

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup>  
OF OCTOBER 2024 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor	Padraig Fleming, Cathaoirleach In The Chair	
	Councillors	Aisling Moran	Tommy Mulligan
		James Kelly	Marie Tuohy
		John King	Caroline Dwane Stanley
		Aidan Mullins	Paddy Bracken
		Seamus McDonald	John Joe Fennelly
		Catherine Fitzgerald	Paschal McEvoy
		Ollie Clooney	Conor Bergin
		Barry Walsh	Willie Aird
		Vivienne Phelan	Ben Brennan

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Simon Walton, Interim Chief Executive, Mr. Pat Grassick, A/Director of Services, Ms. Georgina Ireland, A/Director of Services, Ms. Julie Bergin, A/Director of Finance, Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services, Ms. Carmel McNicholl, A/Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, A.O. & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

**166. VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

The following Votes of Sympathies were agreed:

- (i) The Bergin Family, Castlegrogan, Errill, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Patricia Bergin
- (ii) The McDonald Family, Cherrygarth, Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise on the recent death of Ms. Antoinette McDonald
- (iii) The Gee Family, Dunmore, Durrow, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. John Gee
- (iv) The Keenan Family, Main Street, Stradbally, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Marie Keenan
- (v) The Kenna Family, Temperance Street, Abebeyleix, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. John Kenna
- (vi) The Sheil Family, Coolnacritta, Galmoy, Kilkenny on the recent death of Mr. Sean Shiel
- (vii) Ms. Ewa Clerpysz, A/A.S.O, Housing Department, Laois County Council on the recent death of her father, Leon
- (viii) The Doheny Family, Portlaoise Road, Mountrath, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. John Doheny
- (ix) The Walsh Family, Loughteague, Stradbally, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. John Walsh
- (x) The Brennan Family, Garrendenny, Crettyard, Carlow on the recent death of Mr. Michael Brennan

**167. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON THE 30<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2024**

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor John King, the minutes of the September monthly meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

**168. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 23<sup>RD</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2024**

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the minutes of the CPG Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

Under matters arising from the minutes of the CPG Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2024 and following a brief discussion, it was agreed to consider Notice of Motion No: 43/2024 as follows at this stage:-

**Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-**

*“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Mr. Darragh O Brien, T.D., to make regulations in the public interest, to mandate that all Local authorities, commence Live Streaming and Archiving of Statutory Council meetings, to provide appropriate funding from Central Government and to implement as soon as possible”*

The Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy. The submission of the Motion was assented to by six Members of the Council in accordance with Standing Order Number 17. It was noted that the Motion was similar to NOM No: 35/2024 which was considered, and rejected, by Members at the September meeting of Laois County Council.

The issue was discussed, and a Roll Call Vote taken which resulted as follows: -

COUNCILLOR		FOR COUNCILLOR MORAN'S NOTICE OF MOTION	AGAINST COUNCILLOR MORAN'S MOTION	ABSENT
FIRST NAME	SURNAME			
William	AIRD		✓	
Conor	BERGIN		✓	
Paddy	BRACKEN		✓	
Ben	BRENNAN	✓		
Ollie	CLOONEY		✓	
Caroline	DWANE STANLEY	✓		
John Joe	FENNELLY		✓	
Catherine	FITZGERALD		✓	

Padraig	FLEMING		✓	
James	KELLY	✓		
John	KING		✓	
Seamus	MCDONALD		✓	
Paschal	MCEVOY		✓	
Aisling	MORAN	✓		
Tommy	MULLIGAN	✓		
Aidan	MULLINS	✓		
Vivienne	PHELAN		✓	
Marie	TUOHY	✓		
Barry	WALSH		✓	

- ❖ 7 votes in favour of Councillor Aisling Moran's Notice of Motion
- ❖ 12 votes against

Having regard to the requirements of Standing Order No. 17, the meeting was advised that the motion was defeated.

**169. REPORT ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN SEPTEMBER 2024**

On the proposition of Councillor Ben Brennan seconded by Councillor John King, the reports on Municipal District Meetings held in September 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

**170. APPROVAL TO THE RAISING OF A LOAN NOT EXCEEDING €1,250,000 FROM THE HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY PLC., FOR LAND ACQUISITION AT THE FOLLOW LOCATIONS FOR HOUSING PURPOSES:**

On the proposition of Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Cllr. Willie Aird, the Members approved the raising of a loan not exceeding €1,250,000 for land acquisition at the following locations for Housing purposes:

- (i) Greenmill Lane, Portlaoise,
- (ii) Lord Edward Street, Mountmellick,
- (iii) Smith's Field, Mountmellick.

**171. NOMINATION OF SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FOLLOWING S.P.C.'s:**

On the proposition of Cllr. John Joe Fennelly, seconded by Cllr. John King, the members approved the nomination of the following sectoral representatives:

- (i) **ICTU on behalf of Trade Unions**
- Transport, Environment and Emergency Services SPC – Mr. Keith Lewis
  - Enterprise, Economic Development and Tourism SPC – Ms. Lynda Scully.
- (ii) **Chambers Ireland on behalf of Business/Commercial**
- Housing, Regeneration and Planning SPC – Ms. Jackie Carroll
  - Climate Action and Community SPC – Ms. Jackie Carroll
  - Enterprise, Economic Development and Tourism SPC – Ms. Jackie Carroll
- (iii) **Chambers Ireland on behalf of Development/Construction**
- Housing, Regeneration and Planning SPC – Mr. Michael Kelly, Jnr.,
  - Transport, Environment and Emergency Services SPC – Mr. John Killeen,
  - Enterprise, Economic Development and Tourism SPC – Mr. Diarmuid Carroll
- (iv) **IFA on behalf of Farming**
- Climate Action and Community SPC – Mr. Liam Delaney
  - Transport, Environment and Emergency Services SPC – Mr. James Walsh,
  - Enterprise, Economic Development and Tourism SPC – Ms. Noreen Cahill
- (v) **Laois PPN on behalf of Social Inclusion, Environment, Community and Voluntary Sectors**
- Social Inclusion**
- Housing, Regeneration and Planning SPC – Mr. Pat Whelan,
  - Climate Action and Community SPC – Mr. Niall Culleton
- Environment**
- Housing, Regeneration and Planning SPC – Ms. Sheelagh Coyle,
  - Climate Action and Community SPC – Mr. Liam O’Neill
  - Transport, Environment and Emergency Services – Mr. Bobby Delaney
- Community and Voluntary**
- Climate Action and Community SPC – Mr. John Oxley
  - Enterprise, Economic Development and Tourism SPC – Mr. Roghan Headen

## 172. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Members were circulated with the draft 2023 Annual Report which was unanimously agreed on the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor John King.

**173. FIX DATE FOR SPECIAL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER MATERIAL CONTRAVENTIONS OF THE LAOIS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 – 2027 AS FOLLOWS:**

- (i) PLANNING REF: 24/20077
- (ii) PLANNING REF: 24/60231

On the proposition of Cllr. Paddy Bracken, seconded by Cllr. John Joe Fennelly, it was unanimously agreed to convene a Special meeting of the Council on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 10.15 am.

**174. 11.30 am – Presentation by Ms. Shirley McKay, Co-Ordinator for SOSAD and Mr. Christy Bannon, Mental Health Advocate with SOSAD.**

Ms. Shirley McKay delivered a presentation on the work which is being carried out by SOSAD and provided details of the services which they provide. Mr. Christy Bannon also addressed the meeting and outlined the issues which are currently arising in relation to the service. The Members complimented SOSAD on their work and undertook to support them in their endeavors. The Cathaoirleach and members wished them every success in the future.

**175. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2024**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Monthly Management Report for October 2024 and the Directors of Services responded to the various queries raised.

**176. TRAINING & CONFERENCES**

The Members were circulated with details on Training & Conferences.

**177. Correspondence**

The following correspondence was circulated:

- (i) Acknowledgement dated the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from the Laois Domestic Abuse Service in relation to Notice of Motion No: 32/2024
- (ii) Acknowledgement dated the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs in relation to Notice of Motion No: 38/2024
- (iii) Acknowledgement dated the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from Minister Darragh O' Brien, T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to Derelict Sites
- (iv) Acknowledgement dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from Minister Darragh Calleary in relation to Notice of Motion No: 33/2024
- (v) Acknowledgment dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from the Office of the CEO in the HSE in relation to Notice of Motion No: 36/2024
- (vi) Acknowledgement dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from the Office of the CEO in the HSE in relation to Notice of Motion No: 39/2024

- (vii) Acknowledgement dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from SEAI in relation to a recent query
- (viii) Acknowledgement dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 from Minister Jack Chambers, T.D. in relation to Notice of Motion No: 37/2024

## 178. Notice of Motions

### **Notice of Motion No: 34/2024**

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council call on the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage to consider granting sports clubs in County Laois a Rates Exemption”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in this regard.

### **Notice of Motion No: 41/2024**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council provide money in the Budget for footpaths in estates”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that further to notices of motion raised at both Municipal District and full Council meetings, Laois County Council will arrange for the necessary repair works on a prioritised basis within respective estates in the charge of the Local Authority. Given the frequency of requests which results from the number of mature estates in the county, provision will have to be made for an appropriate budget for such works as part of the budgetary process for 2025 and beyond. The Irish Public Bodies risk reduction programme is no longer available to Councils. An alternative funding source has been sought in the past from the Department of Transport for a restoration improvement programme for footpaths akin to that introduced for local and regional roads in circa 1997. No such specific funding for footpaths has been provided to date.

The matter was discussed, and the Members outlined the wide range of issues arising in relation to footpath repairs. It was noted that the funding which the Council currently has available is not sufficient to meet the demands. It was agreed to raise the issue with the Department of Transport again.

### **Notice of Motion No: 42/2024**

Councillor Vivienne Phelan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council organise SafeTalk (Suicide Alertness for Everyone) training for all Councillors”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that the matter will be considered.

### **Notice of Motion No: 44/2024**

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Mr. Darragh O Brien, T.D and the Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue, T.D., to re-introduce the targeted Neutering & Microchipping programme for dogs and cats”*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Vivienne Phelan. The Members were advised that a letter would issue to the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Mr. Darragh O’ Brien, T.D., & the Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue in this regard.

**Notice of Motion No: 45/2024**

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Mr. Darragh O Brien, T.D., and the Minister for Finance, Mr. Jack Chambers, T.D. to abolish the Property Tax for people over 70, on their primary residence.*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to the Minister in this regard.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: \_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
CORPORATE AFFAIRS