

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> OF JANUARY 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 8<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER 2021**

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the minutes of the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December were confirmed as circulated.

**2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER 2021**

There were no matters arising from the meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2021.

**3. N77 – HCV TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND AIR QUALITY**

Mr. Adrian Barrett, Senior Engineer delivered a presentation to the Members on the above item which was emanated from concerns regarding air quality, volumes of HCVs on the N77 and HCVs potentially by-passing the M7 Toll Plaza. Traffic surveys were carried out in October 2021 which included traffic counts, surveys and review of data from existing traffic counters, identification of registration plates in relation to toll avoidance by HCVs together with analysis of Nitrogen Dioxide levels in the towns of Abbeyleix, Durrow and Cullahill. The Members were given a summary of the survey results and were advised that the EPA will have a report on the Nitrogen Dioxide levels in March 2022 following a 6-month monitoring period.

#### **4. VOTES OF SYMPATHIES**

On the proposition of Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously agreed to extend a vote of sympathy to the O' Brien family on the recent death of Mr. Johnny O' Brien, Old Knockmay Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to extend a vote of sympathy to the White family on the recent death of Mr. Frank White, Newpark, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanle, the Members unanimously agreed to extend a vote of sympathy to the Murphy family on the recent tragic death of Ms. Ashling Murphy, Cully, Blueball, Co. Offaly.

#### **5. Notice of Motions**

##### **Notice of Motion No: 01/2022**

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

***“That this Council address the drainage issues and resurface the section of laneway at the top of St. Brigid’s Place”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet Councillor Dwane Stanley to examine the drainage and section of road in question.

##### **Notice of Motion No: 02/2022**

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

***“That this Council include Cloghoge Lane in the roads programme and carry out a safety Audit on the bridge with a view to carrying out any necessary works to the bridge”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the local County road L77973 will be examined for

consideration for works under the 2022 Roads Programme. The bridge on the L77972 will be inspected in the coming weeks.

**Notice of Motion No: 03/2022**

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

***"That this Council carry out road works and drainage to prevent the surface water from the road flowing into the entrances of the houses at Cashel Ballyroan"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that minor works were carried out previously in relation to the entrances to these properties on the R425 Cashel, Ballyroan. Further works are now required to survey drainage in the locality with a view to putting a more permanent solution in place. These works will commence in the coming weeks.

**The following three Notice of Motions were taken together:-**

Notice of Motion No: 04/2022 in the name of Councillor Noel Tuohy

***"That this Council refurbish the Public Toilets in the cemetery to a condition fit for use and that this facility is open especially during funeral times"***

Notice of Motion No: 13/2022 in the name of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald

***"That this Council ensure that the toilets in the cemetery can be open especially during funerals"***

Notice of Motion No: 14/2022 in the name of Councillor Thomasina Connell

***"That this Council immediately renovate the toilets located at Portlaoise Cemetery"***

These Notice of Motions were seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has undertaken an inspection of the toilets at Portlaoise cemetery with a representative of the cemetery committee and has agreed a scope of refurbishment works which will facilitate the reopening of the toilets by the committee.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald requested a meeting to be arranged in relation to the development of a prioritised plan of appropriate interventions at the cemetery together with measures to address anti-social behaviour and vandalism at the cemetery in Portlaoise.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that this matter could be discussed further at the February meeting of the Municipal District or at a meeting in the Cemetery prior to the February Meeting.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 05/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to put traffic directional makings on Fr. Browne Avenue roundabout"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. It was agreed to install lane directional arrows on the approaches to the pedestrian crossings on the Fr. Browne Avenue roundabout at O' Moore Park.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 06/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to include the road from Blandsfort Cross to Ballinakill for resurfacing and in the interim period for repair on critical areas"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the L3777 will be examined for consideration for works under the 2022 Roads Programme. In the interim repair works will be carried out in the coming weeks.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 07/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council for an update on taking over the Garden Village Estate on the Mountmellick Road"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council is in ongoing discussions with

parties who retain interests in Garden Village. The Council is seeking to ensure that the estate will be taken in charge in Q2 2022. In the meantime it was noted that Laois County Council is maintaining lighting and the pumping station in the estate which are the main sources of maintenance and costs for the estate.

**Notice of Motion No: 08/2022**

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

***“That this Council ask the TII to cut back overhanging branches on the N77 between Abbeyleix and Killamuck”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the trees and hedgerows at this location.

**Notice of Motion No: 09/2022**

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

***“That this Council include the Council houses in Thornberry Abbeyleix in their programme for retrofitting”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that these properties are not part of the current Retrofitting programme which was approved in 2021. Laois County Council are due to get confirmation shortly of proposed retrofit funding for 2022 and these properties can be considered for the 2022 programme subject to adequate funding being available.

**Notice of Motion No: 10/2022**

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

***“That this Council give an update on when the new footpath will commence on the way down to the swimming pool in Ballinakill and also the removal of the trees in this area”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the footpath is proposed to be delivered this year and will be funded by the National Transport Authority under Active Travel. Tendering for a Design Team has been completed and the successful tenderer is to be

appointed. Design work and preparation for statutory processes will commence following the appointment. Subject to available resources, the local authority plans to have the work completed in Q3 of this year.

### **Notice of Motion No: 11/2022**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:

***"That this Council give an update on Hynds Square and parking at Jessop Court"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that revised arrangements for car parking in Jessop Court have been developed whereby, from Monday to Friday (9am to 4.30pm), four car parking spaces will be made available for general public use subject to parking charges and time restrictions applicable in Portlaoise Town Centre. Outside of these hours parking is to be reserved for residents only.

The Members requested that the Litter Warden carry out a survey including photographs to monitor usage and spaces. In response Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that the current arrangements are as a result of surveys carried out. The surveys illustrate that the interventions proposed will not adversely impact on residents capacity to avail of spaces given the reduced demand for residents parking during business hours.

### **Notice of Motion No: 12/2022**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council give an update on the houses in Clonrooske Abbey"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has been advised by Cluid who in turn are advised by the developer that Phase 1 will be delivered by end of March 2022 and Phase 2 by end of May 2022 with remaining units to be delivered by the end of June 2022.

A lengthy discussion ensued including discussion on re-lets whereupon Cllr Dwane Stanley stated that there are 40 houses for re-let across the County and there should be two maintenance crews, one for re-lets and one for homeless persons accommodation – this will be raised at the next SPC meeting.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services re-iterated that the Housing Programme is one of Laois County Council and the Chief Executive's main priorities. He noted that, in the matter of delivery of housing in Clonrooske Abbey there are two contracts ongoing, one between the Approved Housing Body and the Contractor regarding the building of the units and, separately, one between the Approved Housing Body and Laois County Council regarding the allocation, management and maintenance of the units once built. The response to the Notice of Motion indicates delivery dates for the three Phases and, if there are any changes to the dates provided, the Housing Department will report to Members.

### **Notice of Motion No: 15/2022**

In the absence of Councillor Thomasina Connell, Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council provide an update as to the installation of lights on the junction of Ridge Road and Parkview, Portlaoise"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Supplementary lighting and infill lighting will be provided in this area as part of the 2022 Roadworks Programme.

## **6. CORRESPONDENCE**

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

In relation to the recent meeting with the representatives from the T.I.I., in response to a query from Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that he would arrange for a summary of issues discussed at the meeting to be made available at the February meeting.

Abbeyleix Road proposals – Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that the public consultation continues until the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 – if there are any specific issues that any Member wish to raise they can contact the Senior Engineer, Mr. Adrian Barrett.

## **FIX DATE & TIME FOR NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on **16<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 at 11.00 a.m.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**John Joe Fennelly, Leas Chathaoirleach**