeks from start of construction to live delivery of services to a premise.
- Node 2, 3 and part of 4 are now live. Remainder of 4 and 6 will be live by the end of October.
- License application due on Node 5 due to change of location on site.
- Node 7 – 11 will be applied for shortly and constructed under the next phase.

SIRO – PORTLAOISE

- Siro continue to rollout services in Portlaoise town , working in Lyster sq areas at present.

Wi-Fi to Donaghmore Famine Museum.

- Currently liaising with **Dense Air** (Mobile Networks Enhanced and Extended) in relation to provision of Wi – Fi in the Donaghmore Famine Museum as part of a pilot scheme they are undertaking.
- Donaghmore is 1 of only 3 pilot locations in the country been rollout by Dense Air. The other two are in Kilkenny and Dublin.
- Works on the ground will hopefully start within the next few weeks , as well as connecting the Museum there will also be connections to houses in the local surrounding area.

WIFI4EU

- The WiFi4EU initiative promotes free access to Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens in public spaces including parks, squares, public buildings, libraries, health centers and museums in municipalities throughout Europe.
- The WiFi4EU initiative provides municipalities with the opportunity to apply for vouchers to the value EUR 15 000. The vouchers are to be used to install Wi-Fi equipment in public spaces within the municipality that are not already equipped with a free Wi-Fi hotspot.

- Laois County Council have applied for 4 vouchers, however we are unsure how many/if any we will be awarded.

CIGNAL – Clear signal everywhere.

- Cignal acquired the Coillte telecoms business in 2015 supporting the requirements of all wireless operators in Ireland. They are now developing sites across the country which will improve the service of mobile users (blackspots).
- Currently in Laois there are 3 sites being developed :
 1. Killenard – indoor coverage improvements
 2. Errill – rail coverage
 3. Garran - N7 coverage
- * There are a further 5 sites under review in Portlaoise , Stradbally, Ballylinan, Durrow and Mountmellick.
 - I am currently undertaking a mobile blackspot survey and results to date show the need for site in all of the areas mentioned above which would benefit from this project.
 - Eir have informed Cignal that Laois will be one of the first counties to be targeted for their rollout plan which is due to commence in the next three months. Eir were bought by new shareholders earlier this year. They have stated that their intention is to invest in the expansion of their mobile network. Cignal has been appointed as their partner to help deliver sites in areas where poor coverage exists today. Eir have been preparing their rollout plan over the past number of weeks and they informed us that Laois will be one of the first areas targeted for this rollout.

The benefits for County Laois are as follows:-

1. Eir intend to upgrade their existing mobile technology at all existing sites meaning the latest 4G technology will be deployed
2. The sites will be 5G ready which Cignal anticipate will be available next year under pilot projects
3. Cignal has 8 new sites which I have mentioned above and 3 existing sites at Portarlinton , Shraduff Glebe and Sheffield wood which are progressing and if delivered as part of the eir rollout will provide a significant improvement across the county in relation to the mobile coverage footprint
4. Laois will be completed early in the new year

Free town Wi – Fi.

- Ongoing liaising with several companies in relation to Free town Wi – Fi. As Portlaoise and Portarlinton are well served to date, this may be a solution for other towns such as Mountmellick Mountrath Stradbally Abbeyleix Durrow or Rathdowney.
- This initiative can fall under the WI – FI4EU project as mentioned above.

Notice of Motion No: 24/2018

Councillor William Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council request the Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government to increase HAP rent caps in County Laois to ensure Council tenants and HAP tenants are paying the same level of rent and avoid any requirement on HAP tenants to pay top up payments to landlords”

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

Notice of Motion No: 25/2018

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council give a progress report and possible timeframe for the commencement of works at the new library on Main Street, Portlaoise following the recent allocation of additional funds for same”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Department of Community Rural Development published an announcement on the 12th of October indicating a further €1.35m grant support to the new library in Portlaoise, raising the total grant funding to €3m. This was welcome and timely news as the design team –led by MCOH Architects of Portlaoise- are currently finalising tender drawings and documents. The architects have confirmed that the final documentation for tender approval will be ready by the end of November; we will then seek approval from the Department to seek tender prices.

Notice of Motion No: 26/2018

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That Laois County Council request the Minister for Education & Skills to provide a new school for the students and staff at Kolbe Special School Centre without further delay, as it is currently not fit for purpose for the Pupils and Staff”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly

Notice of Motion No: 28/2018

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council writes to the Minister for Education & Skills, supporting the call of the staff and the parents of the pupils of Kolbe house, to be part of a new building project on the site which has been selected for some years, and further that this council assist in any way it can to expedite this badly needed project for the most vulnerable children in our society”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. It was agreed that a letter issue to Mr. Joe McHugh, Minister for Education & Skills as a matter of urgency in relation to this issue.

Notice of Motion No: 27/2018

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council extend the mattress amnesty for another month”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council applied for and was successful in obtaining a grant of €20,000 from the DCCAE this year to fund a mattress amnesty. The amnesty was rolled out in June/July at four locations across the county running for a week in both Portlaoise and Portarlinton Civic amenity sites and for a day each in Rathdowney and Graiguecullen. The event was a great success and 827 mattresses were collected. We are optimistic that the amnesty will be funded again in 2019. Mattresses are accepted at Portlaoise Civic amenity site all year round but they do incur a charge which covers the cost of removing them from site and recycling.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

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