

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 20TH OF NOVEMBER 2024 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

PRESENT: Mr. Willie Aird, 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. Tommy Mulligan, M.C.C.
Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C.
Ms. Marie Tuohy, 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 THE OCTOBER MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 16TH OF OCTOBER 2024

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh, the minutes of the October meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District held on the 16th of October 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 16TH OF OCTOBER 2024

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh, the minutes of the budget meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District held on the 16th of October 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OCTOBER MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 16TH OF OCTOBER 2024

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the 16th of October 2024.

4. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 134/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council reline Main Street, Ballyroan and review locations of welcome signage"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD will make arrangements to carry out line marking works on the R425, Main Street, Ballyroan. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Councillor Walsh in reviewing the locations for the 'welcome signage' in Ballyroan.

Notice of Motion No: 135/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council repair urgent defects, cracking, and tree damage to footpaths & road gulleys in Rosdarragh & Rathevan Portlaoise and also devise a plan going forward as there are several incidences of cracking throughout both estates"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer would make himself available to meet Councillor Walsh in Rosdarragh & Rathevan in Portlaoise to examine priority areas of footpaths and gulleys requiring maintenance and repair.

Notice of Motion No: 136/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council continue re-surfacing works in Ironmills, Ballinakill and include in the roads programme 2025"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the L1738 will be examined for consideration for inclusion on the 2025 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 137/2024

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council cut back the trees and shrubs blocking the view on the approach to the stop sign on the way into Highfield Meadows"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to carry out the maintenance works as required at this location on the L81016 at Highfield Meadows, Portlaoise"

Notice of Motion No: 138/2024

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council put double yellow lines at on the curve at the entrance to Rathevan Close"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install double yellow lines near the green area at the entrance to Rathevan Close on the L81030.

Notice of Motion No: 139/2024

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council review the curve on the road at the entrance to Forest Park as it is causing difficulties entering and exiting the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tommy Mulligan. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet with Councillor Tuohy on site in Forest Park to examine the location.

Notice of Motion No: 140/2024

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

"That this Council open up the old basketball courts behind the Convent School for construction workers on the site so as to alleviate the shortage of parking spaces available at Laois County Council Millview car parking area"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tommy Mulligan. The Members were advised that the lands upon which the old basketball courts are located are in private ownership and therefore outside the control of Laois County Council. The Council will seek to explore the possibility of its use or potential alternatives.

It was agreed that the owners of the lands be contacted with a view to discussing it's availability. It was also requested that the Developer give consideration to making the lands available to cater for construction related traffic.

Notice of Motion No: 141/2024

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

"That this Council contact Coilte and request the lane at Togher woods be repaired"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will issue correspondence to Coillte in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 142/2024

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion

"That this Council contact Mr. Rory Hanniffy, the County Register and request that he engage with St Frances School, and Dunamase college with a view to getting a polling station in place to cater for residents living that side of town"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to the County Registrar in this regard.

During the course of the discussion on the above, the Members also requested that the following items be taken into consideration when examining the matter and more particularly for the upcoming polling for the General Election on the 29th November 2024:-

- Parking provision
- Salting/winter maintenance (given the winter election)
- Additional lighting
- Signage and Accessibility

Notice of Motion No: 143/2024

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

"That this Council start the process to take in charge the laneway off Killamuck road Abbeyleix as there are 6 residential properties and also farmlands to the back"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will examine the lane way to the west side of the L57332 - the lane in question is approximately 160 metres long.

Councillor Fennelly requested that in the interim that some local remedial works be carried out at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 144/2024

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That this Council widen the bridge at Dysart Aughnacross to facilitate the movement of wide agricultural machinery as there are 5 farmers crossing the bridge on a daily basis"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will assess the feasibility and likely cost of the request and give consideration for its inclusion in a future bridge rehabilitation works programme as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 145/2024

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

"That this Council include the road from Fr. Breen Park to Tullyroe Bridge Abbeyleix on the Roads programme for 2025 to include resurfacing, drainage and Safety measures as to allow easier access and safe travel for all who use the sporting facilities in the park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will examine the L16568 for consideration for inclusion for road resurfacing and drainage in the 2025 Roads Programme and this road will be included on the next round of applications for road safety improvement works.

Notice of Motion No: 146/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That Laois County Council paint/install a yellow box junction between the Kilminchy roundabout and the entrance/exit to Dún Masc housing estate to help address the traffic congestion and alleviate delays for residents exiting the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install road markings on the junction of R445 and L-81029 Dun Masc Portlaoise in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 147/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council request that Road Design Section prioritise locations of existing uncontrolled courtesy crossings for upgrading through additional painting and signage"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will review the current provision of courtesy crossings in Portlaoise and assess their suitability for upgrading on a prioritised basis to the new Department of Transport Type B or Type C crossing standard as contained in the traffic sign advice note.

Councillor Mulligan referred in particular to the road at Millview at the exit from Car Lane.

Notice of Motion No: 148/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council promote the existing monument structures on Father Brown Avenue. These monuments represent The Fort and the transportation of The Seven Septs of Laois to Kerry during the Laois/Offaly Plantation. Can Laois County Council provide signage and inscriptions on the structures with a view to promote and generate interest as well as inform the public and tourists as to what they represent"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy. The Members were advised that The Laois Heritage Office is currently working with the Laois Heritage Forum and Laois Heritage Society to review the existing Portlaoise Heritage Trail with a view to updating the trail (including options around new signage). The monument structures on Father Brown Avenue can be included in the overall consideration of the Portlaoise Heritage Trail and associated signage.

It was agreed to revert to the Heritage Officer to request the possibility of the erection of an Information Board.

Notice of Motion No: 149/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council remove parking spaces each side of the gates at the Church on the Stradbally Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to examine the sight lines for drivers exiting the church car park on the Stradbally Road and will carry out road marking works to improve the location.

Notice of Motion No: 150/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install traffic calming measures near the old Centrepoint on the Mountrath Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that traffic calming will be examined in the context of a review of the overall alignment and cross section of the road at this location. Consideration will also be given to cycleways, footpaths and the future development of the old center point site and associated active travel links to Harpurs lane. The footpath widths under the railway bridge on the Mountrath Road will also form part of the overall consideration for this stretch of road.

Councillor Fitzgerald requested that consideration be given to some interim measures at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 151/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install a path on the Timahoe/Meelick Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a member of staff will meet with Councillor Fitzgerald on site to review the extent of the request and examine the feasibility of providing a footpath at this location.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services advised that he would request the Active Travel Section to meet with Councillor Fitzgerald and explore the possibility of an Active Travel Scheme at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 152/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to instigate the possibility of purchasing the land adjacent to the Arthur Jacob roundabout on Fr Brown Avenue with a view to developing a Town Park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Planning & Community Sections of Laois County Council will be requested to give consideration to, assess the need for & the feasibility of the provision of a Town Park at this location. The assessment will give due consideration to the current provision and location of recreational facilities and parks within the town of Portlaoise.

Councillor Willie Aird requested that the matter be raised with the new Chief Executive.

Notice of Motion No: 153/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to request a meeting with the HSE Regional Executive Officer and the IHA for HSE Midlands to discuss their plan for the recruitment of therapists in Special Schools in Laois"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 154/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council take in charge Rankin's Wood"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council have carried out a CCTV survey of both foul and storm water sewers which have identified a number of issues which will have to be dealt with prior to taking in charge and subject to available funding. It should also be noted that this is a gated development, however the original planning permission gave no indication that this was to be a gated development with controlled access. As a condition of taking in charge, the development must become a public road and as long as the gates remain in place, this can not be progressed further until the issue of access is resolved.

5. Correspondence

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services advised that a response had been received from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley, T.D, in relation to correspondence which had issued as a result of the following Notice of Motion which had been considered at the October meeting of the Municipal District:-

Notice of Motion No: 116/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council acknowledge the acute shortage of enrolment places in Portlaoise Secondary Schools for children with special needs and that Laois County Council seek a meeting with the Minister of Education to address this urgent issue and alleviate these concerns"

The correspondence stated that the matter has been referred to Ms. Hildegard Naughton, T.D, Minister of State for Special Education and inclusion.

Correspondence from Minister Sean Fleming and Deputy Brian Stanley was also noted in relation to the above Notice of Motion.

6. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Municipal District would take place on the 11th of December 2024 at 11.00 a.m.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services