

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
25TH OF SEPTEMBER 2019 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

PRESENT	Mr. John Joe Fennelly, Cathaoirleach (In the Chair) Ms. Mary Sweeney, M.C.C. 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.
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services Mr. Michael Rainey, Director of Services Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. BEST WISHES & WELCOME

The Members congratulated Mr. Michael Rainey, Director of Services on his appointment as Director of Services with Carlow County Council.

The Members welcomed Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services to Laois County Council and congratulated him on his appointment as Director of Services with Laois County Council.

2. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING OF PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 17TH OF JULY 2019

On the proposal of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, the minutes of the July meeting held on the 17th of July 2019 were confirmed as circulated.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 17TH OF JULY 2019

Councillor Willie Aird referred to Notice of Motion No: 100/2019 regarding the installation of a roundabout at the entrance to Newpark adjacent to Dunnes Stores & the Greenmill Lane on the Mountmellick Road. It was agreed that this matter would be followed up with the Road Design Section. It was also requested that Dunnes Stores be invited to such a meeting. Councillor Dwane Stanley indicated that there is a need for more roundabouts on the Mountmellick Road and that this should also be addressed with the T.I.I.

Councillor John Joe Fennelly referred to Notice of Motion No: 106/2019 in relation to seeking a meeting with Mid Link Toll to reducing the volume of HGV's coming through our towns and villages. It was agreed that the matter be followed up with Mid Link Toll.

4. DRAFT CASUAL TRADING BYE-LAWS FOR PORTLAOISE

Ms. Georgina Ireland, Administrative Officer, Roads Department briefed the Members on the Draft Casual Trading Bye-laws for Portlaoise presented for their noting. These bye-laws revoke the 2007 bye-laws. It was noted that some minor changes were being made to the bye laws to reflect updates in legislation, location of the market, the introduction of a charge for trading, more defined bays and the opportunity for street performance. The members noted that the temporary road closure to allow for current arrangements for the Laois Food & Craft Festival would be in place until the end of the year or until the bye laws are in place, whichever is the earlier.

It was noted that Laois County Council have worked in collaboration with Downtown Portlaoise and the Town Team in respect of the market initiative and the review of the Casual Trading Bye Laws. The Bye-Laws will go on display for a period of four weeks and submissions will be noted – there will then be a period of two weeks and it will go forward for approval at a Council meeting before the end of 2019.

5. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 112/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council provide an update with regard to the previously requested sign at Higgs Lane, Dublin Road, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the sign has recently been delivered and will be erected in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 113/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council investigate the open drain adjacent to a premises at Rathleague and provide an update on how it can be made safe”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E., would make himself available to meet with Councillor Sweeney to examine this issue.

Notice of Motion No: 114/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council repair the damaged footpaths at three locations in the village of Ballyroan, located at Chapel Street and Main Street”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that works will be carried out at these locations under the Councillors Discretionary Scheme in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 126/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install traffic calming measures on road between Sheffield Cross and Keyes Cross”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. would make himself available to meet with Councillor Fitzgerald to examine the issue.

Notice of Motion No: 127/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council arrange to meet with residents of Marian Avenue to discuss parking and traffic issues in the estate and also in the meantime to try and re-surface the back lanes from the Arch up to No. 80”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. would make himself available to meet with Councillor Fitzgerald to examine the issue. An application for the provision of parking bays in Marian Avenue has been submitted for Community Involvement Scheme funding for 2020.

An application for the re-surfacing of the rear access lanes in Marian Avenue has also been submitted for Community Involvement Scheme funding for 2020.

Councillor Fitzgerald also requested that disabled parking spaces be provided in the estate subject to funding being successful. It was also requested that consultation would be had with the residents prior to any works commencing.

Notice of Motion No: 128/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install fresh road markings in New Park”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that this location will be examined and considered for renewal of road markings.

Notice of Motion No: 118/2019

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

“That Laois County Council contact the County Registrar, Mr Paul Fetherstonhaugh and Laois County Councils Returning Officer and request them to provide adequate polling stations for future Elections in the Borris Road, Mountmellick Road and Mountrath Road Areas of Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that the provision of Polling Stations at elections is solely a matter for the County Registrar. The Council will refer this matter to the County Registrar for his attention.

It was agreed that a letter issue to the County Registrar in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 119/2019

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

“That this Council give an update on progress for the installation of a pedestrian crossing at Dunamaise College, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that a controlled pedestrian crossing is being considered at this location as part of the design for Phase 2 of the Fort Protector Project under the URDF Scheme.

The Members requested that an update regarding the timeline be made available at the next meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 120/2019

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

“That this Council clarify who is responsible for re-instating the bridge at Lower Bridge Street, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that this bridge is not in the charge of Laois County Council. It was constructed sometime before 1913 by a number of the residents of the 10 properties whose back lane is accessed by the bridge.

The Members indicated that this bridge was closed by Laois County Council due to safety reasons. The Members requested that it be re-instated as soon as possible for access for the residents at this location.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that he would have the matter followed up as a matter of urgency.

Notice of Motion No: 115/2019

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council carry out essential road repairs at Derrylaghan, Crookedwood Cross, Ballacolla Road, Abbeyleix”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that this location has been examined and the Portlaoise MD Office is currently confirming costs for the works that are required. It is intended that works would be carried out within the next 6 to 8 weeks, subject to funding being available.

Notice of Motion No: 116/2019

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

“That this Council carry out maintenance works on Rathmoyle Road, Abbeyleix up by the National School”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members advised that this issue at this location relates to the re-instatement of the road adjacent to two no. water valves – the issue has been referred to Irish Water to be addressed.

Notice of Motion No: 117/2019

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

“That this Council put traffic calming measures in place on the entrance into Ballinakill Village close to the G.A.A. Grounds”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. would make himself available to meet with Councillor Fennelly to examine the issue at the entrance into Ballinakill Village close to the G.A.A. Grounds.

Notice of Motion No: 121/2019

Councillor William Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install a lay-by from the road at Derry to the road at Dysart in order to allow traffic to pass on the road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that this location will be examined in the coming weeks and considered for funding under the Councillors discretionary works.

Notice of Motion No: 122/2019

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install signage in Broomville to indicate the different estates, e.g. Broomville Close, etc”

It was noted that this Motion should read ‘Fielbrook’. This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that this location will be examined in the coming weeks and considered for funding under the Councillors discretionary works. Please note that not all parts of Broomville have been taken in charge by Laois County Council”

Notice of Motion No: 123/2019

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council engage with the OPW to ensure that dredging commences on the River Blackwater especially through the Clonsoghy area”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson would liaise with the Laois County Council Capital Projects office to discuss opportunities for funding for works on the River Blackwater through the Clonsoghy area.

Notice of Motion No: 124/2019

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council review the entrance to and exit from Rinnucini Estate on the Dublin Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. would make himself available to meet with Councillor Tuohy to examine this issue.

Notice of Motion No: 125/2019

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council support the provision of wheelchair friendly equipment in the local playground”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that the Occupational Therapy School in UCC are currently carrying out an accessibility audit of three of the playgrounds in Laois – Portlaoise Leisure Centre, Stradbally & Mountrath. Laois County Council has secured funding from the Department of Children & Youth Affairs to carry out accessibility works in these playgrounds and Members will be informed in due course.

Notice of Motion No: 129/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council now acquire lands adjacent to The Rock of Dunamaise to facilitate car parking facilities at this important tourist location ~ at present parking is completely inadequate, particularly for buses and larger vehicles”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council are currently pursuing possible locations at the Rock of Dunamaise for car parking facilities and interpretative signage.

Councillor Connell requested a timeline on this for the next meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 130/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council calls on the Government to deal with the significant lack of affordable childcare places in County Laois in light of recent reports that Ireland is one of the lowest in the European Union for unmet childcare places”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that a letter issue to the Department in this regard.

6. Correspondence

The following items of correspondence which had been received since the last meeting were circulated and noted by the Members:-

- (i) Correspondence dated the 6th of August 2019 from Bord Na Mona in relation to Notice of Motion No: 101/2019
- (ii) Correspondence dated the 11th of July 2019 from the H.S.E. in relation to Notice of Motion No: 21/2019

7. Provision of Office Accommodation for the Order of Malta

Councillor William Aird expressed thanks to Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Mr. Dom Reddin, Administrative Officer & Mr. Michael Mockler, Clerk of Works for their assistance in securing office accommodation for the Order of Malta.

8. Fix Time, Date & Venue for the next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 16th of October 2019 at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

John Joe Fennelly, Cathaoirleach