

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 14TH OF SEPTEMBER 2022 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 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. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 15TH OF JUNE 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th of June 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 15TH OF JUNE 2022

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley raised the following Notice of Motion which had been considered at the June meeting of the Municipal District and sought an update on the current position:-

Notice of Motion No: 95/2022

“That this Council move ahead with a new build for the Civil Defence in Portlaoise”

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that discussion were ongoing and that Members would be kept apprised of any developments with regard to same.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THE 15TH OF JUNE 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Thomasina Connell seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 15th of June 2022 were confirmed as circula

4. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 114/2022

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

"That this Council along with Clúid Housing give an update as to when the three phases of houses in Clonrooske Abbey can be tenanted"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were informed that Cluid have advised that 14 of the units can be tenanted before the end of 2022. The balance of the units (18) will be tenanted during the first quarter of 2023.

A discussion ensued wherein the Members requested a meeting with Cluid and the Housing Department for an update on developments. It was also requested that public lighting be examined.

Notice of Motion No: 115/2022

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

"That this Council along with the ESB cut the trees back along the railway line boundary in St. Brigid's Place, look at a permanent solution around the public lighting in the area, include the remaining sections of the back lanes for re-surfacing and if the Housing Department can give an update on progress made with the Community Centre"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised of the following:-

Trees

- In relation to the trees along the boundary of St. Brigid's Place adjacent to the railway line, Laois County Council have sought quotations from tree services contractors to remove the Leylandi at this location on a phased basis with a view to commencing Phase 1 in early 2023.
- The planting of more suitable trees at this location will be carried out in agreement with the local residents committee.

Re-surfacing & drainage

- With regard to the re-surfacing and drainage works at the back lanes at St. Brigid's Place, it is intended that an application will be submitted for funding through the Community Involvement Scheme Programme 2023.

- (LCC Housing section to provide community contribution for the CIS) .

Community Centre

- Laois County Council's Housing Officer recently met with a number of residents from St. Brigid's Place and Cllr. Dwane Stanley to discuss a property recently vacated by Laois Partnership, and the possibility of their taking it on as their community building.
- Several items were discussed in terms of the committee's makeup and the commitment involved in the residents taking on a property, from a security, maintenance and cost perspective.
- Laois County Council committed at that meeting not to return the property to lettable housing stock in the short term, to enable the residents to discuss the feasibility of their being properly constituted and taking on the property.
- The residents will revert in this regard with an update and their decision.

Public Lighting

The public lighting engineer will meet with Cllr Dwane Stanley on site to review public lighting in the area and identify a solution.

Councillor Fennelly requested a report from Laois County Council on public lighting.

Councillor Dwane Stanley advised that she is currently collaborating with the residents on a CIS application. Councillor Dwane Stanley requested Laois County Council to cut back the trees around the public lighting. Councillor Connell referred to a CIS application also. Councillor Aird requested that where trees are impeding on lights that they should be cut back.

Notice of Motion No: 116/2022

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

"That this Council give an update on the road safety audit carried out at Scoile Bhríde Knockmay, that this Council take in charge the public lights at Treo Nua Centre, Knockmay and repair them, that action be taken on the vacant houses in the estate and to ensure that further work is carried out on the Green Areas in Clonrooske View to level it off"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised of the details on the Road Safety impact Assessment Harpur's Lane, Knockmay, Portlaoise (L-21128-0). The following outline of the interventions to be considered for Harpur's Lane in the vicinity of Scoil Bhríde was noted:-

1. Optimise the use of the on-campus drop off area, this area was not open for drop-off at the time of the assessment.
2. Identify opportunities for additional remote drop-off areas close to Scoil Bhríde with safe access routes for pedestrians to Scoil Bhríde.
3. Provide additional raised pedestrian crossings in the vicinity of the school and on the Knockmay Roundabout (near Birchgrove).
4. Create a school zone on Harpur's Lane with a layout that accords with NTA design guidance and incorporate facilities for cyclists, including cycling lanes and crossings as appropriate.
5. Install additional traffic calming measures.
6. Improve visibility and layout of existing junctions and crossings on Harpur's Lane.

Laois County Council will engage with Scoil Bhríde and Portlaoise College within the next 2 weeks on the use of existing and additional drop-off areas.

The Active Travel Section will progress the overall project as outlined below;

1. Design Phase
 - a. Submit a grant application form to NTA in Oct 2022 for seed money (€30-40k) to procure services to develop a design for consultation and consent purposes.
 - b. Subject to approval of funding, proceed to public consultation in accordance with Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994 by end Q1 2023.
 - c. Complete detailed design and proceed to tender by mid Q2 2023.
2. Construction Phase
 - a. Submit a grant application form to NTA by end Q2 2023 for funding of the construction works.
 - b. Subject to approval of funding, award the contract and proceed to commence construction in Q4 2023 to deliver the various interventions.

Notice of Motion No: 117/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council immediately install a disability access chair at the Leisure Centre, Portlaoise to allow those with additional needs access the swimming pool"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has sought tenders for the supply and installation of a new hoist for Laois Leisure Portlaoise and an order will be placed this month following assessment of tenders.

It was agreed that an update be sought on this issue as a matter of urgency.

Notice of Motion No: 118/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District install additional parking spaces at Hillview, Knockmay"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that With regard to the provision of additional car parking spaces at Hillview, it is intended that an application will be submitted for funding through the Community Involvement Scheme Programme 2023. (LCC Housing section to provide community contribution for the CIS) .

Notice of Motion No: 119/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District review the parking situation at Triogue Place, Portlaoise with a view to erecting 'Residents Only' signs at this location to prevent non-residents from continuing to block up the small number of parking spaces"

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 Connell in relation to the parking issues at Triogue Place

Notice of Motion No: 120/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide an update on the completion of the walkway from Ballyroan School to the GAA Pitch and confirm if or when will there be planting to replace trees removed and the possibility of a fence being installed on the roadside slope to the bridge"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the new footpath in Ballyroan is substantially complete and is in full use. It is intended that all trees removed will be replaced with native trees of an appropriate size in Q4 2022. The engineer will conduct a site inspection and review the requirement for additional fencing at the new footbridge.

Notice of Motion No: 121/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide a double white continuous line from Cashel Cross past the dip in the road and provide 'Concealed Entrances' signage"

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 Walsh on site to review the line markings and locations for signage

Notice of Motion No: 122/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide an update on any vacant/derelict Laois County Council properties within the Ballinakill Village area and any plans to renovate and bring back into use"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council recently acquired a vacant property at Stanhope Street, Ballinakill, Co. Laois and is in the process of making a Stage 1 submission to the Department of Housing for the development of 3 social housing units. No other houses in Council ownership in Ballinakill are currently listed as vacant/derelict.

Notice of Motion No: 123/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to put in place as a matter of urgency safety measures at the T junction at L6135 and L6139 at Derrygarron where a number of accidents have taken place recently"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that this location will be included as an application for funding for safety improvement works in 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 124/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on our Area Engineer to give an update regarding proposed works requested by the residents at Glendowns, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that Glendowns Pond has surface water connectivity to the River Barrow SAC. As required by law Laois County Council has subjected maintenance works at Glendowns Pond to Appropriate Assessment Screening. That Assessment has concluded that the proposed/required works (removal of fallen trees, instream works in the form of removal of silt accumulations etc.) have the potential to release nutrients and suspended solids downstream to the River Barrow Special Area of Conservation. Accordingly Laois County Council is required to prepare a Natura Impact Statement to advise the means by which the necessary works can be undertaken. A programme of baseline ecology and hydrology surveys are currently being undertaken and will form the basis of works to be considered in the NIS. LCC will advance preparation of the NIS in Q4 2022, the NIS will then be submitted to An Bord Pleanála for its consideration. Works can only be undertaken in circumstances where An Bord Pleanála approve the NIS submitted. An Bord Pleanála do not have a statutory time period in which they are required to issue their decision so the commencement date for works cannot be specified but it is often the case that any such works are confined to the period May-September in any given year. We acknowledge the need for maintenance works at the Glendowns Pond and we intend to pursue the completion of those works. Nonetheless there is a process set down in law which we are duty bound to observe. We can advise as to progress over the coming months.

Notice of Motion No: 125/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to reinstate the pedestrian crossing at the exit from the Triogue walk at Millview"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that an uncontrolled courtesy crossing will be installed at this location in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 126/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council talk with Dunnes Stores, Mountmellick Road to discuss providing a roundabout at Green Mill Lane"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has undertaken a feasibility study relating to the installation of roundabouts on the junctions of the N80 with Harpurs Lane, Greenmill Lane & the Ballyfin Road. Laois County Council has applied for funding from the T.I.I. to carry out works at the three locations.

Subject to the confirmation of funding, Laois County Council will engage with Dunnes Stores regarding the provision of a roundabout at the junction of the N80 in Green Mill Lane.

Complementary to the above initiative Laois County Council has undertaken a Road Safety Impact Assessment on Green Mill Lane.

Please see below an outline of the interventions to be considered for Greenmill Lane;

1. Improve visibility at the junction of Greenmill Lane and N80 & Ridge Road and at roadside accesses along Greenmill Lane.
2. Provide traffic calming of along the road between the N80 and Triogue Manor.
3. Provide raised controlled pedestrian crossings on Greenmill Lane and uncontrolled pedestrian crossings at accesses off Greenmill Lane.
 - a. Reconfigure accesses and provide footpath continuity where feasible across accesses / side roads.
4. Provide cycle facilities on Greenmill Lane, ensure facilities tie in conveniently and safely with the paths along the Triogue River.
5. Provide a footpath along eastern end of Greenmill Lane, with a crossing to the footpath on Ridge Road, however this problem should be considered in conjunction with associated issues relating to this section

of road and the solution should deal holistically with all deficiencies identified on this section of the road.

6. Consider provision of an alternative cycle/pedestrian route through the Triogue Linear Park onto the Ridge Road.
7. Prohibit HGVs by placing a 3.5T limit Greenmill Lane at the east side of the access to the Dunnes Stores deliveries entrance and at the junction with the Ridge Road.
8. Reconfigure tactile paving and carry out repairs to footpaths and utility covers.

The Capital Project Office will incorporate items 1 to 4 into the design for the Triogue Cycleway Phase 2 funded by URDF and NTA Active Travel.

The Capital Project Office will consider items 5 and 6 as part of a future phase of the Triogue Cycleway (i.e. Phase 3)

The Portlaoise MD Office will progress items 7 & 8 in the coming months.

The Members proposed that a delegation consisting of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, Catherine Fitzgerald and Barry Walsh would seek a meeting with Dunnes Stores as soon as possible to progress this matter.

Notice of Motion No: 127/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council resurface the road in Beechfield and also contact the developer of the vacant site at the top of the estate regarding it's condition"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson will make himself available to meet with Councillor Fitzgerald on site at Beechfield to examine the road condition at this location and Mr. David O' Hara, Acting Senior Planner will make arrangements to meet Councillor Fitzgerald to examine the vacant site at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 128/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council erect fingerboard signage in the various estates in Fieldbrook"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will meet Councillor Fitzgerald on site and will examine the locations for the proposed signage

Notice of Motion No: 129/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council consider moving the entrance and exit of Laois Leisure Centre, Portlaoise to the corner at the roundabout. This would facilitate the flow of traffic with no car light disturbance to local residents"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will liaise with road design to assess the current layout and any suitable options for improvement.

Notice of Motion No: 130/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an update to the progress on the provision of a Dog Park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that The Executive Parks & Landscape Officer will be starting in Laois County Council in early September and will examine possible locations for a dog park in Q.4 identifying with a view to putting in place by end of Q.2 2023

Notice of Motion No: 131/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install lights along the railway line at the back of the Astro Pitches at Laois Leisure Centre, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will undertake a review of the all lighting requirements at the Leisure Centre Campus with the management company Laois Leisure in the coming weeks and will identify appropriate funding streams and prepare and funding applications.

Notice of Motion No: 132/2022

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

"That this Council install extra drainage at Blackhill, Abbeyleix as some houses were flooded recently"

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 with Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the location at Blackhill, Abbeyleix in relation to the specific requirements for drainage works at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 133/2022

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

"That this Council remove hedging at Abbeyleix Road, Ballyroan close to St. Patrick's Cemetery to make it safer for residents to exit their entrance"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that this location will be included as an application for funding for safety improvement works in 2023.

Notice of Motion No: 134/2022

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

"That this Council install a water tap close to the library at Market Square, Abbeyleix to facilitate people to refill their water bottles. This should be considered as a pilot project for the County"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that the matter has been referred to Irish Water for clarification.

5. Correspondence

The Members noted the correspondence which was received from the Department of Justice on the 29th of July 2022 and circulated in response to Notice of Motion No: 105/2022 as follows:-

Notice of Motion No: 105/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an up date on the provision of the Womens Refuge"

6. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 19th of October 2022.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

**Director of Corporate
Affairs**