

**MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE
25TH OF JULY 2022 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE**

PRESENT:	Councillor	Thomasina Connell	In The Chair
	Councillors	James Kelly	John King
		Seamus McDonald	Ollie Clooney
		Willie Aird	John Joe Fennelly
		Paschal McEvoy	Caroline Dwane Stanley
		Noel Tuohy	Catherine Fitzgerald
		Conor Bergin	Aidan Mullins
		Padraig Fleming	Ben Brennan
		P.J. Kelly	Barry Walsh
		Paddy Bracken	Aisling Moran

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services, Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services, Ms. Julie Bergin, A/Head of Finance, Mr. Pat Delaney, S.E.O., Corporate & Human Resources, & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

79. VOTES OF SYMPATHIES

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Thomasina Connell, the members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Crotty Family, The Weir, Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny City, on the recent death of Mr. Kieran Crotty, father-in-law of Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services.

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Thomasina Connell, the members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Lawler Family, 19 Rheban Manor, Athy, Co. Kildare, on the recent death of Ms. Paula Lawler, sister of Ms. Marie Murray, Planning Department, Laois County Council.

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Thomasina Connell, the members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Conroy Family, Beladd, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, on the recent death of Mr. Michael Conroy, retired Retained Firefighter and husband of retired employee Ms. Clare Conroy.

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Thomasina Connell, The Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Kavanagh Family, Glenkeen, Spollanstown, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, on the recent death of Mr. Thomas Kavanagh, father of Mr. Emmet Kavanagh, Corporate Service, Laois County Council.

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Thomasina Connell, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Scully Family, Sandyhill Gardens, Ballymun, Dublin 7, on the recent death of Mr. Noel Scully, brother of Ms. Rosa Bray, Water Services, Laois County Council.

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Thomasina Connell, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Brennan Family, 39 Maple Drive, Rockfield, Kells, Co. Meath on the recent death of Ms. Frances Brennan, sister in law of Ms. Antoinette Brennan, Planning Department, Laois County Council.

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Dunne Family, Pallas Little, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Barney Dunne.

On the proposition of Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Holohan Family, Watercastle, Durrow on the recent death of Ms. Mary Holohan.

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Breen Family, Thornberry, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Teresa Breen.

On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Kealy Family, Cremorgan, Timahoe, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Hannah Kealy.

On the proposition of Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Timmons Family, Dr. Murphy Place, Portlaoise, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Michael Timmons.

80. MINUTES OF THE JUNE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON THE 27TH OF JUNE 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the minutes of the June monthly meeting of Laois County Council held on the 27th of June 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

81. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THE 27TH OF JUNE 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the minutes of the A.G.M. of Laois County Council held on the 27th of June 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

82. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 20TH OF JUNE 2022

On the proposition of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the Members unanimously agreed the report on CPG meeting held on the 20th of June 2022 as circulated.

83. REPORT ON THE BORRIS-IN-OSSORY/MOUNTMELICK MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN JUNE 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed the report on the Borris-in-Ossory/Mountmellick Municipal District meeting held in June of 2022 as circulated.

84. REPORT ON SPC MEETINGS HELD IN MARCH 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Pádraig Fleming seconded by Councillor Páscal McEvoy, the Members unanimously agreed the report on the SPC meetings held in March of 2022.

It was noted that Councillor James Kelly was present at the Climate Action & Community SPC held in March. It was agreed to have the record amended in this regard.

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

(i) DISPOSAL OF 0.007 HECTARES OF LAND AT CHURCH STREET, BALLINAKILL

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.007 hectares of land at Church Street, Ballinakill in the townland of Ballinakill, Rathdonnell, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois, for a consideration of €300.00

(ii) DISPOSAL OF 0.0917 HECTARES OF LAND AT BROCKLEY PARK, STRADBALLY

On the proposition of Councillor Páscal McEvoy seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.0917 hectares of land at Brockley Park, Stradbally in the townland of Brockley Park for a consideration of €300.00.

(iii) DISPOSAL OF 2.447 HECTARES OF LAND AT KNOCKMAY, HEPBURN COURT, SQUASH COURT AND KINGDOM HALL, BALLYFIN ROAD, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS.

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 2.447 hectares of land at Knockmay, Hepburn Court, Squash Court and Kingdom Hall, Ballyfin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Knockmay to Cluid Housing, 159-161 Sherriff Street Upper, Dublin D01 R8NO for a consideration of €500,000.00.

Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services outlined that this area is an area for regeneration and had been subject to dereliction and anti-social behavior. Ms. McEvoy gave further details to the members on the density, ownership and management of the scheme. She advised that a P & A (Payment and Availability Agreement) will be entered into with the A.H.B., Cluid.

86. APPROVAL OF THE RAISING OF A LOAN NOT EXCEEDING €15,000,000 FROM THE HOUSING AGENCY PLC., FOR HOUSING PURPOSES

On the proposition of Councillor Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously agreed the raising of a loan not exceeding €15,000,000 from the Housing Agency Plc., for housing purposes.

87. CONSIDERATION OF A FUTURE PRESENTATION BY COMHAIRLE NA NÓG as RECOMMENDED BY THE CORPORATE POLICY GROUP ON THE 18TH OF JULY 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Padraig Fleming seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to a future presentation by Comhairle na nÓg as recommended by the Corporate Policy Group on the 18th of July 2022. It was agreed that the presentation could be tabled on the October meeting agenda.

88. BEST WISHES TO LAOIS LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL IN THE ALL-IRELAND INTERMEDIATE FINAL – JULY 31ST 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously agreed to extend the best wishes of Laois County Council to the Laois Ladies Gaelic Football who will play in the All-Ireland Intermediate Final on the 31st of July 2022

89. CONSIDERATION OF A CIVIC RECEPTION TO MR. ZACH TUOHY AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CORPORATE POLICY GROUP ON THE 18TH OF JULY 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Aisling Moran seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to accord a Civic Reception to Mr. Zach Tuohy as recommended by the Corporate Policy Group on the 18th of July 2022.

90. UPDATE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PORTLAOISE AND PORTARLINGTON LEISURE CENTRES – PRESENTATION BY MR. SEAN QUIRKE, MANAGER OF LAOIS LEISURE

Mr. Sean Quirke delivered a comprehensive presentation on the management of the Portlaoise and Portarlington Leisure Centres. Councillor Eddie Fitzpatrick, Chairman of Laois Leisure was also in attendance. The presentation outlined all services currently available/operational status, details of swimming lessons available, the enhancement of current services, physical works/repairs to the Centres to date and details on reporting and performance .

Councillor James Kelly queried the accommodation of the CCFL using the outdoor pitches and the importance of these being made available for use. Mr. Sean Quirke noted same and indicated that works are required at the playing pitches and will keep the matter under review.

91. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR JULY 2022

The Monthly Management Report for July 2022 was circulated and noted by the Members. The Directors of Services responded to the various queries raised.

92. TRAINING AND CONFERENCES

The Members were circulated with a copy of the conferences and training for ratification and same was agreed on the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

93. CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence received since the last meeting was circulated and noted by the Members:-

- (i) Correspondence from Kerry County Council in relation to Long Covid Clinics dated the 23rd of June 2022
- (ii) Correspondence from Cork County Council in relation to a subsidy for the Irish Fishing Fleet dated the 27th of June 2022
- (iii) Correspondence from Limerick City & County Council in relation to Long Covid Clinics dated the 30th of June 2022
- (iv) Correspondence from Limerick City & County Council in relation to a moratorium on evictions similar to Covid emergency measures
- (v) Acknowledgement email from the Minister of Finance in relation to Notice of Motion No: 27/2022 dated the 12th of July 2022
- (vi) Correspondence from Coillte in relation to Notice of Motion No: 28/2022 dated the 11th July 2022
- (vii) Acknowledgement email from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to Notice of Motion No: 29/2022 dated the 12th of July 2022
- (viii) Acknowledgement email from the Minister for Health in relation to Notice of Motion No: 30/2022 dated the 13th of July 2022
- (ix) Correspondence from ESB in relation to Notice of Motion No: 32/2022 dated the 6th of July 2022

94. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 33/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council liaise with public & private Transport operators to ensure adequate transport & travel provisions are in place for upcoming Ploughing Championships and Electric picnic"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy. Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Senior Engineer confirmed that Laois County Council will engage with the transport operators in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 34/2022

Councillor Ollie Clooney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council put in place appropriate arrangements to recognise people in County Laois who have donated in excess of 100 units of blood"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. Mr. Pat Delaney, S.E.O., indicated that the Blood Transfusion Board have indicated that prior to Covid-19 the Irish Blood Transfusion Board held an annual dinner celebrating those donors who had reached both 50 and 100 units of blood. At this dinner the donor would be given either a gold drop pin in recognition of 50 blood donations or a porcelain pelican in recognition of 100 donations. Since Covid it has not been possible to hold these dinner award ceremonies but at some stage these might be returned. At the moment, donors who have received either 50 or

100 donations receive a gift pack in the post from the organisation in recognition of the achievement.

The Members supported Councillor Clooney and it was agreed that a means of appropriate recognition would be examined by Laois County Council.

Notice of Motion No: 35/2022

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council in consultation with the road office, find a prominent location in the capital town of Portlaoise, to retrofit an existing pedestrian crossing to a rainbow crossing and to use as a pilot with the view to putting one in all our towns and villages in Laois to show solidarity and inclusion to the LGBTQI+ community and to have this in place before the 17th of September 2022 to coincide with the first ever Midlands pride which Portlaoise has the honour of hosting”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John King. The Members were advised that pedestrian crossings are lined and signed in accordance with prescribed, statutory provisions. There is no discretion available to Road Authorities to vary the prescribed provisions. Notwithstanding, subject to agreement of the Motion by Members, it is noted that there is precedent, arising from similar Notices of Motion in other local authority administrative areas, whereby road markings are provided on the approaches to pedestrian crossings that reflect and provide for the sentiments of the Motion. Similar can be arranged in Portlaoise, as agreed by Elected Members. Following a query that was raised on the matter by Councillor Moran with regard to design standards, Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Senior Engineer advised of the need to maintain the black and white crossing markings for the purpose of providing for users with visual impairments.

Notice of Motion No: 36/2022

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give an update on each of the following, Motorhome Aires in each of the town and village in Laois and if we have looked into any grants for land owners in tourist locations to provide campsites to encourage tourists to visit and stay in Laois”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council are not aware of any Motorhome Aires in Laois. Applications for funding can be made to Laois Partnership for the development of such sites. Funding up to a max of €150,000 available to eligible applicants, 75% funding provided. Would need to provide a business plan and applicants ideally would be a sole trader or limited company. Details of a grant of planning permission required.

While there has been some interest and enquiries regarding such developments they did not progress for commercial and other reasons.

Notice of Motion No: 37/2022

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council provide the original contract for the agreement to purchase the 31 houses on Church Avenue, Stradbally, also to include the original agreed price, the price after the first increase and then the cost Laois County Council agreed to pay after the second increase., a copy of the new contract signed by both the Council and the developer and finally, what is the total number of houses that the Council intend to purchase in the estate”

This notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aidan Mullins. The Members were advised that the contract requested is available for elected members to view.

In relation to this turnkey development for 31 units in Stradbally, approval for this scheme was granted for construction costs of €7,193,069. A cost increase was approved by the Department for construction costs of €7,304,157.84. (1.5% increase) and the application was approved by the Dept for construction costs of €8,385,210.74. (14.8% increase). The Council has purchased 31 units in this development for social housing purposes.

Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services responded to the various queries raised by the Members in relation to this Notice of Motion and advised that these were matters for the Developer to address.

Notice of Motion No: 38/2022

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

“That Laois County Council make contact with Minister Peter Burke, Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage to extend the Croi Conaith scheme to houses/ dwellings in the countryside as there are many throughout County Laois. Some might only need small investment to make them habitable again. Some, if not all of the scheme investment could be recouped if the dwellings were to be sold or rented out”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to Minister Peter Burke in this regard.

The Members requested that a booklet be made available detailing Council grants which are available. Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services advised the Members that Laois County Council are proposing to run a marketing campaign on all of their initiatives and that Laois County Council’s website be updated also with details of same.

Notice of Motion No: 39/2022

Councillor Noel Touhy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council write to Minister Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media expressing the concerns regarding price gouging especially in the hospitality sector which is adversely affecting our tourism industry”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to the Minister in this regard.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: _____
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
CORPORATE AFFAIRS