

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH 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.  
Mr. Barry Walsh, 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 16<sup>TH</sup> OF FEBRUARY 2022**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the minutes of the meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

**2. WELCOME TO COUNCILLOR BARRY WALSH**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird and seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, the Members of the Portlaoise Municipal District unanimously welcomed Mr. Barry Walsh to his first Portlaoise Municipal District Meeting, M.C.C., following his co-option at the February 2022 Meeting of Laois County Council.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services/MD Manager joined in the sentiments of the Members and assured Councillor Walsh of the Executive's support and assistance in his new role.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 16<sup>TH</sup> OF FEBRUARY 2022**

Councillor Dwane Stanley requested an update on the following Notice of Motion which had been proposed and seconded at the February meeting of the Municipal District held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2022:-

#### **Notice of Motion No: 16/2022**

***"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"***

Councillor Dwane Stanley referred to an uprooted tree which is currently unsafe. Mr. Wes Wilkinson indicated that following a further examination by him, it was noted that the tree in question is on privately owned property.

#### **4. Schedule of Municipal District Works 2022**

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the Members unanimously agreed the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2022, as presented.

Councillor Fennelly made enquiries regarding Clár funding for a pedestrian crossing and other traffic calming measures in Raheen. It was confirmed that these works would commence during the Easter holidays. It was also noted that the local contribution would be shared by a few Members, from their discretionary funding, as agreed in 2021.

#### **5. Chief Executive Report on Consultation and Draft Masterplan for Lands at Stradbally Road**

The Members were circulated with the above reports and same were noted by the Members.

#### **6. Notice of Motions**

##### **Notice of Motion No: 33/2022**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council provide an update on the design and construction of the footpath between Ballyroan primary school and Ballyroan GAA pitch, with timelines for each stage to completion"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a contractor has been appointed to deliver this project together with another Active Travel project in Ballinakill. The earliest start date will be from early May 2022. Laois County Council are working with

the contractor to agree a detailed programme of delivery in advance of works commencing on either site.

### **Notice of Motion No: 34/2022**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council carry out survey/clearing works on the Gloreen River Ballyroan and the Triogue river in Cullenagh Ballyroan due to recent flooding to neighbouring fields and roads”***

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 make Councillor Walsh on site to examine the specific issues at these locations - however, it should be noted that the Gloreen River, Ballyroan and the Trigoue River, Cullenagh, Ballyroan do not form part of the drainage districts for which Laois County Council retains responsibility.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that water courses and drainage fall into the responsibility of three categories as follows:-

- (i) arterial drainage schemes - responsibility lies with the OPW
- (ii) Drainage Districts – responsibility lies with Laois County Council
- (iii) All other drainage/water courses – responsibility lies with the riparian landowner.

### **Notice of Motion No: 35/2022**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council increase quantity of dog bins & signage to the Municipal district. In particular provide additional dog litter signage to all footpath walking routes in Ballyroan Village and provide dog litter bins on each route with clear signage highlighting their use”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that over the past two years LCC has provided 75 Mutt Mitt dispensers along popular walking routes in County Laois. Such provision has been undertaken in partnership with local Tidy Towns groups. A single Mutt Mitt dispenser is provided in Ballyroan and is maintained with the support of a local volunteer. Additionally, new signs have been put up at many locations around the county, including two in Ballyroan. The Council promotes responsible dog ownership through Green Dog Walker campaign which includes dog owners cleaning their dog’s mess. Additional dispensers and signage will be

deployed, in consultation with local groups, to support responsible dog ownership.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 36/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council install pedestrian road markings where the Fr. Browne Avenue meets the Mountrath Road in three locations - before the roundabout on Fr. Browne Avenue, to the left of the roundabout where the existing natural crossing takes place and to the right of the roundabout”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that further to discussions with the Director of Services, it has been agreed to install enhanced road markings at the three locations outlined in relation to the roundabout on the R445 Mountrath Road/Fr. Browne Avenue. These road markings will be installed in the coming weeks.

Councillor Aird enquired as to the possibility of the provision of a controlled crossing at these locations and Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. confirmed that the Portlaoise MD has been in contact with the Road Design Section to secure funding for a controlled pedestrian crossing with belica amber flashing beacons on Fr. Browne Avenue adjacent to the roundabout.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 37/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council together with the Director of Services and Senior Staff of the Roads Section be afforded a meeting at the location on the Stradbally Road to discuss the possibility of the continuation of the road over to the Dublin Road because of an impending planning application being lodged to Laois County Council for the proposed new school - ‘Colaiste Dunmasc’.***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that an in-committee meeting with Elected Members has been scheduled for the afternoon of Monday, 4th of April (or alternate date as required).

#### **Notice of Motion No: 38/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Municipal District make the junction safe at the L66959 where it meets the R445 at Clonkeen, Portlaoise”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD office will carry out works to remove vegetation and clean the drain at the junction of the L66959 at the junction of the R445 at Clonkeen, Portlaoise

**Notice of Motion No: 39/2022**

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

***“That this Council replace the fence on the Ballacolla Road between property and the Old Railway Bridge”***

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 Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the fencing on the Ballacolla Road, Abbeyleix (R433) adjacent to the old Railway Bridge.

Councillor John Joe Fennelly clarified that the fence in question is the responsibility of Laois County Council.

**Notice of Motion No: 40/2022**

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

***“That this Council repair the road at Ardlea at Raheen as part of the road has subsided”***

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 Councillor Fennelly on site in Ardlea, Raheen to examine the specific location with a view to carrying out repair works in the coming weeks.

**Notice of Motion No: 41/2022**

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

***“That this Council repair the road between Crookedwood Cross and the Gully Bridge on the Ballacolla Road as road has subsided”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will complete these repairs on the R433 between Crookedwood Cross and the Gully Bridge on the Ballacolla Road, Abbeyleix in the coming weeks.

### **Notice of Motion No: 42/2022**

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

***"That the planning section of Laois County Council enforce the derelict sites legislation on the owners of the derelict cottage and site on Harpers Lane and the adjacent site of Centrepoint"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that these properties are not currently on the Derelict Site Register. The Planning Section will open new files and carry out inspections of the two properties on Harpur's Lane, Portlaoise and take the required action under the Derelict sites Act if appropriate.

Councillor Dwane Stanley advised the meeting that there are a number of anti-social activities including illegal dumping being carried out at this derelict site which is completely open. Councillor Stanley acknowledged the work that has been carried out by Centrepoint but has concerns in relation to the boundary at the back of the properties and also in relation to some of the elderly residents living in the area.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised the Members that direct contact would be made with the new owner in relation to same.

### **Notice of Motion No: 43/2022**

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

***"That this Council put drainage in place to address the flooding of two sections of footpaths in the area of the Green, Kilminchy"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will carry out drainage works adjacent to these sections of footpaths in the vicinity of The Green, Kilminchy.

### **Notice of Motion No: 44/2022**

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

***"That this Council give a presentation on the new Local Authority Home Loan/Schemes that are available since January and the new updated Tenant Purchase Scheme"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a briefing note was recently issued to all elected

members in relation to the recent changes to the Tenant Purchase (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 effective 1st February 2022. A similar briefing note in respect of the newly introduced Local Authority Home Loan Scheme (replacing the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan) is currently being prepared and will be circulated to all elected members in due course. A presentation on both schemes can be made to all elected members if deemed necessary. Members are also welcome to contact the Senior Executive Officer, Housing with any query they have.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 45/2022**

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council install a yellow box outside St. Peters and Pauls Cemetery to facilitate the traffic particularly trying to exit onto the busy Stradbally Road”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a yellow box will be installed outside St. Peters and Pauls Cemetery on the N80 Stradbally Road, Portlaoise in the coming weeks.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 46/2022**

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council remark the yellow boxes on the Block Road and the Dublin Road”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the yellow boxes on the Block Road (L6311) and the Dublin Road (R445) will be examined and the road markings refreshed where required in the coming weeks.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 47/2022**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council give an update on the taking in charge of Broomville Court”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Broomville, Broomville Gardens and Broomville Court are included in the programme of works for taking in charge in 2022. CCTV has been completed on this estate. The “As built drawings” are currently

being prepared - it is anticipated the relevant paperwork will be submitted to Water Services by mid April to progress the taking in charge.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 48/2022**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council give an update on the two derelict houses on the Stradbally Road”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the two vacant and derelict houses at Beladd on the Stradbally Road in Portlaoise have been acquired by Laois County Council by Compulsory Purchase Order. The notice period for the Council’s intention to enter on and take possession of the properties expired on 9th March, 2022 and the Council can enter on and take possession of the properties and secure them on or after that date.

Councillor Connell confirmed that the matter was recently raised at a meeting of the Dublin Mid-Leinster Regional Health Forum – the HSE to revert to Councillor Connell on the matter.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that these properties would be discussed at the in-committee meeting scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2022.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 49/2022**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council look for funding to install walkway/cycle way on the Ballyclider Road”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Active Travel funding has been allocated to projects for 2022. However, LCC will consider the proposal when planning for future works programmes.

It is acknowledged that Ballyclider Road is a popular walking route and the proposed footpath/cycle way will be included in the provision and improvement of pedestrian & cycling facilities for the wider Portlaoise area. However, in the first instance, as required by NTA, a targeted approach for the provision of such infrastructure inside existing speed limits is priority.



### **Notice of Motion No: 50/2022**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council explore the removal of The County Hotel, Main Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois from the register of Protected Structures, and to set out what the process is to be undertaken and the likelihood of having same removed. The removal of The County Hotel from the said list would be in ease of the re-development of the site to accommodate Housing, which has previously been proposed to house older members of our Community”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Planning Authority will explore the removal of the County Hotel from the Record of Protected Structures. The building is rated as being of Regional importance on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and the following is the appraisal or reason the building is protected: Procedure for deletion from RPS - The procedure for the deletion of a Protected structure from the Register of protected structures involves the following process: A notice must be served on the owner or occupier of the proposed deletion, send particulars of the proposed deletion to the Minister and any other prescribed bodies, publish notice of the proposal in a local newspaper and invite submissions on the proposed deletion, The Planning Authority considers any submissions from the Prescribed bodies/ Minister and the public, a decision to remove the structure from the record must be made within 12 weeks of the end of the submission period. The owner /occupier of the property is then notified of the deletion. The deletion of a structure from the RPS is a reserved function. It is also worth noting that the structure is located within an Architectural Conservation Area which has the objective of preserving the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights. In considering a development proposal within an ACA a Planning Authority must take account of the material effect that the development would be likely to have on the character of the ACA

Councillor Connell indicated that she was keen to see this site being re-developed at a reasonable cost and requested that we liaise with the Planning Department to expedite this. Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested that a meeting be scheduled with the Chief Executive in relation to same.

### **Notice of Motion No: 51/2022**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council undertake the pruning of the trees at Laurel Drive, Esker Hills, Portlaoise as many of the lights are being overshadowed by the foliage”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Pruning of the trees around street lights at Laurel Drive, Esker Hills, Portlaoise will be carried out by end of March.

Councillor Connell requested a brief update on public lighting in Esker Hills and it was agreed that an update be sought from Road Design in this regard.

**Notice of Motion No: 52/2022**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council replace the signage for Deer Warning at the bridge at the Rathdowney Road, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois.”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the signage at this location will be examined as required.

**7. Correspondence**

The correspondence dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 from the HSE in relation to the recent Notice of Motion regarding the long-term plans for the day services at Abbeyleix Community Hospital. It was agreed that a copy of the correspondence be forwarded to all Members of Laois County Council for their information.

**8. Fix Date for Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 at 11.00 a.m.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cathaoirleach

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Director of Corporate  
Affairs

