

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 20TH OF APRIL 2022 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT Mr. John Joe Fennelly, Leas Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C.
Ms. Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.
Mr. Noel Tuohy, M.C.C.
Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.
Mr. Barry Walsh, M.C.C.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services
Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously passed a vote of sympathy to the Kelly Family, Sweetview, Abbeyleix on the recent death of Mr. Gerry Kelly, brother in law of Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH OF MARCH 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Thomasina Connell seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th of March 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH OF MARCH 2022

Councillor Dwane Stanley requested an update on the following Notice of Motion which had been proposed and seconded in her name at the March meeting of the Municipal District held on the 16th of March, 2022:-

Notice of Motion No: 42/2022

"That the planning section of Laois County Council enforce the derelict sites legislation on the owners of the derelict cottage and site on Harpers Lane and the adjacent site of Centrepoint"

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised the members that a meeting is scheduled with the owner of the site later this week. An assessment of the site is currently being carried out with a view to taking the necessary action under the Derelict Sites Act to address the issue.

Councillor Willie Aird requested an update on the following Notice of Motion which had been proposed and seconded at the March meeting of the Municipal District held on the 16th of March 2022:-

Notice of Motion No: 36/2022

"That this Council install pedestrian road markings where the Fr. Browne Avenue meets the Mountrath Road in three locations - before the roundabout on Fr. Browne Avenue, to the left of the roundabout where the existing natural crossing takes place and to the right of the roundabout"

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. confirmed that the Portlaoise MD Office is currently drafting a design for the upgrade of all crossings on the roundabout to include the installation of three zebra crossings on the Mountrath Road and Fr. Browne Avenue. The Portlaoise MD office will be liaising with the Road Design Section and the Active travel Section to discuss opportunities for funding for the installation of one or possibly two of these zebra crossings in 2022.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that, while efforts were being made to secure funding for the controlled crossings, Laois County Council would install white tram lines with a buff-coloured infill to highlight the existing uncontrolled crossings as an interim measure.

4. Clonrooske Abbey Residential Development

It was agreed that the following Notice of Motion would be discussed in conjunction with this item:-

Notice of Motion No: 54/2022 in the name of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley:-

"That this Council give an update on the completion of the new houses in Clonrooske Abbey, contact the developer to get the public lights working properly throughout the Estate and an update with the owner of the vacant site that was earmarked for a creche"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that this scheme is to be delivered by June 2022. The development

is being delivered via a contract between the voluntary housing body and the developer.

Mr. Jim O' Sullivan, Building Control Officer has contacted the Developer in relation to the public lighting throughout the estate and the repair of same.

The planning permission pertaining to the site which was earmarked for a creche has now expired (Pl ref no – 05/912). There is no current proposal before the Planning Authority for this site.

Councillor Dwane Stanley expressed concern regarding delays in the completion of all three phases of the development. Furthermore, it was stated that there is only one public light in the entire estate which is working.

Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services confirmed that the Developer and the AHB are meeting on site on a regular basis.

The Members requested that the Planning Department follow up on the now vacant 'creche' site, proceed to take Phase 2 in charge, plan for repairs to public lighting and meet with the contract parties to support an early completion date for the development.

Councillor John Joe Fennelly, Chair of the MD, requested that Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services, take the Members concerns into consideration.

Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services advised that a meeting with Elected Members would be scheduled for next week, on site, to review the various issues.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed that a meeting also be arranged with Cluid and the Elected Members, a proposal that was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird.

5. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 53/2022

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

"That this Council repair or replace the footpaths on the Borris Road from Martley's shop up to St Frances School"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the location will be examined and referred to the Active Travel Section for inclusion in future applications for Active Travel

funding. Essential repairs will be carried out in the interim under the Councillors Discretionary Footpath allocation.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald requested that the ramped section of footpath at this location be made more walker friendly.

Notice of Motion No: 55/2022

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

"That this Council give an update on the completion of Rockview Estate and request the owner of the site in Rockview Square to repair the section of fencing that is broken"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that planning permission was granted under pl ref no. 16/527 for the completion of the Rockview Estate. This permission expires in October 2023. To date no commencement notice has been lodged for the development. The Planning Authority will investigate the fencing in Rockview Square and will liaise with the owner/developer to rectify any issues

The Members requested an updated report for the May meeting of the Municipal District from the Planning Department to include details of the fencing repairs, the timing of the building of the site and the condition of the unfinished part of the estate.

Notice of Motion No: 56/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council re-surface/carry out repair works on road L 7780-0 between Blandsfort Cross and Graigue Cross Roads as sections of this road are in poor repair"

The Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD office will examine the road L7780-0 and carry out repairs in the coming weeks - this location can be considered for surfacing under the 2023 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 57/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council consider traffic calming measures on the R425 road from Portlaoise into Ballyroan Village. Heavy goods vehicles are driving through the village at dangerous speeds early in the morning and during evening times"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Road Design will arrange site meeting with elected member to identify exact location and issues and will prepare a proposal.

Councillor Willie Aird suggested that Councillor Walsh consider funding the installation of a speed radar sign at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 58/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council seek an update from Irish water regarding the upgrade of the Ballyroan Waste Water Treatment Plant with timelines to completion"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Funding has been approved by Irish Water to progress upgrade works to Ballyroan WWTP including the following works - Provide a Third SBR tank within Ballyroan WWTP existing site, including all associated equipment and civil works, Provide 1No. stormwater storage tank, Provide 1 No. sludge storage tank, Provide 1No. Flow Splitter Chamber with Valves, Provide 2 No. Air blowers, Provide 2 No. Sludge wastage pumps, Provide power supply. It is planned to start upgrade works in Q4 2022, subject to planning approval.

Notice of Motion No: 59/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council address the problem with drainage and verge build up in Clonkeen near the end of Lane"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that this location will be examined further with a view to carrying out the required repairs in the coming weeks

Notice of Motion No: 60/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install safety measures in the next phase of Triogue Way at Rankin's Wood and in the meantime put some safety measures in place"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the location in question has been visited and concerns noted. Safety Improvement measures are currently under design and will be implemented over the coming months.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald requested the installation of temporary measures in the short term.

Notice of Motion No: 61/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council repair the car road between Saint John's Square and Mill View and also examine the possibility of installing a crossing from Mill View to the Memorial Park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that necessary repairs will be carried out by the Portlaoise MD Road Office on the Car Road in the coming weeks. Road Design will arrange site meeting with elected member to identify exact location and requirement for pedestrian crossing.

Notice of Motion No: 62/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install barriers at the corner of The Ridge Road and Moneyballytyrell for the safety of children exiting from the Skate Park and Playground onto the busy junction/road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will liaise with the Sports Office to examine the access requirements for service & maintenance vehicles through this entrance and options for installing a removable barrier at this location.

Councillor Tuohy requested a follow up report for the next meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 63/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council consider assisting and showing leadership in Portlaoise becoming an Autism Friendly Town as is the case in Clonakilty"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Business Support Unit will liaise with the Laois Chamber to see if this is a project they would be interested in pursuing in Portlaoise.

Notice of Motion No: 64/2022

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council carry out drainage works at Ironmills & Monaclear, Ballinakill"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the drainage works at Ironmills, Ballinakill on the L-7799 will be carried out in the coming weeks. The drainage issue at Monaclear, Ballinakill on the L-5735-11 will require some further detailed surveying & design and will be included in applications for funding for Climate Adaptation and Resilience works for 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 65/2022

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council install 'Children at Play' signs in Fairways Housing Estate, Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will liaise with Councillor Fennelly on site in relation to the installation of 'Children at Play' signs at the Fairways Estate in Abbeyleix.

Notice of Motion No: 66/2022

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council service the water fountains on Main Street, Abbeyleix and ensure that they are operational for the summer tourist season"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council is currently in the process of appointing a Structural Engineer with Masonry Conservation expertise. Once appointed, this location will be examined for refurbishment and conservation works mid-2022.

Notice of Motion No: 67/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council repair the footpaths in Newpark, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that footpath repairs will be carried out at this location in the coming weeks under the Councillors Discretionary Footpath allocation.

It was noted that Councillor Fitzgerald gave a commitment to a contribution from her discretionary funding. A lengthy discussion ensued wherein the Members enquired as to the possibility of specific funding for repair and maintenance works to footpaths.

It was agreed that the following Notice of Motion be submitted for the May Monthly Meeting of Laois County Council:-

"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."

Notice of Motion No: 68/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council turn the lifebuoy the correct way around at the lake at Kilminchy"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that heretofore the ring buoys located around Kilminchy lakes were installed and managed by Kilminchy Homeowners and not by Laois County Council. It has been agreed that the Portlaoise MD office will relocate the ring buoys and that regular inspection of the ring buoys will commence and be carried out by the Water Safety Development Officer in consultation with Kilminchy Homeowners.

Notice of Motion No: 69/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council commence the process of imposing weight restrictions on the Mountmellick Road in order to reduce the number of HGV's using this road to go through Portlaoise Town Centre"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald.

The Members were advised that the Roads Department will assess the options for the introduction of a weight limit and will revert to Council with the options available.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley indicated that if restrictions are imposed, there was the possibility of local businesses being adversely affected. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that a weight restriction would not preclude local access and, rather, the system would only compel 'passing through' HCV Traffic to divert from the Town Centre.

Councillor Connell requested an update for the May Meeting of the Municipal District clarifying how the weight restrictions can be introduced i.e. via byelaws, erection of revised road signs etc.

Notice of Motion No: 70/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise MD call on Laois County Council to improve the road linings and markings at the crossroads at Ballycarnan/Ballyknocken"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Roads Office will make arrangements to refresh and improve the road markings at the junction of the R425 & L-6773 at Ballycarnan/Ballyknocken Portlaoise.

Notice of Motion No: 71/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise MD call on Laois County Council to inspect for safety the wall on Harpurs Lane given the level of construction activity taking place at present"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council is currently in the process of appointing a Structural Engineer with Masonry Conservation expertise. Once appointed the wall on Harpurs lane will be assessed.

Following a discussion, the Members collectively agreed the significant heritage value associated with the wall. In these circumstances Members were collectively of the view that repairs to the wall be advised and arranged by Laois County Council.

In that light, repairs will be informed and prioritised following the engineering/masonry assessment.

Notice of Motion No: 72/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise MD call on Laois County Council to ensure the continuation of the footpath on the Timahoe Road to coincide with the development of the new Dunamaise College"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that pedestrian facilities along the front boundary of the site on the R426 on the Timahoe Road Portlaoise will be examined as part of the Planning process and provided as part of the development of the site at this location.

It was noted that this Notice of Motion would be referred to the Planning Department for their information.

6. Correspondence

It was noted that no correspondence had been received since the last meeting.

7. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 18th of May 2022 at 11.00 a.m.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

**Director of Corporate
Affairs**