

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 20th OF OCTOBER 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.
Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.
Mr. Noel Tuohy, 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 Portlaoise on being awarded Ireland's cleanest town in the recent National IBAL League. Members collectively emphasised that this is a wonderful achievement and is recognition of the outstanding work and collaboration between Laois County Council and Portlaoise Tidy Towns.

Tribute was paid to Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E., Portlaoise Municipal District Area together with all the Portlaoise MD staff who work in week in week out in maintaining and enhancing the public realm. The work of the Litter Wardens was also acknowledged.

Tribute was also paid to Mr. Gerry Browne, Chairperson of the Portlaoise Tidy Towns and all the volunteers for their outstanding work in keeping the town clean and tidy and also to the Portlaoise Town Team for their support and contribution.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services joined in the sentiments expressed to all who contributed to this wonderful achievement and also extended thanks to the Elected Members for their ongoing support.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 15th OF SEPTEMBER 2021

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th of September 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 September meeting as follows:

Notice of Motion No: 129/2021

"That Laois County Council ensure that as part of the development in Tower Hill that a boundary wall is included between the development and Millbrook Estate"

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that a meeting is scheduled in relation to same for next week. It was agreed that Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley and Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald would attend.

4. NOMINATION OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EIRGRID LAOIS KILKENNY REINFORCEMENT PROJECT COMMUNITY FORUM

It was noted that this matter was deferred from the September Municipal District Meeting. As advised Eirgrid has committed to establishing a community forum in relation to the Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement Project and has appointed Irish Rural Link as the Community Forum's independent facilitator. The purpose of the forum is to ensure constructive communication between community stakeholders during project delivery and oversee the implementation of the community benefit scheme. It was unanimously agreed that Councillor Thomasina Connell be nominated from the Portlaoise Municipal District.

5. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

It was agreed by Councillor Mary Sweeney that her Notice of Motions be considered in her absence and proposed by Councillor Thomasina Connell

Notice of Motion No: 143/2021

"That Laois County Council provide an update on the design and construction of the footpath between Ballyroan primary school and Ballyroan GAA pitch"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the design is progressing and when finalised it will be included in the tender package that is to issue in the in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 144/2021

"That Laois County Council repair and lower the footpaths at the junction of the Bog road and the Main Street in Ballyroan to provide for safe wheelchair access across the road"

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 with Councillor Sweeney on site and confirm the extent of the works required.

Notice of Motion No: 145/2021

"That Laois County Council repair and strengthen the R425 between the Cross of Newtown and Main Street, Ballyroan"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Couoncillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a section of the R425 between Cross of Newtown and Main Street, Ballyroan will be strengthened by the end of next week as part of the 2021 Restoration Improvement (Strengthening) Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 146/2021

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

"That this Council extend the footpath on the Ballyroan Road, Abbeyleix to facilitate wheelchair users – this project may be funded by the Active Travel allocation that is available to Laois County Council"

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 with Councillor Fennelly on site and confirm the extent of the works required.

Notice of Motion No: 147/2021

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

“That this Council re-instate the road fence at Clonad, Portlaoise – this fence was erected in the late 1960’s as part of the CPO when the new road was being installed”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the fencing is located along the boundary between private agricultural land and old main road at Clonadadoran Portlaoise that was formally the Portlaoise - Abbeyleix Road prior to the realignment of the N77. Maintenance of such a boundary fence adjacent to public road is the responsibility of the private landowner.

The Members requested Laois County Council to apply for funding for the upgrade of the recreation/amenity area and as part of these works, as a once off measure, that the Council would replace any boundary fencing that needed to be addressed.

Notice of Motion No: 148/2021

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council put in place traffic calming measures at Boley, Abbeyleix and also erect wheelchair users signs at this location”

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 with Councillor Fennelly on site on the L-1652-63 Boley Lower to examine the location and confirm the location of the required signage.

Notice of Motion No: 149/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to remove the grass growth from the side of the footpath on the Rathleague Road near the junction to Summerhill Lane”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Council is currently designing a traffic calming scheme for this section of road outside the GAA Club. Public consultation will commence in November with a view to construction in Q. 1 of 2022. The issue raised under this Notice of Motion will be addressed as part of this.

Councillor Aird requested that works be carried out in the interim as a matter of urgency . Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. agreed to examine.

Notice of Motion No: 150/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to ensure that the road in Glenside, Portlaoise is included on the road maintenance programme for necessary re-surfacing and filling of potholes"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine the L-81001-0 at Glenside for considerations as part of the 2022-2024 Multiannual roads programme. Repairs will be carried out at this location in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 151/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council for an update regarding the placement on the schedule of works of proposals for a footpath and bicycle lane from the Rugby Club to Togher Wood"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that designs are currently under development for a pedestrian and cycle link to Togher Wood.

Notice of Motion No: 152/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update on the progress with the Columbarium Wall and also the future availability of land at Portlaoise Cemetery"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that consideration will be given to the construction of a columbarium wall in the preparation of the 2022 estimate but this will depend on cost and the Council's ability to do so within resources available. Currently, there are approximately 2.7 acres of land available for the provision of new plots at Portlaoise Cemetery.

The Members expressed concern regarding Portlaoise Cemetery running out of space in the graveyard in three years and requested that it be included in the budget for 2022 as a matter of urgency. The possibility of the provision of a crematorium was also raised.

Notice of Motion No: 153/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install bollards at St. Mary's CBS/Scoil Chroist Ri to prevent parking on cycle lanes, similar to the bollards installed on Fielbrook Roundabout"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that it is important to note that it is an offence to park on a cycle track. The Roads Design Section will review cycling facilities at this location prepare measures to enhance and protect the existing facilities in the area.

In addition, Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that Ms. Aine O' Connor has been appointed as Cycling Officer with Laois County Council. Ms. O' Connor has commenced her work on the development of a cycling culture in Portlaoise and Mr. Walton indicated that Ms. O' Connor would attend the November meeting to do a presentation on the data gathering exercises and analysis which she is currently carrying out.

Councillor Tuohy requested an update on the pedestrian crossings at Aughnaharan Drive & Summerhill Lane. It was agreed that an update be requested from the Road Design Section.

Notice of Motion No: 154/2021

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council request Portlaoise Regional Hospital to provide a parking areas for people dropping off bloods"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina O'Connell. The Members were advised that correspondence will issue to the Health Services Executive in this regard.

It was noted that the intent of the Motion pertained to a short term, set down, free-of-charge parking area to be provided for persons dropping off blood samples.

Councillor Connell indicated that she would arrange to raise the matter at the next meeting of the Dublin Mid-Leinster Regional Health Forum of which she is nominated to.

Notice of Motion No: 155/20212

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

"This Council give a detailed report on the deep retrofitting program being rolled out in Mountain View Estate, Hillview Drive Knockmay, and O' Moore Place, to give details on the works that are planned on these Council houses and timelines and also to ring-fence future funding to include St John's Square and St Brigids Place"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Cuoncillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has been approved funding for 2 retrofitting schemes as outlined below. The eligible works which must achieve a minimum BER rating of "B2" (or Cost Optimal Equivalent) include the following.

- a) Attic Insulation
- b) Flat Roof Insulation
- c) External Wall Insulation / Dry Lining / Pumped Cavities
- d) Windows & Doors
- e) Heat Pumps

f) LED Lighting

1) **Midlands Retrofitting Programme:**

Budget approval has been granted 157 homes as part of a pilot initiative under the above programme. Lot 1 Contractors are currently on the ground and works have commenced.

Contracts for Lot 2 & Lot 3 have been signed and works are due to commence in Q4 2021.

Lot	Area	Estimated Timeframe
1	Mountain View, Portlaoise	Q4 2021
	Quigley Park, Rathdowney	Q4 2021
	Radgarc Alain, Arles	Q4 2021
2/3	Hillview, Portlaoise	Q2 2022
	Derrymore, Portarlinton	Q2 2022
	Kirwan Park, Mountmellick	Q2 2022

2) **Energy Efficiency Retrofitting & Planned Maintenance Programme:**

Budget approval has been granted 31 homes and works will include planned maintenance works.

Tenders have been advertised and are due for submission on 28/10/21.

Contracts for these works are due to signed in Q4 2021.

Lot	Area	Estimated Timeframe
1	O'Moore Place, Portlaoise	Q2 2022

Laois County Council has not received any funding approval yet for proposed future programmes.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested that quarterly updates be made available to the Members on these projects and that Mr. Trevor Hennessy, A/S.E., Housing could be in attendance.

Notice of Motion No: 156/2021

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

“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”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has been in regular contact

with Cluid with regard to the delays being experienced with the delivery of this development. Delay issues to date have been the availability of sub-contractors to complete minor fixes and ESB connection issues. Cluid have advised that all 3 phases will be delivered by Q2 2022 and all efforts are being made to ensure that Phases 1 and 2 are delivered prior to that date. An update will be given to the members as soon as it is to hand in this regard.'

A discussion ensued during which Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley expressed concern regarding continuous delays in the delivery of the 32 social housing scheme. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that he would make arrangements with the Housing Department to schedule a meeting with Cluid and Councillor Caroline Dwane & Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald as a matter of urgency.

Notice of Motion No: 157/2021

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

"This Council cut back trees overhanging the public footpath in Rosevale Estate , and the trees at the back of Bianconi Way"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will examine and risk assess the trees in Rosevale Estate and at the back of Bianconi Way. The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will obtain a quotation for carrying out any necessary works. The works may be carried out on a phased basis subject to the availability of funding.

Councillor Dwane Stanley requested if the trees in Glenbarrow could be examined also. In relation to Rosevale Estate, Councillor Stanley advised that the trees were overhanging the footpath on the Main N80.

In relation to Bianconi Way Councillor Aird requested that all the trees be removed along the back lane. However, Councillor Dwane Stanley indicated that only problematic trees be removed and that some trees should remain to maintain the privacy of residents.

Notice of Motion No: 158/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council provide an update on the Taking in Charge of Broomville Estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that surveys and substantial works are required to prepare this estate for taking in charge which require a funding stream which is currently not available. This is being considered as part of the 2022 budget.

Councillor Connell advised that there is an issue with some public lighting that requires repairs.

Notice of Motion No: 159/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council provide an update on the proposed car park at the Rock of Dunamaise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council are currently engaging with an Auctioneer representing a landowner for a site identified as a possible location for a car park at the Rock of Dunamaise. Negotiations are still ongoing and Laois County Council will advise the Elected Members on any outcome of these discussions accordingly.

Notice of Motion No: 160/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council review the road layout at the entrance to Dysart Woods on the Stradbally Road to ensure safe access and egress from the Main Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will meet Councillor Connell on site to review the road layout at the entrance to Dysart Woods on the Stradbally Road and following the site visit the Portlaoise MD Office will make contact with Coillte regarding any proposed measures that may be required"

In relation to Fr. Browne Avenue, Councillor Willie Aird indicated that the gates do not stay open automatically and people are not willing to close them due to Covid -19. It was noted that as a result the walkway is not being used as much as it should.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

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

7. FIX DATE & TIME FOR NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **17th of November 2021 at 11.00 a.m.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

**_____
John Joe Fennelly, Leas Chathaoirleach**