

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 6TH OF DECEMBER 2023 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

RESENT: Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Mr. Barry Walsh, M.C.C.
Ms. Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C.
Mr. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.
Ms. Marie Tuohy, M.C.C.

APOLOGIES: Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.

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

1. MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER 2023

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh, the minutes of the November meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District held on the 15th of November 2023 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE NOVEMBER MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER 2023

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley sought an update on Notice of Motion 143/2023, which had been considered at the November meeting of the Municipal District. The Motion provided that *"That this Council cut back the trees on the boundary between Carmody Way / Higgins Park Fairgreen and Clonrooske Abbey."* In November, in response to the Motion, the Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will arrange for an Arborist to assess the trees at this location and address any significant issues that arise. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. advised that assessments to advise necessary works were underway and he would provide further updates, as matters progress.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services, raised Notice of Motion 134/2023 wherein it was requested *"That this Council give an update in relation to the lift which is out of use at the car park at the County Council plaza."* In replying to the Motion, it had been indicated that the Lift would be repaired to support the Christmas Market. Mr Walton clarified that, due to the extent to which the lift was damaged, repairs would not be possible in advance of the Christmas Market.

3. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 152/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council check and top up all salt bins that were put in place throughout the Portlaoise Municipal District. Some are letting water in and may require some hardware to ensure correct closure when not in use"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will examine the salt bins in the various locations and ensure that they are filled and weatherproof.

Notice of Motion No: 153/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council carry out a flood review at Clonbrin Corner, Ballyroan. This area is prone to flooding and needs flood relief measures installed as it is causing a traffic hazard when flooded on a very busy road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson S.E.E. will make himself available to examine the location with Councillor Walsh.

Notice of Motion No: 154/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council write to Coillte and request an annual hedge cutting maintenance plan for all lands with road frontage within the Portlaoise MD and Laois County area. Specifically regular hedge cutting notices have been issued in the Graiguenahowan/Spink area which cause a potentially hazardous situation for road traffic"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will contact Coillte in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 155/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council repair the paths in St. John's Square"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet with Councillor Tuohy, on site, to examine the paths in question and make arrangements to have repairs carried out as required.

The Members requested an update on a request that had been made for a Footpath Restoration Programme. It was noted that previous correspondence had issued to the Department of Transport in this regard following a Notice of Motion considered in 2022. It was agreed to follow up this matter with the Department of Transport.

The following two Notice of Motions were taken together:

Notice of Motion No: 156/2023 – Councillor Marie Tuohy

"That this Council install lighting from the Rugby club to Junction 17 as this is a very busy area for pedestrians including children to and from the club"

Notice of Motion No: 158/2023 – Councillor Willie Aird

"That Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council to extend the lighting from the entrance of the Enterprise Park to the entrance to the Rugby Club"

Both Notice of Motions were seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council's Road Design Department will provide a cost estimate for the installation of public lighting between Junction 17 and Portlaoise Rugby Club.

Notice of Motion No: 157/2033

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update as to the works on the Disability Suite in Laois Leisure, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council have been advised by the supplier that the tracking hoist system and shower changing table will be installed early in the new year in the disability suite at Laois Leisure, Portlaoise.

Notice of Motion No: 159/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council to put traffic calming measures in place at Kilmainham, Mountmellick, similar to those at the Rock School"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install signage and road markings on the R422 in the vicinity of Kilmainham, Mountmellick.

Notice of Motion No: 160/2023

Councillor Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District arrange to install traffic calming measures at Capoley in order to reduce the speed at this location"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E., will make myself available to meet with Councillor Aird on site in Ballycarnan to examine the specific location and make arrangements for traffic calming measures to be put in place.

Notice of Motion No: 161/2023

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

"That Laois County Council be given an update as to when the six houses in Knockmay that are vacant will be refurbished and tenanted"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council is currently dealing with 5 vacant social housing stock in the Knockmay area and is not aware of any other local authority owned unit currently vacant. Two properties are the subject of energy retrofit works in addition to relet work and will be completed for tenanting in Q1 2024. Two properties are almost ready to be relet and will be

tenanted in the coming weeks. One property was recently surrendered and assessed relet works issued for pricing. There is a considerable amount of works to be done and this will be ready for letting by end of Q1 2024.

Notice of Motion No: 162/2023

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

"That Laois County Council be given an update as to when a Liaison Officer / maintenance person for the elderly and disabled tenants will be reappointed to the post"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Human Resources are a matter for the Chief Executive. Members will be aware that there has been a substantial increase in the level of maintenance provision in the Council in recent years. The provision of additional maintenance resources have substantially improved the response time across the range of Council stock. Councillor Dwane Stanley asked if the stock of houses for the elderly could be reviewed as soon as possible.

Notice of Motion No: 163/2023

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

"That Laois County Council carry out drainage works at Doary, Ballyroan to prevent flooding of private property"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that drainage works at Doary, Ballyroan will be carried out within the next four to six weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 164/2023

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

"That this Council in conjunction with Ballinakill Tidy Towns and Development Committee put a plan in place to re-pave and landscape the Square in Ballinakill as the present paving is in very poor condition"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to draw up

a landscaping and paving design for the Square in Ballinakill. The Portlaoise MD Office will liaise with the Community Section & The Town Regeneration Officer to seek funding for these works in 2024.

Notice of Motion No: 165/2023

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

"That this Council install a lay by area close to the junction at Aughnacross, Moate, Ballinakill to allow for extra wide vehicle movement in the areas"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will examine the location and install a lay by in this location in early 2024.

Notice of Motion No: 166/2023

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

"That this Council include in their footpath programme the graveyard at the Church of the Most Holy Rosary, Abbeyleix as the paths in the graveyard are in very poor condition"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will undertake an inspection of the footpaths in this cemetery to ascertain what works might be required.

Notice of Motion No: 167/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council request the upgrade of the Astro Pitch at Portlaoise Leisure Centre"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will be liaising with the Board of Laois Leisure in terms of their long term sustainable capital investment requirements and the prioritisation of same.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald sought a report on the list of works required, noting that the pitch is regularly unsafe and not playable at the moment.

Notice of Motion No: 168/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install railings on the footpath under the railway bridge on the Mountrath Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise Municipal District Office will liaise with Irish Rail regarding a proposal to widen the footpaths where possible beneath the Railway Bridge on the Mountrath Road, Portlaoise.

Notice of Motion No: 169/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council contact Irish Water to provide the promised new sewage pipes for Colliers Lane"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will contact Uisce Eireann, as requested.

4. Correspondence

It was noted that no correspondence had been circulated since the last meeting of the Municipal District.

5. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 17th of January 2024. The Schedule of Meetings for 2024 was unanimously agreed on the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly. It was agreed that the September meeting would take place on the earlier date of the 11th of September 2024 due to the National Ploughing Championships being held from the 17th to the 19th of September 2024 in County Laois.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services