

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 17th OF NOVEMBER 2021 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.

APOLOGIES: 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. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS

On the proposition of the Leas Cathaoirleach, Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously congratulated Abbeyleix on being awarded the title of 'Ireland's Tidiest Small Town' for 2021 and tribute was paid to the committee and all the volunteers who have contributed to this wonderful success.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 20th OF OCTOBER 2021

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th of October were confirmed as circulated.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER 2021

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested an update on the following Notice of Motion which had been proposed and seconded at the October meeting as follows:

Notice of Motion No: 156/2021 – Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley

“That this Council arrange a meeting urgently with Cluid housing body to discuss the continuous delays with the completion of 32 Social houses in Clonrooske Abbey Portlaoise. ”

Councillor Stanley made reference to a recent meeting that was held with Mr. David Murphy, Business Manager with Clúid Housing & Ms. Georgina Ireland, S.E.O., Housing Department, Laois County Council attended by herself and Councillor Fitzgerald wherein discussions were had regarding the delay in the delivery of these houses.

During discussions Councillor Aird proposed that Ms. Angela McEvoy Director of Services address the Portlaoise MD Members in Committee regarding the Housing Programme insofar as that Programme relates to the Portlaoise Municipal District. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy.

Councillor Willie raised the issue of the cycle path/footpath at the Rugby Club at Togher. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that provision can be made for this in the 2022 Roadworks Programme.

4. Presentation by Ms. Aine O' Connor on the Challenges and Opportunities relating to a Cycling Culture

Ms. Aine O' Connor who has been appointed Cycling Officer with Laois County Council in conjunction with Waterford Institute of Technology delivered a comprehensive presentation to the Municipal District Members on cultivating a Cycling Culture in Portlaoise. The presentation outlined her research to date and the objectives of her work. Ms. O' Connor responded to the various queries raised and the Members thanked her for her presentation.

5. Provision of Traffic Calming measures in Raheen Village in accordance with Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act, 1994

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E., advised the members that road safety issues in Raheen Village, particularly in the vicinity of the primary school and creche, were raised with Laois County Council at the March 2021 Meeting of Portlaoise MD. Laois County Council has examined the road safety concerns, designed a traffic calming scheme and published the Scheme in accordance with the provisions Section 38 Road Traffic Act, 1994. A detailed briefing has previously been given to the Members regarding the

proposed Scheme. The making of a decision to provide traffic calming measures under Section 38 Road Traffic Act, 1994 is a reserved function of the members. Mr. Wilkinson recommended that the Members resolve to provide Traffic Calming in Raheen Village as set out previously, for the safety of all road users including vulnerable road users, pedestrians and school children.

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously agreed the measures as circulated with the inclusion of longer table top ramps to form part of the scheme noting that this change is in keeping with the objectives of the Road Safety Audit and proper design standards.

6. Municipal District Additional 2021 Allocation

The Members were advised that €25,000 was being allocated in relation to unspent training and conference monies for 2021. It was agreed that the matter be discussed and agreed after the meeting.

Councillor Aird proposed that Ms. Muireann Ní Chonail, Arts Officer be invited to the next meeting to update Elected Members on the delivery of the Arts installation at the Abbeyleix Road/Father Brown Avenue Roundabout.

7. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 161/2021

In the absence of Councillor Mary Sweeney, Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following three Notice of Motions:

"That this Council clear the overgrown footpaths at Newtown, Ballyroan"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the works at this location will be carried out within the next three to four weeks

Notice of Motion No: 162/2021

"That Laois County Council provide free parking in designated areas in Portlaoise town centre for the Christmas period"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council doesn't propose to provide free parking for the Christmas period. Free parking encourages long term parking - the current system of paid parking for up to two hours ensures spaces are vacated throughout the day and more people can visit the town.

Following discussion and on the request of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald with the support of other Member, and, as agreed with the Director of Services, Mr. Simon Walton, it was unanimously agreed that free parking would be provided on the 4th, 11th & 18th of December 2021.

Notice of Motion No: 163/2021

"That this Council consider the resurfacing and strengthening of the R425 between Newtown and Ballinlough in the 2022 Roads Programme "

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that this location will be examined for consideration as part of the Annual Roads Programme for 2022.

Notice of Motion No: 164/202

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

"That this Council write to the Minister for Local Government and Heritage, Mr. Darragh O'Brien and request him to resolve the issue of Irish Water's refusal to take in charge pumping stations in housing estates until the Local Authority upgrade the system to their specification"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will write to Minister O'Brien requesting

that the taking in charge of legacy water services assets by Irish Water is expedited

Notice of Motion No: 165/2021

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

“That this Council give an update on progress made to take The Garden Village in Charge and an update on outstanding works including the pumping station”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. 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.

Notice of Motion No: 166/2021

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

“That this Council carry out a road safety Audit on Greenmill Lane with a view to installing road safety measures in the area”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will shortly proceed to tender to carry out a road safety audit at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 167/2021

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

“That this Council install bollards on the Durrow Road, Abbeyleix at the entrance to Abbeyleix Bog and repair the grass verge where vehicles are pulling in”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Roads Office will examine this location and carry out road repairs as required

Notice of Motion No: 168/2021

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

"That this Council give an update on the painting and lighting of Abbeyleix Library"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Library Section has sought quotations for the painting of the library. Due to the age of the building and the type of render on the exterior the painting will have to be done by painters with experience in painting heritage buildings. Regarding the lighting - some of the external ground lights around the library have been water damaged and are not working and Laois County Council are trying to source replacements and /or alternatives.

It was requested that these works could be carried out by Summer 2022.

Notice of Motion No: 169/2021

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

"That this Council undertake to install drainage works close to Bartles Bridge in front of property"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will re-examine this location during a period of wet weather and carry out drainage works as required.

Notice of Motion No: 170/2021

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council renew the road markings in Knockmay estates especially the markings on the ramps"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine the estates in the Knockmay Area with a view to refreshing road markings as required in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 171/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install a fence /barrier at Portlaoise Leisure centre in front of houses at St. Brigids”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council have been contacted by a local resident and have requested that the new management company meet with local residents to assess the issues and ascertain the cost of resolving the fencing issues.

Notice of Motion No: 172/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give an update on the refurbishment of our houses on Harpurs Lane”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that these properties are not currently part of the Retrofitting programme for 2021/2022 but could be considered for future programmes should further DHLGH funding streams become available. In the interim, Laois County Council maintenance team will carry out an inspection on each property to establish what maintenance works are required to be completed.

It was highlighted that some houses require immediate repairs.

Notice of Motion No: 173/2021

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install lights on the Junction 17 Togher Link Road from Portlaoise Plaza to Clonminam Industrial Estate”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council are awaiting ESB attendance onsite to

energise the Lighting Installed at J17 National Enterprise Park. A recent update provided by ESB advised that the lighting will be energized before the end of November.

Notice of Motion No: 174/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council request a meeting with the Director of Services for Roads & Transportation, Mr. Simon Walton and the roads engineering staff to discuss the proposed new road infrastructure for the proposed new development of Dunmasc College"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Mr. Walton would be happy to meet with Councillor Aird and any other Member to discuss emerging proposals for the new road infrastructure at this location. It was noted that a planning application was still to be made in respect of the proposed development.

Councillor Aird requested a site meeting with the relevant Council officials to discuss the current issues in the vicinity of the proposed development. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that a meeting could be facilitated in respect of the proposed development.

Notice of Motion No: 175/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council increase the size of the signage indicating the 50kph speed limit on Fr. Browne Avenue and also to install a speed sign between Telfords and the entrance to the Centre of Excellence"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Roads Office will review the speed limit signage on Fr. Browne Avenue and make arrangements to install speed radar signs on Fr. Browne Avenue to be funded from Councillors discretionary funding for 2022

Notice of Motion No: 176/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council surface the roadway at the rear of the houses on the Abbeyleix Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that this location will be examined for consideration as part of the Annual Roads Programme for 2022.

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. also agreed that surveys and works relating to underground services and surface water drainage may need to be carried out in advance of any re-surfacing.

Notice of Motion No: 177/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois Council carry out maintenance to the Old Cemetery at Ridge Road, Portlaoise and that it be allocated to the existing Cemetery Committee”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that in line with other historic cemeteries around the County, the Old Cemetery at Ridge Road, Portlaoise is not under the control and management of Laois County Council. Therefore, Laois County Council is not in a budgetary position to contribute to works at this location from its cemetery budget.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services agreed to engage the Community Section & the Heritage Officer in relation to the development of a plan and carrying out works at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 178/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council provide an update in relation to the proposed playground Kilminchy, wherein a plan had previously been prepared”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Kilminchy Residents Company had previously prepared a Green Infrastructure Plan and consulted with Laois County Council during the preparation of this plan, which included an outline for a natural children’s play area. While assistance has been sought and provided to the Kilminchy Residents in relation to the hard-court

facilities, no further discussion has occurred in relation to a play facility. The Sport & Leisure Office is available to assist and support the local group further this project.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services agreed to follow up the matter with the Sport & Leisure Officer

Notice of Motion No: 179/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council commit to undertaking repainting the road markings in Esker Hills where they have faded”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that his location will be re-examined and refreshed road markings will be carried out as required

Councillor Connell clarified that works were required at the entrance to the estate in particular.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

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

9. FIX DATE & TIME FOR NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **8th of December at 11.00 a.m.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
John Joe Fennelly, Leas Chathaoirleach