

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, 19TH OF OCTOBER 2022 IN THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE
MEETING ROOM, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE AND BY MICROSOFT
TEAMS**

PRESENT Mr. Barry Walsh, 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. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services
Mr. Paul McLoughlin,
Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 14th OF SEPTEMBER 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Thomasina Connell seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th of September 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 14th OF SEPTEMBER 2022

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 14th of September 2022.

3. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 135/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the Notice of Motion:-

“That the Portlaoise District provide details on what we have done to date and what our plans are going forward to combat town centre dereliction and vacant within the town of Portlaoise, whether we have undertaken a survey as undertaken in Mountrath/ Mountmellick and if same has been undertaken what actions we are taken to engage with owners of those properties”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that it is the intention of the Regeneration Team to do a Vacancy survey of properties within Portlaoise and other towns and villages to ascertain the levels of vacancy. However in the interim the Vacant Homes Officer continues to work with owners of properties in Portlaoise who wish to bring vacant properties back to use for residential use and vacant properties can be reported on www.vacanthomes.ie or to the vacant homes officer at vacanthomes@laoiscoco.ie.

Notice of Motion No: 136/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Portlaoise District provide an update on remaining housing estates to be taken in charge in this Municipal District – what estates are left to be TIC, what the issues are preventing them being TIC and whether these estates are being specifically targeted by the TIC Working Group set up last year”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that, at the September 2022 Meeting, Elected Members made a declaration which provided for the taking in charge of Heathfields, Dublin Road. Broomville Close/Court/Gardens and Fieldbrook, Dublin Road were part of the same taking in charge process but an issue was raised in the consultation process that has slightly delayed taking in charge. Thereafter, another public notice will be published in October/November 2022 to commence the consultation process for the taking in charge of Garden Village, Borris Meadows and Bellingham (Remainder) and Ashewood Walk.

Notice of Motion No: 137/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Portlaoise District provide an update in relation to the Rock of Dunamase to include a summary of the archaeological works undertaken/to be undertaken and what the outcomes of those works were, together with a timeline as to when it can be expected we would have a car park”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a Visual Impact Assessment of the area around the Rock of Dunamase to assist in selecting the best site for the installation of parking was carried out in early 2019. Following this report, The National

Monuments service recommended that a Geophysical Study be carried out in two locations at the Rock to identify the likely extent of subsurface archaeological remains in each of these sites. With the landowners consent these Geophysical Studies were carried out and the surveys conducted for this report revealed a landscape which contains a large number of possible archaeological and agricultural anomalies. Agreement has been reached with a landowner to purchase a site subject to Part VIII planning for the development of a carpark. The Part VIII is currently being prepared. It is envisaged that this will be brought before the Council by January 2023 and the sale closed for the purchase of the land in Feb 2023. The car park development will then be considered subject to funding.

Councillor Willie Aird requested if interim safety measures could be examined ahead of the installation of the new development.

Notice of Motion No: 138/2022

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

"That this Council be given an update on the future plans for the two burnt out houses in Lakeglen"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a detailed design for the refurbishment of these 2 houses has been agreed by the Housing and Planning Departments. This detailed design has been submitted to Department for approval and once this is approved LCC will then progress the refurbishment works to tender stage.

Councillor Dwane Stanley requested a public lighting representative to meet her in relation to the replacement of old lighting at Treo Nua.

Notice of Motion No: 139/2022

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

"That this Council be given an update on the progress and future plans for the two Council owned houses on the Stradbally Road and take action to clean up the properties immediately"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that design options for both Roads and Housing are currently being examined with a view to the development of the lands acquired,

in the interim, the houses will be secured and the sites maintained to protect local residential amenity.

Councillor Aird requested a site meeting with Mr. Walton and Mr. Wilkinson at the site.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services advised Members that, once they were available, he would advise the Members as to the emerging options for development of the two sites acquired.

Notice of Motion No: 140/2022

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

"That this Council repair the sections of footpaths that are in a bad state in the Cemetery in Ballinkill"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a tender for these works has been published and awarded and it is expected that the work will be completed in the coming weeks

Notice of Motion No: 141/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council repair the car road between St. John's Square and Millview"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that works will be carried out on the car road within the next four to five weeks.

Councillor Willie Aird requested the installation of additional road markings at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 142/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install safety measures at the St. Mary's CBS and Scoil Chríost Rí campus. These measures should include bollards to protect cyclists and infrastructure for students walking to school"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that the Council has submitted an application to the NTA for funding under the Active Travel Programme to carry out vulnerable road user safety improvements on the Borris Road at the school campus.

The Members requested that interim measures be carried out in the short term and Councillor Fitzgerald requested that the Active Travel Department examine.

Notice of Motion No: 143/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council investigate the problems with water supply in Kilminchy"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Irish Water Leakage Reduction Contractors have been carrying out leakage investigation works in the Kilminchy area over that last month. These works may have caused some disruption to the water supply in the Kilminchy area. These works have now been completed.

Notice of Motion No: 144/2022

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

"That this Council install traffic calming measures at Sweetview, Abbeyleix in line with the safety audit report carried out over the last number of months"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Office carried out a Road Safety Impact Assessment at this location in mid-2022. The report identified a number of interventions for this location including pedestrian crossings, footpath works, signage and line markings. The Portlaoise MD office in conjunction with Road Design Section will submit an application form for a specific improvement grant to the Department of Transport for funding to develop a design for consultation and consent purposes. Subject to approval of funding we will intend to proceed to public consultation in Q. 1 of 2023.

Councillor John Joe Fennelly requested interim works to be carried out in the interim.

Notice of Motion No: 145/2022

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

"That this Council install extra signage and lining at Graigue Cross, Spink"

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 with a view to carrying out the works as required.

Notice of Motion No: 146/2022

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

"That this Council re-surface the roadway into the Fire Services Training Compound at Ballinakill Road, Abbeyleix. This road is in very poor condition and is also used by five local residents"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that This Portlaoise Municipal District Office will arrange to carry our road repairs at this location. This road can be examined for consideration for re-surfacing under the 2023 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 147/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Municipal District call on Laois County Council to install lockable bollards at gateways affected by illegal parking in Market Square, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise Municipal District Office will examine gateways in Market Square, Portlaoise that are affected by illegal parking and will carry out works as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 148/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Municipal District calls on Irish Water to take in charge The Rock Group Water Scheme which was promised in 2016 as works on the scheme have been carried out to date on the booster pump by Laois County Council which was requested by Irish Water"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Water Services staff previously made a Taking in Charge submission to Irish Water for this Group Water Scheme and some further information was requested. Laois County Council Water Services met with representatives of the Rock GWS on 10/10/22 to clarify this further information. A revised Taking In Charge submission is now ready to be submitted to Irish Water for final approval.

Notice of Motion No: 149/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to consider, in order to protect tenants, purchasing some of the private rented housing that has come on the market recently"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that DHLGH Circulars 2/2022 and 16/2022 provide for acquisition of properties for social housing applicants in priority categories of need, e.g., disability/particular needs, one-bed units to deliver on Housing First, or properties that allow persons/families to exit homelessness, subject to conditions. All expressions of interest from property owners who wish to sell are examined on this basis.

Councillor Willie Aird sought an update on the delivery of housing on Tyrells land. Councillors Walsh & Aird requested a meeting with the DOS and the CE regarding the delivery of housing.

Notice of Motion No: 150/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council carry out re-surfacing works on road L6719-0 from Tullore Cross Ballyroan towards the Rock Ballyroan"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District Office will arrange to carry out road repairs at this location. This road can be examined for consideration for re-surfacing under the 2023 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 151/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council repair and replace footpath on the Ridge road Portlaoise from the Church roundabout to memorial park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.EE will make himself available to meet Councillor Walsh on site to examine the works required at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 152/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council install additional public toilet signage in Lyster square & surrounding areas"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson will make himself available to meet Councillor Walsh in Lyster Square to investigate the proposed locations for signage with a view to carrying out works as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 153/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give an update re the provision of an area of Reflection for those who were bereaved by Covid”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that In March this year there was a commemorative event held at Fitzmaurice place. In addition the Council this year sought consultancy tenders in the matter Woodland Creation on Public Land; regrettably no tenders were received. The Council is open to suggestions on the matter of an area of reflection as set out in the Notice of Motion.

It was agreed that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. would meet Councillor Noel Tuohy with regard to identifying a suitable location.

Notice of Motion No: 154/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install a path where required on Summerhill Lane and to look to extend it further past Ashwood Walk to Rathleague junction in the interest of safety of the large volume of pedestrians”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that The provision of a footpath along Summerhill Lane will be considered in the context of the available roadbed space available. Additionally, and separately connectivity between Portlaoise town centre and Rathleague will be provided for as development proposals are progressed for zoned undeveloped lands in the broader Summerhill area.

4. Correspondence

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

5. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 16th of November 2022.**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

**Director of Corporate
Affairs**