

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 16TH OF FEBRUARY 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.

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

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 19TH OF JANUARY 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the minutes of the meeting held on the 19th of January were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 19TH OF JANUARY 2022

Councillor Dwane Stanley requested an update on the following Notice of Motion which had been proposed and seconded at the December meeting of the Municipal District held on the 13th of December 2021:-

Notice of Motion No: 181/2021

"That this Council give an update on progress made to secure a building in Portlaoise for the Civil Defence"

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised the Members that Laois County Council are actively working to source a suitable property to meet the ongoing and future needs of Laois Civil Defence. It may be necessary to consider a new build if a suitable property is not forthcoming on the property market over the course of the next 4 to 6 months. The Members will be kept apprised on any progress in the matter.

3. Roads Restoration Programme 2022 - 2024

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. advised that he had previously briefed the MD Members on the Roads Restoration Programme 2022-2024. The Programme was agreed, as circulated, on the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell.

4. Parking at Ardán Glás

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. briefed the meeting on this item, including the issues that had been highlighted following a meeting with the residents of the estate in late 2021, in relation to parking issues on the entrance roads in particular at school pick up and drop off times when the traffic becomes congested. It was noted that there are also issues in relation to emergency access and the safety of pedestrians. Mr. Wilkinson, S.E.E. circulated a draft of proposals to the Members and same was unanimously agreed on the proposition of Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald.

5. Policy for the naming of Housing Developments, Commemorative Naming of Infrastructure and the provision of Monuments, Memorials and Plaques - Nominees for the Naming and Memorials Committee

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services referred to the above policy, recommended to Laois County Council by the Transportation, Environment & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee, and approved by Laois County Council at the January 2022 Monthly Meeting. The policy provides that three Elected Members from each Municipal District be nominated to the Committee. It was noted that this new committee would replace the existing Placenames Committee. The following Members were unanimously nominated to the Committee-

- Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald
- Councillor Noel Tuohy
- Councillor Willie Aird

6. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 16/2022

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

"That this Council cut back the trees, carry out drainage works and establish the boundary at the rear of The Village Estate adjacent to the Ballyfin Road/Newpark to repair a few sections of footpaths in the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will develop a proposal to address the boundary at the rear of The Village estate with a view to seeking funding for these works. Minor tree surgery works to address overhanging branches and minor footpath repairs works will be carried out in the coming weeks.

Councillor Dwane Stanley also indicated that there is a tree at the front of the estate that requires examination – it was agreed that this would be examined.

Notice of Motion No: 17/2022

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

"That this Council reinstate the road markings at the entrance to Glenbarrow Estate and install road markings and a yield sign at the junction along the main spine road in the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the road markings at the entrance to Glenbarrow will be refreshed in the coming weeks. A new yield line and sign will be installed in the coming weeks also.

Councillor Dwane Stanley indicated that the new yield line and sign could be funded from her discretionary funding.

Notice of Motion No: 18/2022

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

"That this Council address the parking of cars in Millbrook Estate where it is causing obstructions on the footpaths and engage with the residents in the estate to establish an agreed outcome"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will engage with residents in Millbrook Estate to examine the location for the installation of double yellow

lines and/or bollards to address the parking of cars causing obstructions on the footpaths.

Notice of Motion No: 19/2022

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

"That this Municipal District request a meeting with the HSE regarding the community nursing unit and day care services in Abbeyleix "

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that a letter would issue to the HSE in this regard. Councillor John Joe Fennelly indicated that there are significant concerns in relation to the closure of the day care services in Abbeyleix and in particular concerns in relation to those elderly people from remote areas who are keen to access the service following prolonged periods of social isolation arising from Covid-19. Councillor Fennelly requested that the HSE address the Municipal District regarding the matter. Councillor Fennelly sought the support of the two Laois County Council representatives on the Dublin Mid-Leinster Health Forum. Councillor Connell indicated that both herself and Councillor Fleming will support and contact the HSE in this regard in their capacity as the Laois County Council's representatives.

It was agreed that this is an extremely essential service for both the community and the staff of the Centre.

Notice of Motion No: 20/2022

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

"That this Council install extra traffic calming measures at Rathmoyle, Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine this location and carry out repairs as required.

Notice of Motion No: 21/2022

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

"That this Council replace the fence at Heywood Village in Ballinakill beside Gills Pond"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine this location and carry out repairs as required.

Notice of Motion No: 22/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council to erect signs for Mountrath and Portlaoise at Leary's Cross, on the Mountrath to Raheen Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine this location and install appropriate signage as required.

Notice of Motion No: 23/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District call on Laois County Council to erect additional lighting on the Triogue walk from Riverview to Green Mill Lane"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the upgrade of this section of the Triogue way will be the subject of an application to An Bord Pleanala in 2022. Additional lighting along this route will be included in the works proposals to be submitted.

Councillor Willie Aird re-iterated the importance of prioritising lighting in this area. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that given that this section of walk is running alongside the River Triogue, Laois County Council are required to prepare an application to An Bord Pleanala to comply with environmental legal requirements. This application will be made during the next two months and the Members would be kept apprised.

Notice of Motion No: 24/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District request the Roads Department to carry out necessary repairs on the Road from the Hollow Bush to entrance of property at Clonad"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will carry out repairs on the L-26965 Clonadadoran in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 25/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council provide an update in relation to the Portlaoise Town Bus Service"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council have been in continuous contact with the NTA in an effort to advance proposals for the Portlaoise Town Bus Service. Laois County Council have sought and received agreement in principal for Laois County Council to proceed to procure designers to advance the Bus Stop design for the service. Designers will be procured and appointed at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that two new bus routes are to be introduced with a total of 35 to 40 bus stops. Laois County Council has recently secured agreement from NTA for the Council to advance the design of the various bus stops to be provided. This is being advanced.

Once designs are in place two further tenders are required to underpin implementation of the bus service – one for the construction of the bus stops and one for the operation of the bus service.

Mr. Walton indicated that the timeline for the operation of the bus service will be towards the end of 2023, on the basis that NTA continue to fund its implementation. The Members indicated that this is a huge development for Portlaoise Town.

Notice of Motion No: 26/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council undertake a review of our public spaces across the Portlaoise Municipal District with a view to making these safer for families, children and those accessing these areas alone, in particular The People's Park and the Linear Park, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Safety in Public places is a consideration in the

provision of new and enhanced public realm and amenity offerings. To this end our Triogue Way Urban Regeneration and Active Travel Project gave consideration to both safety and security in their design by making places more accessible therefore increasing footfall by opening up of area's for greater public use and increased oversight being one such element of this. The improved infrastructure and introduction of adequate Public lighting along the current section of the Triogue way in the Peoples Park and on future sections in both the Peoples Park and the Linear Park proposed over the next 18 -24 months will be another positive measure in this regard. Consultation with the Joint Policing committee may also bring about opportunities to enhance safety at these and other public spaces also.

All Members supported this Notice of Motion and the importance of public lighting was highlighted. The Members highlighted the need for Laois County Council to link in with the Joint Policing Committee and An Garda Siochana.

Notice of Motion No: 27/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That this Council set out the timeline for the completion of the repair of the clock in Market Square, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that it is Laois County Council's intention to have the clock on the Market Square roundabout operational by mid-March.

Councillor Aird enquired as to the possibility of a plough being put on display on the roundabout at Market Square to recognise the 2022 National Ploughing Championships.

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. confirmed that the works to the clock are the first phase of the overall enhancements of the Market Square roundabout, site visits were carried out to assess the clock in late 2021 and further attendances to site were required in February 2022 to complete repairs to the clock. The second phase which will commence in the coming weeks will involve the removal of bricks, installing metal art pieces and some soft landscaping. It is expected that these will be carried out in four to six weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 28/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install roundabouts at the following junctions on the Mountmellick Road - Green Mill Lane & Ballyfin Road and an update on Harper's Lane"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council undertook a junction assessment of the 3 locations on the Mountmellick Road. The recommendation of the junction assessment was that the provision of roundabouts was an appropriate intervention. This junction assessment has been submitted to TII in an effort to secure funding for the delivery of the roundabouts. To date no funding has been allocated by TII for is project.

Notice of Motion No: 29/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council have a free amnesty day for mattresses and couches"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the free amnesty days for the collection and disposal of bulky goods (mattresses and couches etc.) are organised by Laois County Council with state funding under the annual Anti-Dumping Initiative. The state sets the terms of the Anti-Dumping Initiative annually. Laois County Council will seek to include the collection and disposal of bulky goods (mattresses and couches etc.) as part of its 2022 Anti-Dumping Initiatives application. Details of the Initiative are likely to be made available in the next couple of months.

The Members indicated that this was a hugely popular initiative and an opportunity for the recycling of these large items and proves cost effect for the Local Authority.

The Members requested that correspondence issue to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage outlining the discussion at today's meeting and also that the matter be tabled for consideration at the February monthly meeting of Laois County Council. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that the matter could be raised during the discussion on the Litter Management Plan 2022-2024 which is tabled for adoption at the February meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 30/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update and possible time frame for works at Rathleague especially the pedestrian crossing"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that design work for a new footpath and pedestrian crossing is currently progressing. Laois County Council aims to complete procurement of a contractor and commence work on site by Q2 2022.

Notice of Motion No: 31/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council upgrade and maintain the very busy stretch of road from Ashwood Walk to the Rathleague Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will carry out repairs as required at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 32/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council provide a pathway for part of the school side of Summerhill Lane in the interest of safety with the possibility of funding from the Active Travel Fund if available”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that This year’s Active Travel programme of work has been agreed. However, the Notice of Motion will be noted and considered should NTA funds be made available.

7. Correspondence

There was no correspondence for noting

8. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 16th March, 2022 at 11.00 a.m.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

