

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 21st OF JUNE 2023 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

PRESENT: Mr. Barry Walsh, Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C.
Ms. Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.
Mr. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.
Ms. Marie 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. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 17TH OF MAY 2023

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the minutes of the Portlaoise Municipal District meeting held on the 17th of May 2023 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 17TH OF MAY 2023

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 17th of May 2023

3. PROPOSAL FOR DECLARATION OF A PUBLIC ROAD - EXISTING LANE OFF THE L-2776, CULLENAGH LANE, TIMAHOE, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS.

The Members were advised that the above matter was raised as a Notice of Motion at the December 2022 meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District. It was noted that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 11 of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended), Laois County Council advertised the intention to make a declaration that the road be a public road. No submissions were received. On the proposal of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the members unanimously resolved that the lane off the L-2776, Cullenagh Lane, Timahoe, County Laois, be declared a public road.

4. ROADS PROGRAMME 2023 - L-5733 AT THE TOWNLANDS OF CLONKEEN, LISBIGNEY & CURRAGHACRONACON

The Cathaoirleach of Portlaoise MD, Mr. Barry Walsh advised the Members that this item could be taken in conjunction with Notice of Motion No: 80/2023 as follows:-

"Should the L-57332 at Clonking, Lisbigney not proceed on this year's Roads Programme, that this Council instead re-surface the L-5734-0 at Brandra, Abbeyleix as this road is in a very poor condition at present and that repair works be carried out in the meantime"

The Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the L-5733 at the townlands of Clonkeen, Lisbigney & Curraghacronacon is on the Roads Programme for resurfacing in 2023. Irish Water have notified the Portlaoise Municipal District Office of their intention to upgrade the water main on the L-5733 in phases in 2023 & 2024. As such it is prudent not to carry out resurfacing works on the L-5733 in 2023 or 2024. Resurfacing works on the L-5733 could then be carried out as part of a subsequent Roads Programme, at a time after the water main upgrade works are complete. Subject to agreement with the members here today, the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements for the 2023 allocation for the L-5733 to be utilised to resurface the adjacent road L-5734 at Brandra in 2023.

5. RAILWAY STREET CAR PARK

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services briefed the Members on this matter and advised that Laois County Council will take possession of a 93-space car park at Railway Street, Portlaoise in August/September 2023. The car park arises from an agreement with Ardain developments that will see the development of residential units on the same lands. The car park project is funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund together with Laois County Council funding of €375,000. The Council is required to fund the capital investment made and make provision for the day-to-day operation of the car park.

In considering proposed car-park charges, regard is had to the charges in adjoining car parks charges. A lengthy discussion including a general welcome that the car park will be open later in the 2023 together with various questions from regarding the charging proposals.

On the proposal of Cllr Fitzgerald, seconded by Cllr Aird, Members resolved to apply a charge of €4.00 per day and €3 per 4-hour stay. A further report is to be provided for the September Meeting, to provide for weekly and monthly charges, again having regard to charges in adjoining carparks and the general principle that the car park is to operate as a public transport car park.

6. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 72/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install ramps at Colliers View, Portlaoise and Hawthorn Way, Esker Hills"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will install a traffic calming ramp in Colliers View Portlaoise and Hawthorn Way, Esker hills in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 73/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide an update on the CIS application for Hillview Estate, Knockmay, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Hillview Estate, Knockmay is included on the approved list of Community Involvement Schemes for completion in 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 74/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council please provide an update on the path to be installed around the three lakes in Kilminchy being the proposed 'Kilminchy Lakes Trail' where grant funding under the ORIS scheme was previously granted in the sum of €30,000"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that it is expected that the proposed 'Kilminchy Lakes trail' footpath will be installed by the end of September 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 75/2023

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

"That this Council give an update on the taking in charge of Borris Meadows, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Belgrave Construction have engaged J Conlon Construction

to address the outstanding works and are currently on site to carry out repairs to a section of SW sewer, benching to SW manhole, minor repairs to footpaths, raising of ironwork prior to final surfacing & construction of boundary wall. It is envisaged that these works should be completed in the next 3-4 weeks with the final road surfacing being done immediately after. Once fully completed we should be able to recommend the development to be taken in charge.

Notice of Motion No: 76/2023

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

"That this Council roll out and implement the recommendations of the roads and footpaths accessibility survey by The Irish Wheelchair Association as soon as possible"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Laois County Council are currently reviewing the recommendations of the roads and footpaths accessibility survey by the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Council is amenable to the recommendations made.

A discussion ensued regarding accessibility and permeability for wheelchairs. It was agreed that the Roads Section will review the recent presentation given to the Housing SPC. A copy of that presentation is also to be forwarded to the Municipal District Members

Simon Walton noted that Laois County Council had pro-actively engaged with Make Way Day and advised that six-monthly meetings are now ongoing with the Irish Wheelchair Association in the Portlaoise MD.

Notice of Motion No: 77/2023

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

"That this Council give an update on the derelict sites in Triogue Manor as regards ownership and future use of the sites"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Nishata Ltd is the registered owner of 2 sites – 50 and 51 Triogue Manor. A second section 8(2) notice (notice of intention to enter land as derelict site in the derelict site register) was served on the site owners on 13/06/2023 as the company address changed during the process.

The owner has responded verbally to the notice, indicating an intention to address the derelict site notice issues and bring forward proposals for developing the sites.

Notice of Motion No: 78/2023

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

"That this Council give a timescale on works for the Ballypickas Group Water Scheme Extension to take in Spink G.A.A. Grounds and residential houses in the area"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that this project was not funded as part of the recent multi annual rural water programme. The Council is currently awaiting correspondence from the Department announcing the new multi annual rural water programme. Once correspondence from the Department is received, the Council will be seeking expressions of interest from GWSs wishing to submit projects for funding.

Councillor Fennelly requested that a letter issue to the Department on this matter. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that he will liaise with the Department. He outlined that the new Rural Water Programme 2023 – 2025 was due for launch. Once launched, Laois County Council will advertise and the various Group Water Schemes can make applications for funding.

Notice of Motion No: 79/2023

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

"That this Council erect the remaining barrier on the bridge on Sheeran's Lane, Colt"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the installation of a barrier at Sheeran's Bridge Colt on the L-26812-0 will be included as a funding application for Bridge Rehabilitation Works for 2024. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. advised that he would make himself available to meet with Cllr Fennelly on site to examine the requirements for repairs works in the interim.

Notice of Motion No: 81/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to install a staggered pedestrian guard railing in the footpath in front of the pedestrian crossing at McSorley's Filling Station"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install a railings at the pedestrian crossing adjacent to McSorely's Centra & Fuel Station.

Notice of Motion No: 82/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to install traffic calming measures on the L-6136-0 Knocknagroagh- Rathnamanagh Road where a number of accidents have occurred recently"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install slow road markings at the required locations on the L-6136-0 at Knocknagroagh/Rathnamanagh and this location will be included as an application for Safety Improvement Works funding for 2024.

Notice of Motion No: 83/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to re-mark the road at the roundabouts on the Link Road from the Abbeyleix Road to the Stradbally Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to carry out road marking works on the Portlaoise Southern Circular from the junction with the N77 Abbeyleix Road to the junction of the N80.

Notice of Motion No: 84/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council ensure that the Disability Suite at Laois Leisure Portlaoise is fully equipped and fully functioning for use by all with a disability"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the operation of the Leisure Centre at Portlaoise is in the first instance a matter for Laois Leisure CLG who operate the site. Laois County Council has, through a funding grant from the Department invested in improving disability access to the Leisure Centre. These works have included Automatic door opening, Accessible toilets, new hoist for the swimming pool and Upgraded the Disability Changing Room. It must be noted that the centre's ability to provide for the more profound physical disabilities is restricted by the original building design and purpose. Specialist advice has been received as to how to further improve the current disability changing room. The carrying out of further works to provide a disability suite will be dependent on allocating/transferring funding from existing grants or securing additional funding.

Councillor Marie Tuohy emphasised the urgency of having the portable hoist and flat back bed available at the Leisure Centre. It was requested a further update be provided for the September Meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 85/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update as to the provision of a Dog Park as previously agreed at the Linear Park, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office has undertaken preparatory drainage works adjacent to the area identified for the proposed Dog Park in the Triogue Linear Park in Portlaoise. The Portlaoise MD Office is awaiting receipt of quotations for footpath and fencing works at this location. It is intended that these works will be commenced in Q.3 of 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 86/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council take in charge the road/lane to the Church of Ireland Church in Ballyroan for approximately 80 metres from the start of the Lane”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will examine the lane at this location with a view to advertising the Road Authority's intention to declare a road a public road.

Notice of Motion No: 87/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council give an update on repair works beside bridge LS-R430-009 in Spink just between the GAA grounds and Glanbia creamery. Currently there are safety barriers in place due to a crash last year. Could a review and/or works be carried out to prevent accidents happening again and possibly remove or reduce the bend on the road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that funding (€100,000) for a safety barrier and associated works has been secured for Boleybeg Bridge, Spink for 2023. It's expected that the works will be tendered in Q3 2023. Laois County Council will liaise with the Road Design Section regarding a review of the R430 at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 88/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council consider adding a stage/performance area to include a seating area or picnic benches in the current Portlaoise town park or the new proposals for the Tyrells site”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has entered into a contract for the provision of an outdoor performance and event space at the Fort Protector, Portlaoise. Works are due to commence in Q. 4 of 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 89/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council CPO 15 Abbeycourt, Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council’s Vacant Homes Office has made several attempts to contact the registered owner of this property. The registered owner on the folio is a development company with a solicitor’s office as the contact address, whom we are advised is no longer acting for the development company. Having exhausted all possible ways of making contact with the owner with a view to returning this property to use, Laois County Council has now commenced the Compulsory Purchase Order process and will proceed to acquire the property via this process.

Notice of Motion No: 90/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give a progress report on The Down’s land and The County Hotel”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that in relation to Down’s Land(Tyrells Land), site investigation and topographical surveys are currently being carried out on site. Once these surveys are complete a detailed design for this scheme will be produced which will also include the proposed mixed tenure of the scheme. It is expected that a draft mixed tenure site layout plan will be completed by the end of June and a meeting with the Portlaoise MD Cllrs will be arranged to review this draft layout. In relation to the County Hotel, site investigation and building condition surveys are currently being carried out on site. Once these surveys are complete Cluid Housing can confirm their revised cost plan and detailed design. The surveys carried out so far have outlined some significant challenges in relation to the protected front façade which will be taken into account for the finalisation of the costs plan. A section 57 planning report for the site has also been finalised and an agreement has been reached on which buildings on site can be demolished. It is expected that the revised cost plan and detailed design will be completed in Q3 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 91/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give an update on the provision of the Pedestrian Crossing at Portlaoise GAA Club Rathleague”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a design team is currently preparing designs for the traffic calming measures required, to enable the introduction of the pedestrian crossing at Rathleague. The completed design will be available in the next 4 to 5 weeks. Thereafter, the Council will arrange for the required works to be undertaken.

7. Correspondence

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

Councillor Willie Aird welcomed the appointment of the new Cemetery Registrar for Portlaoise, Mr. Cathal Flynn. He requested that a letter of thanks go to the Ireland family, for their years of service and dedication to Portlaoise Cemetery. This was unanimously agreed.

8. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 13th of September 2023.**

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services