

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 16TH OF OCTOBER 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.

APOLOGIES: 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 SEPTEMBER MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 11TH OF SEPTEMBER 2024

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh, the minutes of the September meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District held on the 11th of September 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SEPTEMBER MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 11TH OF SEPTEMBER 2024

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the 11th of September 2024.

3. Notice of Motions

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"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members requested that a letter issue to the Department of Education in this regard as a matter of urgency and that all secondary schools in the County be included. It was also requested that the correspondence be copied to the three Laois Oireachtas Members.

Notice of Motion No: 117/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council install handrails or alternative safety measures on the footpath under the railway bridge on Grattan Street/Mountrath Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that a topographical survey was undertaken in the vicinity of the railway bridge on the Mountrath Road to examine the opportunity to widen the footpaths at this location. The Portlaoise MD Office is arranging to meet with Irish Rail in the coming weeks to discuss the topographical survey and explore options to improve the safety of pedestrians using the footpaths under the railway bridge.

Notice of Motion No: 118/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council remove a section of a ditch at Pallas Big Area(R32 A2HC) as it is obstructing the sight lines of residents when exiting and is a serious safety concern”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Roads Office will include this location as an application for funding for Roads Safety Improvement works for 2025.

Notice of Motion No: 122/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council install additional speed ramps in Clonrooske View, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Councillor Walsh on site on the L-81116 in Clonrooske View Portlaoise to confirm the location for the installation of a speed ramp.

Notice of Motion No: 123/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council install additional drainage measures on Chapel Street, Ballinakill (Mart road) and to also to include in roads programme 2025"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Cllr Walsh on site on the R432 to examine the location. The Portlaoise MD Office will include this location as an application for Drainage Works funding for 2025. The location will be included for consideration for resurfacing as part of the 2025 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 124/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide public toilets at St. Patrick's Cemetery, Ballyroan Road, Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the provision of public toilets in St. Patrick's cemetery Abbeyleix must be considered in conjunction with other similar cemeteries throughout the county of which there are more than 20. The provision of burial capacity at each of these cemeteries is a priority for Laois County Council and all available ground and resources should be utilised for this purpose. Any requirement to provide public toilet facilities in cemeteries would have a negative impact in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 125/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise MD be afforded the opportunity to meet with the officials of Bord na Mona with the Interim Chief Executive of Laois County Council in

relation to Cashel Bog, Cul na Móna and Ross Bog and the possibility of opening up the O' Moore Way that is the old railway line linking all bogs together for a cycle and walkway"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to Bord Na Mona seeking a meeting regarding this matter.

Notice of Motion No: 126/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise MD arrange for the pruning of the trees where necessary in various estates around the town"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Portlaoise MD will arrange for the pruning of trees as necessary on a prioritised basis within respective estates in the charge of the Local Authority. Given the frequency of requests which is a as a result of the number of maturing estates in Portlaoise town, provision will have to be made for an appropriate budget for such works as part on the budgetary process for 2025 and beyond.

Councillor Dwane Stanley requested the Planning Enforcement Section to examine the private estates in Portlaoise with a view to having tree works carried out.

Notice of Motion No: 127/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise MD consider piping the drain where the pipe was installed across the road in Ballydavis as the drain is very deep in the interest of health of safety for road users"

This Notice of motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will include this location (R32 TD99) as an application for Drainage Works funding for 2025.

Notice of Motion No: 128/2024

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That this Council install pull in areas/on the Lower Ballymullen Road, Abbeyleix to facilitate local residents who walk this road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet Cllr Fennelly on site on the L-5731 in on the Lower Ballymullen Road to examine the location for the installation of a passing bay.

Notice of Motion No: 129/2024

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

"That this Council carry out a road safety audit on the R430 at the junction of Spink GAA Club as a number of accidents have been reported on this section of road"

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 Cllr Fennelly on site at the junction of the R430 and L7797 to examine the location and progress to carrying a Road Safety Audit as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 130/2024

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

"That this Council replace the kerbing in front of Askbrook Housing Estate, Rathmoyle, Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangement to carry out repairs to the footpaths in front of Ashbrook Housing Estate, Rathmoyle, Abbeyleix.

Notice of Motion No: 131/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council include the Clonad Road for resurfacing"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The L-26965 will be included for consideration for resurfacing as part of the 2025 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 132/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council review traffic management near Scoil Chríost Rí/ CBS"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Road Design Department will reassess the traffic arrangements at Scoil Chríost Rí.

The Members requested that the matter be referred to the Active Travel Department for an examination of traffic management/impact of pedestrian crossings. It was also requested that additional bollards be provided at Colliers Lane.

Notice of Motion No: 133/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of MotionL-

"That this Council give an update / timeframe on the Bus service for Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The National Transport Authority have provided updates on both the contracts for the installation of stop location infrastructure and the appointment of a service operator for the service. A framework contractor is due to be appointed in the coming weeks to deliver to stop locations and there is an ongoing recruitment campaign for up to 25 drivers for the service. Based on the updates provided, it is expected that the service will be operational in January 2025.

Notice of Motion No: 112/2024

Councillor Marie Tuohy was absent from the meeting and requested Councillor Tommy Mulligan to propose the following Notice of Motions on her behalf:

Notice of Motion No: 119/2024 – Councillor Marie Tuohy

"That this Council give an update on both the dog park at the Linear Park and the area of reflection in the People's Park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the installation of the Dog Park at the Triogue Linear Park will be completed in approximately two weeks time. Works to the boundary wall between Pairc an Pobail and the adjoining property were

recently completed and it is intended to commence development of the garden of reflection at Pairc an Pobail by the end of Q.1 of 2025

Notice of Motion No: 120/2024 – Councillor Marie Tuohy

"That this Council cut back the tree and foliage covering light no. 2 on Kilminchy Avenue"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Public Lighting Department will arrange for the foliage or similar that may be interfering with the public light to be removed.

Notice of Motion No: 121/2024 – Councillor Marie Tuohy

"That this Council remove the tree on the green in Lower Beladd which is at risk of falling and is close to the footpath and the road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine the tree at this location and make arrangements to remove it as required.

4. Correspondence

The Members were advised of correspondence received from Slieve Bloom Coach Tours Ltd., dated the 27th of September 2024 in response to the following Notice of Motion:-

Notice of Motion No: 93/2024

"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"

The correspondence outlined that from a business point of view Slieve Bloom Coaches are constantly looking into different timetables to see could the services be enhanced across the County and provide passengers with different times for travel. On this service, the driver starts at 06.50 a.m. and finishes at 19.00 p.m. To avail of a later service, the departure time from Portlaoise would have to be pushed out leaving a later finish time for him making his working hours illegal as per WRC rules etc. Secondly, if drivers were replaced to run the service later it would mean additional costs and extra bills to cover, i.e., diesel cost, driver cost, roster changes, etc. Furthermore, the NTA would have to be approached to amend the route licence at an added cost to the Company and it could be refused. As a business the additional costs could not be sustained unless extra funding was allocated. It was

indicated that there is a shortage of drivers and Slieve Bloom Coaches would not be in a position to extend the services until such a time drivers were available and funding was received to cover the costs. Furthermore seats for passenger boardings over the past few weeks have been examined – From Monday, September 2nd 2024 there has been 93 passengers have travelling on the service at 17:10. 13 of those passengers travelled to Ballyroan – people of Ballyroan are not supporting the service.

5. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Municipal District would take place on the 20th of November 2024 at 11.00 a.m.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services