

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER 2023 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

**RESENT:** Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)  
Mr. Barry Walsh, 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 13<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2023**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, the minutes of the Portlaoise Municipal District meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September were confirmed as circulated.



**2. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS ON RECENT NATIONAL TIDY TOWNS RESULTS**

Unanimously, the Members paid tribute to all the Tidy Towns Groups in the County and their volunteers for recent achievements at the National Tidy Towns Competition 2023 as follows:-

-  Abbeyleix on their recent success as being named Ireland's Tidiest Town
-  Portlaoise on winning gold
-  Durrow on winning bronze
-  Ballinakill on winning a County Endeavour Award

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2023**

The following matters were raised arising from the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2023

-  Councillor Willie Aird sought an update on the tenders for houses in Lakeglen
-  Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested that funding be sought for temporary measures and bollards on Harpur's Lane.

#### **4. VOTE OF SYMPATHY**

The following Votes of Sympathies were agreed:

- (i) The Callaghan Family on the death of Mr. Johnny Callaghan, Trumera, Mountrath, father of Mr. Fintan Callaghan and Mr. Patrick Callaghan, Laois County Council
- (ii) The Mulhall Family, Bog Road, Ballyroan on the death of Ms. Mary Mulhall

#### **5. Notice of Motions**

##### **Notice of Motion No: 111/2023**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*"That Laois County Council write to Irish Rail seeking them to undertake an urgent and immediate review of disability access measures at Portlaoise Train Station"*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. It was agreed that a letter would issue to Irish Rail in this regard.

##### **Notice of Motion No: 112/2023**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*"That Laois County Council install a 'Courtesy Crossing' at the entrance to Esker Hills Estate to make this a safe crossing for the large numbers of pedestrians traversing Ridge Road"*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD office will make arrangements to install road markings and a 'Courtesy Crossing' at the entrance to Esker Hills Estate in the coming weeks.

A discussion was had in relation to pedestrian crossings. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer advised that there are two general categories of pedestrian crossings, controlled and uncontrolled crossings.

A courtesy crossing is a type of uncontrolled crossing whereby there are no defined entitlements but markings identify a popular crossing point to motorists, where local circumstances do not permit provision of a controlled crossing point.

Controlled crossings include the likes of zebra and pelican crossings and are located at specific locations where specific standards can be met (driver visibility, sight lines etc). At controlled crossings drivers are required to stop and permit pedestrians to cross.

### **Notice of Motion No: 113/2023**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council carry out the following works in Fairgreen Estate: Carmody Way - cut back foliage at stop sign, remove some trees on the green & on Carmody Way itself and install a light"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD office will make arrangements to trim back trees adjacent to the stop sign at Carmody Way in the coming weeks. Arrangements will also be made to thin out existing trees on the green area on a phased basis. Laois County Council Road Design will investigate the possibility of installing a public light at this location also. A member of the Road Design Staff will meet Cllr Connell on site to review the existing lighting provision and make arrangements as necessary.

### **Notice of Motion No: 114/2023**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council organise pruning and topping of trees in the public green area, Lower Main Street, Ballyroan"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to carry out crown reduction on the trees on the green area at Lower Main Street, Ballyroan.

### **Notice of Motion No: 115/2023**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion

***"That Laois County Council increase the size of the existing lay-by outside Ballypickas G.A.A. Club"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet with Councillor Barry Walsh on site at Ballypickas G.A.A. Club to examine the works required at this location.

**Notice of Motion No: 116/2023**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council roll out the road marking, bollard and traffic calming measures similar to those outside Scoil Mhuire, Abbeyleix to all schools across the Portlaoise MD where feasible"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised The measures have been introduced as part of the Safe Routes to School Programme in conjunction with An Taisce and the NTA. Any future such installations will be dependant on allocated funding and approvals.

**Notice of Motion No: 117/2023**

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

***"That Laois County Council give an update on the repairs that are needed to the footpaths in Woodgrove and an update on the future plans for the vacant site in Woodgrove Lawns"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office has examined the footpaths in Woodgrove and are currently making arrangements to carry out the works in the next three to five weeks. This piece of land has been identified on the RZLT map prepared by Laois County Council. The site is within "scope" of the provisions of the Residential Zoned Land Tax. The Council will also inspect the lands to determine if any development opportunities exist from a housing perspective.

**The Members requested that the planning section include conditions for developments going forward to ensure that trees are planted a sufficient distance from built infrastructure such as footpaths, walls, houses and roads.**

### **Notice of Motion No: 118/2023**

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

***"That Laois County Council seek a meeting urgently with Respond to find out what is the delay with them signing off on works that are needed for people with disabilities through the Council grants schemes"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has engaged with Respond regarding sign-offs to permit disability friendly works on Respond properties in County Laois. Respond has advised that, currently, there is one Respond property in County Laois, for which they await contractor documentation from the tenant, to allow such works to proceed. Laois County Council has asked Respond to follow up with the tenant in order to advise the documentation required and to support a timely commencement of works.

The Members requested Respond to furnish a list of their Housing Liaison Officers to the Members.

### **Notice of Motion No: 119/2023**

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

***"That Laois County Council give an update on the taking in charge of Slí Na Noir Estate Abbeyleix"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a list of works was given to Respond and Laois County Council are currently liaising with Respond regarding the completion of same - once works are completed the statutory process for taking in charge will commence.

The Members requested the details of the schedule of works. Following a query regarding issues with the wastewater network in the estate, Members were advised that, in this instance, because the estate is not taken in charge, it is the responsibility of Respond, as the Developer, to maintain the infrastructure. Following taking in charge, Laois County Council will transfer responsibility to Uisce Eireann, in their capacity as the national water services authority.

### **Notice of Motion No: 120/2023**

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council remove the tree stumps from the green at Upper Beladd, Portlaoise"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD office will make arrangements to carry out works to address the tree stumps from the green area at Upper Beladd, Portlaoise.

### **Notice of Motion No: 121/2023**

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council install a ramp on the entrance into Heathfield Estate before the entrance to Ard Branagh estate for traffic calming reasons"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that A traffic calming ramp will be installed on the entrance into Heathfield Estate before the entrance to Ard Branagh estate within the next four to five weeks.

### **Notice of Motion No: 122/2023**

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council ensure that Pen Readers are made available as a matter of urgency for use in Portlaoise Library"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the library Service have ordered C pens and we expect them to be delivered in the coming weeks

### **Notice of Motion No: 123/2023**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council install a disabled car space in the vicinity of No. 36 Rathevan Close, Portlaoise"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself

available to meet Councillor Aird on site to examine the location for the installation of a disabled parking space.

**Notice of Motion No: 124/2023**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council install traffic calming measures on the main road from Mountmellick at the junction of Knightstown and when you turn right if measures could be included on this road as well"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD will examine the location for installation of road markings to improve safety at the junction at Knightstown on the R422 on the L21332. It was further agreed that the road markings would include slow road markings.

**Notice of Motion No: 125/2023**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That Laois County Council as a matter of urgency trim the trees at Forrest Park & Liogard, Portlaoise"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Councillor Aird on site to examine the trees at Forrest Park & Liogard that require works.

**Notice of Motion No: 126/2023**

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

***"That Laois County Council give a time scale on works to be undertaken at the Abbeyleix Road, Ballyroan close to St. Patrick's Cemetery to improve visibility and safety for residents in the area"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that it is intended to commence works under the Low Cost Safety Improvement Scheme on the R425 near Abbeyleix Cemetery within the next two

to three weeks and works will take approximately three weeks to complete subject to weather conditions etc..

### **Notice of Motion No: 127/2023**

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

***"That Laois County Council contact Irish Water as to the up to date position with regard to extension of Ballypickas Group Wate Scheme to Spink GAA Club & residents in the area"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that this project was proposed mid-way through the current Rural Water Multi-Annual Program but did not receive DoELG approval. The scheme can submit an updated costed proposal for LCC/DoELG consideration in the next Program - which is expected to be announced by the DoELG in the near future."

The Members requested Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services to correspond with the Department to enquire when will the next Rural Water Programme be announced.

### **Notice of Motion No: 128/2023**

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

***"That Laois County Council include the R430/R432 for re-surfacing in 2024 especially from entrance to Abbeyleix Community Nursing Unit to Thornberry as the road surface is very poor at present"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will examine the road in the vicinity of the junctions of the R430 Carlow Road, Abbeyleix and the R432 Ballinakill Road, Abbeyleix for consideration for inclusion on the 2024 Roads Prorgamme.

### **Notice of Motion No: 129/2023**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council make safe the entrance/exit to Beechfield estate and also be given an update on the vacant site adjacent to the estate"***



This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Beechfield entrance was redesigned to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing the road. Previously the entrance was 20m wide and has now been reduced to 8m, with vehicular access maintained. The works provided comply with current design standards. Planning permission was granted on site for a housing scheme of 8 units (Pl ref no. 18/61 refers). No commencement notice has been received to date. The site was subject to Derelict Site proceedings which resulted in the removal of the dwelling on site. The Planning Authority will carry out a site inspection under the Derelict Sites Act and take appropriate action.

Councillor Fitzgerald indicated that the residents are extremely concerned about safety at the estate. There is no clear view with high walls and high trees which requires drivers to park on the crossing for visibility.

It was agreed that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will meet Councillors Fitzgerald & Aird at the crossing with residents. The Members also requested a meeting on site with Mr. David O' Hara, Senior Planner regarding the issue of vacant sites.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised that the matter of vacant sites will be included on the November agenda of the Municipal District where an update will be given by the Planning Department on vacant sites in the Portlaoise area.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 130/2023**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***"That this Council solve the flooding problem at Ballyteegan just after Crookedy Cross"***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will be submitting an application for drainage funding this year for works to be carried out in early 2024 on the L2120.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 131/2023**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the Notice of Motion:-

*"That this Council repair the road from Togher to Burnwood"*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Councillor Fitzgerald at this location with a view to carrying out road repairs as required.

**6. Correspondence**

It was noted that no correspondence had been circulated since the last meeting of the Municipal District:-

**7. Fix Date for Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 at 11.00 a.m.**

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

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Director of Services