

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY 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 20<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2022**

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy, the minutes of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

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

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April

**3. WiFi4EU – Presentation by Ms. Antoinette Brennan, Broadband Officer**

Ms. Antoinette Brennan, Broadband Officer with Laois County Council delivered a comprehensive presentation to the Members on WiFi4EU for Portlaoise which detailed the initiative itself and the premises that have been fitted with the outdoor AP's. It was agreed that the launch would take place at 10.00 a.m. on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 prior to the May Monthly Meeting of Laois County Council.

**4. Notice of Motions**

**Notice of Motion No: 73/2022**

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

***"That this Council give a safety report on the 2 burnt out houses in Lakeglen and outline the required works necessary"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that a preliminary structural assessment, undertaken by a Structural Engineer, has yielded no immediate structural concerns regarding both properties. Additional, more detailed structural assessments have also been carried out and a detailed report on these assessments is due by Friday 20th May 2022. These reports will advise areas of the existing property elements that can be retained and other, replacement remedial works required to make the properties habitable. Further updates will be provided as matters progress.

Councillor Dwane Stanley acknowledged that the matter is being pursued and requested that the Senior Engineer for Housing take into consideration housing those with disabilities in considering the refurbishments.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 74/2022**

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

***"That this Council ensure that the community centre in St. Brigids Place is kept available for the residents use"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the property in question was previously managed by Laois Partnership as a playschool and afterschool facility for the local area. This facility is no longer in operation and the property recently given back to Council for return to our social housing stock. The Council notes that some local residents, who previously had use of the property, have expressed their wish to retain it for future community use. It is proposed to meet with a deputation from the local residents in the coming fortnight, to discuss their needs in this regard.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 75/2022**

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

***"That this Council carry out further drainage works near Bartles Bridge, Cromoge"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will arrange to meet Councillor

Dwane Stanley on site to examine the location that requires additional drainage works adjacent to the location of recent drainage works.

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

**Notice of Motion No: 76/2022 – Councillor Noel Tuohy**

***“That this Council ensure that the grass pitch at the Leisure Centre is maintained and any works that need to be carried out are completed so that the pitch is up to the standard required for the start of the CCFL Season in August”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald.

**Notice of Motion No: 86/2022 – Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald**

***“That this Council carry out the necessary works to get the grass pitch at the Leisure centre up and running for the many groups seeking it's use - especially Towerhill Rovers”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that significant damage has been done to the pitch during the closure period by bicycles and pedestrians crossing the grass pitch as a short cut. Laois County Council are working with Laois Leisure to identify solutions to rectify the issue and restore the grass pitch to a playable standard as soon as possible.

Councillor Tuohy requested that the matter be rectified before the start of August before the soccer season commences.

**Notice of Motion No: 77/2022**

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council erect a boundary fence around the grass pitch at the Leisure Centre to assist in the maintenance of it in good order as a soccer pitch”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council are working with Laois Leisure to identify solutions including different fencing options in order to prevent further damage to the pitch by pedestrians and cyclists crossing the pitch.

The Members advised that there are safety concerns at this location and emphasised the importance of consultation with the residents and teams before any fencing is erected.

**Notice of Motion No: 78/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council install rumble strips, concealed entrance sign and slow road markings on the R426 between Sheffield Cross and the entrance to Sheffield Wood in the townland of Cappoley near property and that funding be sought under the Safety Improvement Works Scheme for this location as soon as possible. This location shall be nominated as the first substitute in 2022 for any other Safety Scheme that cannot proceed in 2022"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will carry out works to install rumble strips and concealed entrance sign and slow road markings at this location over the coming weeks. Subject to agreement with the Members here today, Portlaoise MD Roads Office will note this location as being the first substitute for safety improvement works in 2022 should another scheme not proceed.

All Members were in agreement with this location being a substitute should another scheme not go ahead.

**Notice of Motion No: 79/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Portlaoise Municipal district call on Laois County Council to give an update on the taking in charge of Heathfields"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that The Planning Authority is finalising documentation for submission to Irish Water. Subject to their approval the estate will be advertised for taking in charge forthwith.

Councillor Willie Aird requested an update from Irish Water for the next MD meeting – (Water Services/Planning)

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that this is 1 of 8 estates to be taken in charge and it is expected that it will be taken in charge before the end of 2022.

### **Notice of Motion No: 80/2022**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Portlaoise Municipal district call on Laois County Council include Beechfield in the Footpath Restoration Programme"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that a Notice of Motion is being tabled for consideration by the full Council at their May meeting scheduled for the 30th of May 2022 requesting funding for a Multi-Annual Footpath Restoration Programme for County Laois. Beechfield will be noted for inclusion if and when funding becomes available. I will make myself available to meet Councillor Aird to examine the location in the meantime.

Councillor Aird enquired as to the IPB Allocations – Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. advised that the allocation for 2022 is in the region of €150,000 and that this would be further confirmed. The IPB funding for 2022 will be used to address high priority locations in the MD and that a list of works for 2022 will be made available to the Members.

### **Notice of Motion No: 81/2022**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council include Ballyroan & Abbeyleix in the next Town & Village Streetscape Enhancement Scheme"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme was an initiative of the Department of Rural & Community Development in 2021. If the scheme is introduced for a second year, the towns of Ballyroan and Abbeyleix can be considered for inclusion in same.

### **Notice of Motion No: 82/2022**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council review the height of the ramp entering Ballinakill from the Abbeyleix road just before the junction of the swimming pool road and the R432. The height of the ramp appears to be more severe than the other ramps further down the street. In addition, there is inadequate warning and lighting approaching the ramp. Can flashing beacons be installed at the ramp also?"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E will make himself available to meet Councillor Walsh on site at this location. The traffic calming ramp at this location meets the current standards and advanced warning signage and road markings have been in place since the time the ramp was originally installed.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 83/2022**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council consider extending the footpath on the Bog Road, Ballyroan to the Creche and include it in next years budget"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Council will consider the proposed new footpath under next years works programme, subject to available funding.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 84/2022**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council puts a scheme in place to retrofit the houses in Saint Brigid's Place, Portlaoise"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has recently made a submission to the Department on the 27th of April 2022 for the retrofitting of 47 units. The 47 units submitted were prioritised based on property age and MD area and unfortunately St. Brigid's Place was not included in the 2022 submission. This estate can be considered for consideration in the 2023 submission.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 85/2022**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council replace the litter bin that was removed from outside Hanlon's on the Mountmellick Road and also install more bins from Fairgreen to town centre"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the old manual litter bin outside Hanlons shop on the Mountmellick Road will be replaced in the coming weeks with a big belly solar powered compactor bin. There are currently no plans to extend the town/street bin scheme out the Mountmellick Road along the N80 from the Town Centre to the Fairgreen.

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. indicated that it would take three to four weeks for delivery of a refurbished big belly bin for this location.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 87/2022**

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

***"That this Council contact Eir to move a pole on the Abbeyleix Road, Ballyroan as it is causing sight problems for people living in the area"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinosn, S.E.E. will arrange to meet Councillor Fennelly to examine the location and make arrangements to contact Eir.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 88/2022**

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

***"That this Council replace bollards at the end of the footpath between Balladine Drive & Respond Housing Association in Abbeyleix"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make myself available to meet Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the bollards in question

#### **Notice of Motion No: 89/2022**

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

***"That this Council install a Cul-de-Sac sign at Clonking, Abbeyleix"***

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 proposed location for a Cul de Sac sign at Clonking.

**Notice of Motion No: 90/2022**

**Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-**

***"That this Council repair the road surface at Colliers Way, Kilminchy"***

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

**Notice of Motion No: 91/2022**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council provide an update on the review of the Bye-Laws made under the Control of Horses Act, 1996 which is being undertaken"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a review of the Bye-Laws has previously been prepared but contractual arrangements with the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and Local Authorities gives rise to delays in the publication of any new bye-laws for the Control of Horses.

**Notice of Motion No: 92/2022**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council launch a campaign to be run over a number of months to promote and encourage cycling specifically in Portlaoise, separate from the National Bike Week Campaign"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that following the appointment of the Cycling Officer a study is now ongoing to ascertain attitudes to and information on cycling in Portlaoise. The outputs of that survey will advise future campaigns, all with a view to increasing the numbers of cyclists in Portlaoise. In parallel a Sub-Group of Portlaoise Town Team is seeking to encourage and promote cycling and a



school's focussed family cycle bus is starting on the 18th May, details of which are provided separately.

## **5. Correspondence**

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

Councillor John Joe Fennelly raised the matter of the new criteria for the Local Improvement Scheme Funding. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that correspondence had issued to the Department of Rural and Community Development regarding the securing of additional funding under the scheme. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that he would send out the new criteria/changes relevant to the scheme.

## **6. Fix Date for Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2022 at 11.00 a.m. followed by the A.G.M. of the Municipal District.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

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**Director of Corporate  
Affairs**