

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 13TH OF SEPTEMBER 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. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services
Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST OF JUNE 2023

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, the minutes of the Portlaoise Municipal District meeting held on the 21st of June 2023 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MINUTES OF THE A.G.M. HELD ON THE 21ST OF JUNE 2023

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, the minutes of the A.G.M. of Portlaoise Municipal District meeting held on the 21st of June 2023 were confirmed as circulated.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 17TH OF MAY 2023

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on the 17th of May 2023.

4. RAILWAY STREET CAR PARK

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services briefed the Members on this item.

It was noted that at the June 2023 meeting of Portlaoise M.D. the Members resolved to approve the rate of €2 per three hours and the daily rate of €4 for the Railway Street Car Park. In considering those charges, the Members requested the availability of a weekly and monthly rate also for those using the car park. Therefore, the parking charges of €11 per week and €30 per month were recommended. These charges were unanimously agreed on the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald and seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. Members were also advised that these charges have been recommended having regard to charges in adjoining carparks and the general principle that the car park

is to operate as a public transport car park. It was further noted that the opening date for the Railway Street Car Park is Tuesday, October 10th 2023.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Senior Engineer advised that 40-50% of the spaces would be made available initially on a three to six month permit basis. Demand for permits will be kept under review.

5. PRESENTATION BY MS. BRED A MURRAY, CHAIRPERSON OF LOFFA (LAOIS OFFALY FAMILIES FOR AUTISM)

Ms. Breda Murray, Chairperson of LOFFA (Laois Offaly Families for Autism) and her colleagues, Elaine McGinn, Stef McGinn & Laura Maher were in attendance to speak about the services that are currently available for Laois Offaly Families for Autism. The Members were advised that LOFFA comprises of 157 families representing 175 children. Some suggestions were made by the group as follows:-

- Quite times in restaurants and visual menus
- Special parking spaces or permits near shops etc....
- Communication boards and visual aids in playgrounds
- Allocation of a session in the swimming pool

The Members assured the group of their full support in seeking the additional supports and raising awareness and it was also noted that a Notice of Motion would be submitted to the September meeting of Laois County Council in relation to the swimming pool. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Laois Chamber Alliance & the Portlaoise Town Team for their support.

6. STRATEGIC INFRASTRUTURE DEVELOPMENT (SID) REF: 23/317809 – COOLGLASS WINDFARM LIMITED

Mr. Nathan Smith, Senior Executive Planner briefed the Members on the above planning application to An Bord Pleanála for the construction of 13 no. wind turbines at Timahoe. Members were advised that submissions must be made to An Bord Pleanála by 5.30 p.m. on the 9th of October 2023. Mr. Smith responded to the various queries but indicated that a Chief Executive's Report is currently being prepared on the SID which will be tabled on the agenda for the September meeting of Laois County Council scheduled for the 25th of September 2023 where the matter can be discussed further. Members requested that a map be made available also.

7. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 92/2023

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

"That this Council be given an update on when the recommendations on the road safety Audit at Scoil Bhríde Knockmay will be implemented, and the Council to install extra car parking spaces in Parnell Crescent, Knockmay"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that in advance of a preliminary designs being prepared to advance the matters highlighted in the Road Safety Impact Assessment, engagement took place with the respective schools in relation to the use and operation of the existing car parking and traffic management arrangements. Further engagement is required to inform the design and subsequent application for funding. In relation to the provision of additional car parking spaces at Parnell Crescent, Laois County Council will make an application for C.I.S. funding.

Notice of Motion No: 93/2023

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

"That this Council be given an update on the upgrade of the Mountmellick Road, the 3 roundabouts that are needed at junctions Ballyfin Road, Dunnes Stores & Harpurs Lane Knockmay"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council have met with TII to discuss the advancement of proposals for the N80 Mountmellick road in Portlaoise. Considering the various matters raised & future proposals being considered along this route, TII requested that Laois County undertake an assessment of the N80 from the Fairgreen Roundabout to St Peter & Paul's Church. Following on from this meeting Laois County Council are in the process of preparing a brief to appoint a consultant engineer to prepare a Feasibility and Options Report for submission to TII to address Safety and Capacity issues along the route.

Councillor Dwane Stanley sought an update from the TII for the next meeting of the Municipal District.

Notice of Motion No: 94/2023

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

"That this Council give an update on the Domestic Abuse Centre for Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Housing Department together with Laois Domestic Abuse Service are in the final stages of acquiring a site for the service. Discussions have been had with the Department of Housing in relation to the funding and size of the site, however we continue to work with LDAS to ensure an appropriately sized site is acquired. It is intended to meet with the CEO of LDAS to progress this matter in the coming days.

Notice of Motion No: 95/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council remove the large steel structure at the front of Esker Hills which was previously an advertising post for the development"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine the steel signage structure at this location with a view to having it removed in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 96/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council arrange for the installation of 2 ramps at Heathfield Estate on Dublin Road, Portlaoise to encourage vehicles to slow down"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install traffic calming ramps under Councillor's discretionary traffic calming funding on a phased basis. A ramp will be installed in the vicinity of the property with the eircode R32 TNN0 in the coming weeks. The second ramp adjacent to the property with the eircode R32 Y9CC will be installed in early 2024.

Notice of Motion No: 97/2023

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council arrange for trees to be trimmed back at Higgins Park, Fairgreen"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Councillor Connell at the location to examine the trees in Higgins Park, Fairgreen.

Notice of Motion No: 98/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council install a controlled pedestrian crossing at Millbrook Portlaoise near the exit from the war memorial"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Road Design Department will review the existing courtesy crossing at this location and assess if the need warrants a fully controlled pedestrian crossing.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley indicated that there was a light which wasn't operational at the Car Road near St. John's Square. It was agreed that this would be referred to the public lighting section for their examination and attention.

Notice of Motion No: 99/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council add and continue re-surfacing works at Cloncullane and Upper Crubeen, Ballyroan as part of the roads programme 2024"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the road L-27781 in the townland of Cloncullane and Crubeen will be examined and considered for re-surfacing as part of the 2024 Road Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 100/2023

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council re-instate road markings and a larger stop sign at the V Junction where the L1656 splits into two roads in Tonduff, Abbeyleix. Co-ordinates 52°55'47.5"N 7°21'34.8"W"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office expect line marking works to be carried out this week and will make arrangements for the installation of a second stop sign in the vicinity of the junction of the L-16565 & the L-1656 at Monument Cross, Tonduff, Abbeyleix. The Portlaoise MD Office will submit an application for funding for further safety measures to be carried out in 2024.

Notice of Motion No: 101/2023

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council assists in whatever way possible to see the Meals on Wheels service is reinstated in Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Age Friendly Coordinator, Community Section Laois County Council will continue to liaise with this service and relevant stakeholders and assist as appropriate.

Councillor Marie Tuohy indicated that there are 25/27 homes in receipt of this service and requested that we make contact with the PPN and the HSE to get this vital service re-instated and that an update or representative be available to attend the next meeting of the Municipal District.

Notice of Motion No: 102/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council instal a Yellow Box at Ashton Manor"

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 at the entrance of Ashton Manor at the junction of the R445 and the L-81093.

Notice of Motion No: 103/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install a disability car space outside 147 St. Brigids"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install disabled car parking/road markings at No. 147 St. Brigid's Place, Portlaoise - Eircode R32 Y6DK.

Notice of Motion No: 104/2023

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council look at traffic management at the Library/ Church Avenue"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Road Design Department will review the current traffic arrangements at the intersection of the Main Street and Church Avenue.

Notice of Motion No: 105/2023

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

"That this Council install traffic calming measures at the Old Town Rd. Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make myself available to meet Councillor Fennelly on the L-16566 at the Old Town Road, Abbeyleix to examine the location and identify locations for road signage and markings.

Notice of Motion No: 106/2023

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

"That this Council improve drainage at Knapton Rd., Abbeyleix to avoid surface water at entrances to houses"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Councillor Fennelly and residents on site on the Knapton Road, Abbeyleix to examine the issues at the location.

Notice of Motion No: 107/2023

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

"That this Council extend the double yellow lines on the entrance to the Church car park Abbeyleix from the Main Street"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install double yellow lines on the L-57205 at Church Avenue, Abbeyleix from the N77 Main Street to the entrance of the church car park.

Notice of Motion No: 108/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give a date as to when work will commence on the two vacant houses in Lakeglen, Portlaoise as this is a huge concern to the residents in the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that tender for demolition is currently advertised. Response are due back in October. Once tender evaluation is complete demolition will commence on site.

Notice of Motion No: 109/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council be commended on the work to date on the section of the road on Green Mill Lane to the junction of the Ridge Road and will a walkway across the river be included together with a pedestrian crossing on the Ridge Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that the initial phase of the works is being undertaken to setback the boundary and make some minor alterations to the recently purchased property. This work will improve visibility & secure necessary land for future improvement works at this location while enabling the property to be tenanted at the earliest opportunity. It is intended that a footpath, pedestrian bridge and if possible a pedestrian crossing will be delivered in future phases of the works.

Notice of Motion No: 110/2023

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council be given an update as a matter of urgency repair the bridge at Knocknagrove/Cooltoran"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that repairs to the wall at the bridge at Knocknagrove/Cooltoran on the L-6136 will be carried out in the coming weeks.

8. Correspondence

It was noted that the following correspondence had been circulated since the last meeting of the Municipal District:-

- Correspondence from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in relation to Notice of Motion No: 55/2023 in relation to two housing developments in the Portlaoise area.

9. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 18th of October 2023 followed by the annual budget meeting of the Municipal District.**

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services