

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 16th OF JUNE 2021 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE,
PORTLAOISE AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT Ms. Thomasina Connell, Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C.
Ms. Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C.
Mr. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.
Mr. Noel Tuohy, M.C.C.
Ms. Mary Sweeney, 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 MAY 2021

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the minutes of the meeting held on the 19th of May 2021 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 10TH OF MARCH 2021

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley raised the following issues:-

- ✚ Centrepont Site – it was noted and welcomed that a derelict sites order has been issued to the owners of the Centrepont Site.
- ✚ Bus Shelter at Kilminchy – Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that an application has been made to the National Transport Authority for the first phase of a programme of proposed bus shelters.
- ✚ Footpath at Fr. Browne Avenue/C.I.E. crossing – Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. indicated that works are due to be completed within two weeks
- ✚ Grass from Junction 17 Plaza to Togher House - it was confirmed that works were completed

3. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 103/2021

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council conduct a review of the disability parking spaces, their number and their placement in Portlaoise "

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that there are disabled parking bays provided at numerous locations in the town centre of Portlaoise and at various shops and businesses within the town. The number of parking bays provided within the town is consistent with the recommended rate of provision of disabled spaces nationally. Laois County Council supports the provision of disabled parking bays and should the member wish to request additional bays, this can be considered.

Following a number of queries regarding disabled parking spaces, Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that a Town Centre Accessibility Study will confirm the requirements of people with disabilities. It was re-iterated that there would be no reduction in the number of spaces in the town as part of the current works to facilitate outdoor dining. Additionally, it is open to disability groups, Older Person's Forum etc. to contact Laois County Council directly, where it is considered that the needs of persons with disabilities are not being met.

The following two Notice of Motions were taken together:-

Notice of Motion No: 104/2021

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council repair the road at Summerhill Lane from Ashwood Walk to the crossroad. This is now a very busy road due to the huge increase in traffic linking it to Rathleague, the schools and the Ring Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald.

Notice of Motion No: 112/2021

"That this Council resurface road from Ashwood Walk Roundabout to Rathleague Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the L-67702-0 on Summerhill Lane from the entrance of Ashwood Walk to the junction of the R425 will be included on the list of works for road repairs and will be carried out in the coming weeks.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald requested that this location be included on the Roads Programme – Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. indicated that it could be listed for consideration.

Notice of Motion No: 105/2021

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update on the progress made towards the provision of playground disability equipment on the site at Portlaoise Leisure"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that work will commence on accessibility upgrade in next 3 weeks at Portlaoise Playground. Inclusive swing has been ordered from Landscapes Structures in USA, thanks in part to a recent playground capital grant of €15,000 from Dept of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Delivery and installation will take 6 - 8 weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 106/2021

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council carry out road repairs at Larchfield Cross Ballyroan"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The R425 and the L-6717-0 in the vicinity of Larchfield Cross will be examined and any road repairs required will be carried out in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 107/2021

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council carry out road repairs at Sheffield Cross, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the R426 and the R425 in the vicinity of Sheffield Cross will be examined and any road repairs required will be carried out in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 108/2021

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide an update on the business incentive scheme for the Portlaoise Municipal area"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that there was only one application received in respect of the Business Incentive Scheme for 2021 in respect of Portlaoise Municipal District. This is a marked reduction from previous years and the number of applications received and the decrease can be directly attributed to the COVID pandemic. Under the Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Scheme to date 72 applications have been received and 46 have been approved to a value of €184,000 .00

Notice of Motion No: 109/2021

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

"That this Council be informed as to what is delaying the relets of Council owned properties in the Municipal District and to press ahead urgently with carrying out the works"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that in 2020 the Housing Department completed re-lettings works to 57 units surrendered by existing Council tenants. Of the 57 units completed in 2020, 30 of these were in the Portlaoise MD area. The average time of re-letting for these 57 units in 2020 was 20 weeks which was significantly lower than the national average re-letting time of 28 weeks. It should be noted that the average re-letting time takes account of the time taken to carry out minor works to units prior to reletting but also the time taken to carry out works to units requiring more extensive refurbishment when vacated.

Notice of Motion No: 110/2021

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

"That this Council given an update on the safety audit of the pedestrian crossing near Bellingham Estate and Maryborough Estate, Mountrath Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that following on from a Notice of Motion earlier in the year, the onsite audit has being conducted and Laois County Council are awaiting the report from the consultants. Results will be communicated to the members at the next scheduled MD meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 111/2021

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

"That this Council give an update on the progress made to take in charge Broomville Estate, Dublin Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that there are 36 estates on a list to be taken in charge over the next 3 years. Broomfield is scheduled for 2022.

Notice of Motion No: 113/2021

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion :-

"That this Council repair / or install new footpaths in the new part of the cemetery, consider putting in security cameras in certain areas of the cemetery and also give an update re: The Columbarium Wall"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Senior Executive Engineer will meet with Councillor Fitzgerald at the cemetery to discuss the matter of footpaths for the area in question. In light of the legal and regulatory difficulties associated with their installation, security cameras in cemeteries are not currently under consideration by Laois County Council. Laois County Council has published an Expression of Interest/Market Soundings notice on the E-Tenders website to engage with the market to identify suppliers/contractors who can provide a design and installation service for a Columbarium wall at St Peter and Paul's Cemetery.

Notice of Motion No: 114/2021

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council repair the potholes in The Hermitage Estate and also give an update re: the foul sewer problem in the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the L-81082-0 in the Hermitage Estate, Portlaoise will be included on the list of works for road repairs and will be carried out in the coming weeks. In relation to the surface water/foul sewer issue and, as outlined at the

March meeting by the Director of Services, further investigations are ongoing and it is expected that a detailed report will be available September 2021.

Notice of Motion No: 115/2021

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

"That this Council arrange to meet with the Residents Association in Heywood Village, Ballinakill to discuss a works programme for the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson will make myself available to meet with Councillor Fennelly and the Residents Association in Heywood Village, Ballinakill.

Councillor Fennelly requested that the trees be removed from both sides of the footpath at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 116/2021

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

"That this Council agree to undertake works at Crookedwood Cross, Abbeyleix especially on the right hand side of the junction as you exit from the Kyle/Dunmore Road"

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 Fennelly on site to examine the issue at Crookedwood Cross, Abbeyleix. This location may be considered for a road safety scheme in 2022.

Notice of Motion No: 117/2021

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That this Council continue drainage works along the road at Doon, Raheen close to property"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet with Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the specific location requiring drainage works on the L-66911-0 at Doon, Raheen.

Notice of Motion No: 118/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

"That Laois County Council examine the road adjacent to the L-6114-0 Pallas Little with a view to taking in charge"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will examine the road which is 300m in length and located to the north of the L-6114-0 in the townland of Pallas Little, Portlaoise with a view to taking it in charge.

Notice of Motion No: 119/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion: -

"That Laois County Council indicate when the verges on both the regional roads and the national secondary roads in the Portlaoise Municipal District area"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Road Office will be commencing verge trimming works on regional and national secondary road junctions within the next 2 weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 120/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council consider the erection of a mirror in the interest of safety at Horan's Cross, Pallas, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council do not install convex mirrors at junctions on public roads as distortion of reflected image, glare from sunlight or headlamps may affect the driver's vision. Drivers may also have difficulty judging speed of an approaching vehicle from the mirror image. Reliance on the mirror's restricted image may compromise the safety of other road users (pedestrians and cyclists) who are not easily seen in the mirror.

Notice of Motion No: 121/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council erect fencing in Dun Masc Housing Estate to prevent access down into the steep bank which is hazardous for children playing in the estate and attracting trespassers"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson will make himself available to meet with Councillor Connell on site to examine the specific location requiring fencing in Dun Masc Housing Estate.

Notice of Motion No: 122/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install additional traffic safety measures at the entrance to Fairgreen Estate in Portlaoise to prevent traffic from exiting the Estate in the wrong direction"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Road design will review existing arrangements and implement additional measures if required.

Notice of Motion No: 123/2021

Councillor Thomasina proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"This Council install additional bins in Portlaoise Town Centre to facilitate the additional refuse from outdoor dining and take away outlets"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the majority of outdoor dining facilities in Portlaoise town centre will be managed by each of the respective hostelrys. As such it is the responsibility of each hostelry to ensure that that litter arising from their outdoor dining activities are collected regularly and not allowed into the adjoining public space. Laois County Council will have a number of Summer Students employed in the coming weeks to assist with managing environmental and litter works in the town centre also.

The Members requested additional bins to be installed. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that there will be additional resources/additional rosters for

street cleaning over the summer period. Laois County Council are aware of the challenges associated with outdoor dining and the student summer employment scheme will also provide additional resources to address the issues raised under the Notice of Motion.

4. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously extended a vote of sympathy to the Lawlor Family, Knockmay, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Ian Lawlor.

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously extended a vote of sympathy to Ms. Julie Bergin on the recent death of her father, Mr. Richard McGree, Carrigan Street, Durrow.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

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

Councillor Fennelly requested that the issues with the traffic light system in Abbeyleix be resolved. It was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Road Design Office.

6. FIX DATE & TIME FOR NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **15th of September 2021 at 11.00 a.m.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Thomasina Connell, Cathaoirleach