

**MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE
30TH OF MAY 2022 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE**

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Simon Walton, Director of Services, Mr. Trevor Hennessy, A/Senior Engineer, Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Mr. David O' Hara, A/Senior Planner, Ms. Irene Delaney, A.O., & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

49. VOTES OF SYMPATHIES

On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin, Cathaoirleach, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Justin Family, Mountrath Road, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Richard (Dick) Justin, former employee of Laois County Council.

On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin, Cathaoirleach, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Perkins Family, Echo Gate, Dublin Road, Trim, Co. Meath on the death of Mr. Oliver Perkins, former employee of Laois County Council.

On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin, Cathaoirleach, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Moss Family, 11 Esker Gate, Mountmellick on the recent death of Mr. Patrick Moss, father of Mr. John Moss, Ganger, Central Area, Laois County Council

On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin, Cathaoirleach, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Lewis Family, Oaklawn, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Ted Lewis, father of Mr. Derek Lewis, Roads Section & Mr. Keith Lewis, Fire Section, Laois County Council.

On the proposition of Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Sheeran Family, Grennan, Attanagh on the recent death of Mr. John Sheeran.

On the proposition of Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Fitzpatrick Family, Station Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Paddy Fitzpatrick.

On the proposition of Councillor John King, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Dillane Family, Johnstown Road, Rathdowney, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Michael Dillane.

On the proposition of Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Brennan Family, Doonane, Crettyard, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Margaret (Peggy) Brennan.

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Fennell Family, Grattan Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Peter Fennell.

On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Ramsbottom Family, Fossey, Timahoe, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Sean Ramsbottom.

50. MINUTES OF THE APRIL MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON THE 25TH OF APRIL 2022

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor John King, the minutes of the April monthly meeting of Laois County Council held on the 25th of April 2022 were confirmed as circulated. Councillor Pdraig Fleming, under matters arising, enquired if Laois County Council had received a reply from Eirgrid on the Notice of Motion which was considered at the April meeting.

The Members were advised that correspondence had issued to Eirgrid on foot of this Notice of Motion. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that following a call to Eirgrid they have confirmed that a response would issue in the coming days. It was re-iterated by the Members that the Risk Assessment be carried out by an independent body. Members also highlighted that the purpose of the independent risk assessment was to remove any doubt regarding the effectiveness of the various mitigation measures, particularly those mitigation measures to retain oil. Councillor Mullins stated that, subject to an agreed scoping process, the community will accept the findings of the independent scoping process. Councillor Brennan queried as to alternative sources for the local public water supply.

51. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 19th OF APRIL 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the Members unanimously agreed the report on CPG meeting held on the 19th of April 2022 as circulated.

52. REPORT ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN APRIL 2022

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously agreed the report on Municipal District meetings held in April 2022 as circulated.

53. CONFIRM DATE FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed that the Annual General Meeting of Laois County Council would take place on Monday, June 27th 2022 at 2.30 p.m. in accordance with Section 3(Schedule 10) of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended.

54. PART VIII OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 AS AMENDED IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORT PROTECTOR OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE AND EVENT SPACE AT SCOIL MHUIRE, PORTLAOISE

The Members were circulated with an information note on the above proposed development together with the Part VIII report. On the proposition of Councillor Thomasina Connell seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the proposed development of the Fort Protector Outdoor Performance and Event Space at Scoil Mhuire Portlaoise. It was noted that the proposed development consists of:

- The creation of a significant gathering space for performance and events
- The construction/installation of a performance stage, temporary awning/covering and associated ancillary services including lighting, drainage, power supply and communications
- The construction of building to accommodate welfare and storage needs associated with the Stage/Performance and Event Space
- The provision of a permanent gateway structure to control access to and from the Performance and Event Space
- Demolition of existing lean-to extension to the Granary Building and expansion of the audience area into that space to include storage space underneath
- Creation of new access to the performance space from Tower Hill (using existing opening in Fort Wall)

55. PART VIII OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 AS AMENDED IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE

N77 ABBEYLEIX ROAD, PORTLAOISE – REHABILITATION AND ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

The Members were circulated with an information note on the above proposed development together with the Part VIII report. On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, the Members unanimously agreed to the proposed development of the N77 Abbeyleix Road Rehabilitation & Enhancement Scheme. The Members noted that the development will consist of the following

- Refurbished footpath/cycle facilities on the western side of the N77 Abbeyleix Road
- New footpath/cycle facilities on the eastern side of the N77 Abbeyleix Road providing connectivity with ESB Training Centre, Meelick Road and Midway Hotel
- Altered road cross section which shall reduce the prevailing speed of vehicles
- Provision of new pavement surface
- Review of Public Lighting and provision of additional poles where appropriate
- New landscaping
- Additional drainage

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

(i) DISPOSAL OF 0.33 HECTARES OF LAND AT DOONANE

On the proposition of Councillor Ben Brennan seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.33 hectares of land at Doonane in the townland of Doonane for a consideration of €100.00.

(ii) DISPOSAL OF 0.109 HECTARES OF LAND AT BOGHLONE, CLONROOSKE LITTLE, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.109 hectares of land at Boghlone, Clonrooske Little, Portlaoise in the townland of Boghlone for a consideration €10,000.00.

(iii) DISPOSAL OF 2.58 HECTARES OF LAND AT J17 NATIONAL ENTERPRISE PARK, TOGHER

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 2.58 hectares of land at J17

National Enterprise Park, Togher, Portlaoise in the townland of Togher for a consideration of €700,000 plus V.A.T.

(iv) DISPOSAL OF 1.2 HECTARES OF LAND AT J17 NATIONAL ENTERPRISE PARK, TOGHER

On the proposition of Councillor Thomasina Connell seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 1.2 hectares of land at J17 National Enterprise Park, Togher, Portlaoise in the townland of Togher for a consideration of €340,000 plus V.A.T.

The Members welcomed the disposals of land and congratulated all associated with same. Councillor Aisling Moran requested a breakdown of all the costs relating to J17. Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance referred to the very comprehensive report which issued to the Elected Members in February 2022. Further expenditure in relation to the lands, that are subject to the Section 183 notices will be incurred in the coming months.

(v) DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD CONSISTING OF 0.29 HECTARES OF LAND AT CAMPLONE, BALLYFIN, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold consisting of 0.29 hectares of land at Campclone, Ballyfin, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, R32 C6P6 in the townland of Camclon for a consideration of €300.00

57. NOMINATION OF MR. KEVIN GEOGHEGAN REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION TO THE LAOIS LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to the nomination of Mr. Kevin Geoghegan representing the Department of Social Protection to the Laois Local Community Development Committee.

58. PRESENTATION BY MS. CAITRIONA RYAN, LAOIS VOLUNTEER CENTRE - UKRAINIAN SITUATION

Ms. Caitriona Ryan Manager of the Laois Volunteer Centre delivered a comprehensive presentation to the Members on the background to the Laois Volunteer Centre and the services provided by them. The Members complimented Ms. Ryan on the work being carried out by the Centre. It was agreed that the contact details for the Centre be published on Laois County Council's website.

59. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR MAY 2022

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

60. 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 Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy.

61. CORRESPONDENCE

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

- (i) Correspondence received from Wexford County Council dated the 26th of April 2022 in relation to a call on the Minister to introduce financial assistance to assist in the removal of asbestos from residential dwellings
- (ii) Correspondence received from Wexford County Council dated the 26th of April 2022 in relation to a call on the Minister for Environment, Climate & Communications and the Commissioner for Energy Regulation to ensure a transparent, robust and thorough procurement process be applied to the next body of Electrical Contractors agreement
- (iii) Correspondence from the Department of Education dated the 10th of May 2022 in relation to the Kolbe Special School
- (iv) Correspondence from Cavan County Council dated the 17th of May 2022 in relation to a call on the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications opposing the ban on the cutting and sale of turf
- (v) Correspondence from Clare County Council dated the 18th of May 2022 in relation to diverting spare capacity traffic to Shannon Airport
- (vi) Correspondence from the Minister for Rural & Community Development dated the 6th of May 2022 & the 25th of May 2022 in relation to LIS Funding

62. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 19/2022

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

“That Laois County Council write to the Department of Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland seeking the introduction of a Multi-Annual Footpath Restoration Programme, similar to the Multi Annual Road

Restoration Programme. Such a programme is required to enable a thorough and sustainable investment programme in footpaths, acknowledging the extent of the footpath network throughout the state”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to the Department of Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 20/2022

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

“That Laois County Council supports the right to a Personal Assistance Service (PAS) for disabled people to have freedom, choice and control over all aspects of their lives to enable them to fully participate in an inclusive society as equals”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that confirmation of Laois County Council’s support would be sent to the Independent Living Movement Ireland.

Notice of Motion No: 21/2022

Councillor Ollie Clooney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council consider taking over the payment of all local CCTV Programmes electricity costs”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Conor Bergin. The Members were advised that there is not a uniformity of arrangements across Community CCTV installations. Many individual cameras are powered directly from individual premises, where it would not be possible to identify electricity costs attributable to CCTV. Given that the Community CCTV programme was initiated by the Department of Justice, it may be more appropriate to seek funding from that source, where maintenance grants of up to €5000 can be made available by the Department.

Notice of Motion No: 22/2022

Councillor James Kelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council as a matter of urgency identify what lands and serviced sites are available in the county to fast track the provision of purposely designed and built modular accommodation to address the housing crisis. This type of rapid-build housing is now essential with the influx of Ukrainian refugees and the unprecedented increases in housing waiting lists, emergency and direct provision accommodation”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that Laois County Council prepared and adopted the County Development Plan for the period 2021-2027 in early 2022 which zoned lands for a future population of approximately 5,500 people over the plan period. This plan has identified appropriately zoned and serviced land which can be used to accommodate a range of housing options – private, affordable and social housing in a range of locations.

In tandem with this the Housing Authority has prepared a Housing Delivery Action Plan under Housing for All which aligns with the County Development Plan and aims to deliver and exceed on the targets issued by the Dept of Housing for social housing build delivery over the next 5 years. The HDAP also includes an objective to increase our landbank for future build delivery and for the provision of serviced sites across the county and we continue to seek opportunities in this regard.

All methods of construction suggested will be considered with site suitability for rapid build, cost and speed of delivery in mind but are subject to Department approval in the provision of social housing.

Notice of Motion No: 23/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council get an update from the HSE regarding the re-opening of day care centres in County Laois. The timelines previously discussed have passed for some units”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that an update would be sought from the HSE on the matter.

Notice of Motion No: 24/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council ask the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohoe, T.D. to consider including the self-employed and more specifically sole traders in the cycle to work scheme or a similar scheme”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised that correspondence will issue to the Minister for Finance in this regard. The Members also requested that consideration be given to extending the scheme to include Elected Members.

Notice of Motion No: 25/2022

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

“That Laois County Council contact Transport Infrastructure Ireland to reinstate the lights that are not in operation on the entry and exit lanes on the M7/M8 Motorway”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will contact T.I.I. on this matter.

Notice of Motion No: 26/2022

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

“That Laois County Council contact C.I.E. and other school bus providers to encourage them to use electric buses where possible to carry school going children to and from school”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will contact C.I.E. on this matter.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

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