

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 15th of MAY 2024 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

PRESENT: Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Mr. Barry Walsh, M.C.C.
Ms. Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C.
Mr. John Joe Fennelly, M.C.C.
Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.

APOLOGIES: Ms. Marie Tuohy, M.C.C.

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

1. MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 17TH OF APRIL 2024

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the minutes of the April meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District held on the 17th of April 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE APRIL MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 17TH OF APRIL 2024

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the 17th of April 2024.

3. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 77/2024

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install a yellow box adjacent to Laurel Court on the Dublin Road to ensure the residents can enter and exit their homes safely”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install a yellow box on the Dublin Road, Portlaoise at the entrance to Laurel Court.

A discussion ensued during which it was agreed that representatives from the Active Travel Section would examine the area in the vicinity of the bus stops at Kilminchy on the Dublin Road, Portlaoise with a view to improving pedestrian facilities to cross the Dublin Road near the entrance to Dunmasc and also to access the bus stops.

Notice of Motion No: 78/2024

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council provide an update on the €9 Million URDF funding allocated to Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that under URDF Round 2, Laois County Council was allocated €9m for a Project entitled Portlaoise – Placemaking for a Low Carbon Town Centre. In 2023 Laois County Council submitted a Preliminary Business Case, with a view to the commencement of works associated with the Project. Additional Information was requested from the Council and this was provided in February 2024. The Council awaits approval of the URDF Team to commence works associated with the delivery of the Project.

Councillor Willie Aird sought an update on the County Hotel. It was agreed that this would be made available for the next meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 79/2024

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District engage with Irish Rail with a view to implementing disability access measures at Portlaoise Train Station"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Irish Rail have committed to making all stations Age Friendly and have initially prioritised 10 stations in Ireland, which include Ballybrophy in Laois. As a result of walkability audits in Portarlinton, Ballybrophy and Portlaoise, issues have been identified and Irish Rail's Age Friendly Manager is engaging with myself and the Age Friendly Office in progressing Ballybrophy initially, which will address disability access measures. Of the 3 stations in Laois, Portlaoise is the most challenging and I expect that when the initial 10 stations are accredited, Portarlinton will follow and then Portlaoise in due course.

Notice of Motion No: 80/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council ensure before road surface dressings are carried out in Clonkeen that drainage works be carried out at four different locations in Clonkeen"

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 Councillor Aird on site to examine the locations.

Notice of Motion No: 81/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council install a footpath from Broomfield Cross to Higgs Lane"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will assess the request in the context of the design guidance for the provision of pedestrian infrastructure in the rural speed limit.

Notice of Motion No: 82/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council upgrade the roadway, footpaths and cycleways on Collier's Lane and include a speed radar sign"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will assess and consider the proposed improvements to the existing infrastructure as part of the next restoration improvement programme to be agreed with Elected Members.

Notice of Motion No: 83/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council install road signage at Ironmills Bridge, Ballinakill including slow down & narrow bridge ahead"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install advance warning signage and road markings on the L-1738 at Ironmills Bridge, Ballinakill.

Notice of Motion No: 84/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide an update on the provision of ramps & children at play signage in Heywood Demesne, Ballinakill. Can these be installed as soon as possible?"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make arrangements to meet Councillor Walsh on site to examine the proposed locations for ramps and signage as requested.

Notice of Motion No: 85/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council install green bollards at both Junctions at Ballycarnan Cross Roads on both sides"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install junction definition bollards at Ballycarnan Cross Roads on the R-425.

Notice of Motion No: 88/2024

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

"That this Council install traffic calming measures on the Ridge Road between Bianconi way and the speed limit sign"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise Municipal District has installed additional slow road markings and a 60 kph speed limit marking on the L-2120 - Ridge Road from Bianconi Way to the speed limit sign.

Notice of Motion No: 89/2024

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

"That this Council erect a 'Stop Sign' at the entrance to Lyndon Court and mark the road markings"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to erect a 'Stop Sign' at the entrance to Lyndon Court and mark the road markings.

Notice of Motion No: 90/2024

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

"That this Council be given an update on the upgrade for the Mountmellick Road and the 3 roundabouts that are needed at the Ballyfin Road, Dunnes Stores and Harpers Lane"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell & Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that following discussions with TII on the respective junctions and the N80 Mountmellick road in general, TII instructed that a Feasibility and Options report be prepared for the N80 from the Lucy Franks (Fairgreen) Roundabout to the Roundabout at St. Peter & Pauls Church. A Design Team has been appointed to undertake the required assessments & report for improvements proposed along this route.

It was agreed that Road Design be requested to give consideration to signage for 'alternative routes' such as the Orbital Route with a view to diverting traffic from the N80 onto the Orbital route.

In the absence of Councillor Marie Tuohy and with the agreement of Councillor Tuohy, Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motions:-

Notice of Motion No: 86/2024 – Councillor Marie Tuohy

"That this Council re-mark the pedestrian crossings at the Killeshin Hotel and on Colliers Lane just off the Dublin Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to remark

the pedestrian crossing at the Killeshin Hotel and on Colliers Lane just on the Dublin Road on the R445.

Notice of Motion No: 87/2024 – Councillor Marie Tuohy

"That this Council include Colt bridge in the programme for bridges in 2025 to include crash barriers each side of the bridge"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will include Colt Bridge on the L-2681 in the applications for funding for bridge rehabilitation works in 2025. The application will include for the provision of a vehicle restraint barrier at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 91/2024

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

"That this Council confirm if the new water pipe will be installed at Clonking, Abbeyleix as this work was expected in 2023 and the road was removed from the Roads Programme and is now in a very poor condition"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will contact Uisce Eireann regarding this Notice of Motion and revert to the members with an update when a response is received.

It was agreed that should additional funding becomes available under the Roads programme for 2024 that the road at Clonking, Abbeyleix be prioritised for re-surfacing.

Notice of Motion No: 92/2024

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

"That this Council repair the entrance to Abbey Crescent, Ballyroan Road, Abbeyleix around the existing manhole covers"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E..E. will meet Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the location and carry out the repairs as required.

Notice of Motion No: 93/2024

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

"That this Council contact Town Link regarding the timetable of the last bus leaving Portlaoise for Ballyroan with the view to the addition of a later bus route"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that correspondence will issue to the local Town Link service in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 94/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion;-

"That this Council legally rectifies the boundary mistake made while building the wall between Newpark and Knockmay"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the boundary rectification issues in this area are as a result of previous regeneration works carried out by Laois County Council. Laois County Council will make contact with affected residents individually in order to start the Section 183 land disposal and boundary rectification process.

Notice of Motion No: 95/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council remedy the problem with low water pressure in Clonad"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will contact Uisce Eireann regarding this Notice of Motion and revert to the members with an update when a response is received.

Notice of Motion No: 96/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council revisit the entrance/exit at Beechfield and also give an update on the vacate site adjoining same"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised of the following response from Mr. Diarmuid Donohue, Senior Executive Engineer - *The Council has raised the matter regarding Beechfield entrance with the NTA. An update will be provided upon receipt of NTA response*, and also the following response from Mr. David O' Hara, Senior Planner - Planning permission was granted to Dysart Property Limited in July 2019. This permission expires in November 2024 and to date no commencement notice has been received by the Planning Authority.

4. Correspondence

There was no correspondence received since the last meeting of the Municipal District. Councillor Willie Aird enquired if any update had been received back from Bord na Móna on the following Notice of Motion which was considered at the March meeting of the District:

"That this Council contact Bord na Mona to retain all the existing narrow gauge railway trackway associated with the Portlaoise Cul na Mona works and turn them into a greenway"

It was agreed that an update be again sought from Bord na Móna in this regard.

5. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the Annual General Meeting of the Municipal District would take place on Wednesday, June 26th 2024 at 11.00 a.m. A date for the June monthly meeting of the Municipal District will be fixed at this time.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services