

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 11th OF SEPTEMBER 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 MAY MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 15TH OF MAY 2024

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the minutes of the May meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District held on the 15th of May 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 26TH OF JUNE 2024

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Portlaoise Municipal District held on the 26th of June 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MAY MEETING OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 15TH OF MAY 2024

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the 15th of May 2024.

4. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 97/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council address the traffic and parking concerns at Scoil Bhríde National School in Portlaoise and address safety issues on Harpurs Lane- installation of bollards, introduction of traffic calming measures and utilisation of car park"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council have and will continue to work with Scoil Bhríde National School, Portlaoise College, LOETB, An Garda Síochána, Portlaoise Town Team Active Transport Subgroup amongst other stakeholders to ensure that the measures installed to date to address the issues highlighted are utilised and observed. Further safety & traffic management measures can & will be considered for this location having first ensured that the existing available facilities are effectively being used.

A discussion ensued and Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services advised that a meeting would be scheduled with the new Principal of the school in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 98/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council discuss outstanding and ongoing issues on Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise. What is the medium to long term plan for the road? Do Laois County Council intend to meet with relevant stakeholders"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that a number of meetings with relevant stakeholders have been held throughout the respective phases of the N77 works to date and further meetings can be facilitated if required.

An independent Stage 3 post works road safety audit has been completed for this scheme. Whilst the audit identified some minor items that will be attended to in the short term, it is clear from surveys conducted that prevailing vehicle speeds are down, active travel usage is up and one of the main approach roads to the town has been greatly calmed and enhanced, all of which were key deliverables for the scheme.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services advised that a meeting would be scheduled with relevant stakeholders...

Notice of Motion No: 99/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“As part of the Urban Regeneration Development Fund that Laois County Council will install/erect a bandstand on Lower Main Street which will offer the opportunity for public performances, and will further enhance the ambiance and atmosphere of the area”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that under Round 2 of the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund public realm enhancements will be undertaken along Main Street, Portlaoise, In this regard and in the coming weeks, Laois County Council will be tendering for the appointment of a design team to develop the enhancement proposals. The provision of space and facilities for performances will be considered as part of enhancement proposals.

Notice of Motion No: 100/2024

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

“That this Council give an update on the development at Radharc Darach/Hepburn Court and the field at Knockmay, and confirm that a boundary wall along Oaklawn and the development will be installed”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Enabling works associated with site utilities have commenced on site. Contractor appointment for construction works contract will be finalised by end of Q3 2024, with works on site due to commence in early Q4 2024. Inspections of all boundary walls along Oaklawn have commenced and a programme of necessary repairs to these boundary wall is to be agreed.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services advised that the Housing Department would be requested to prepare a detailed programme setting out commencement dates, construction period and intended date for handover. The programme would also detail and confirm the boundary treatments to be implemented on the adjacent properties.

Notice of Motion No: 101/2024

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

"That this Council repair the tactile paving at number 41 Primrose Avenue , repair coble locking at junction of Primrose Avenue and Buttercup Avenue, Esker Hills and also to trim the trees on the spine road into the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will arrange to carry out repairs to the tactile paving at 41 Primrose Ave in the coming weeks. The Portlaoise MD Office will include the L-81085 Butter Cup Avenue & Primrose Avenue on the list of roads for consideration for resurfacing under the Multi-Annual Roads Programme 2025-2027. The Portlaoise MD Office will examine the trees along the entrance road into Esker Hills (Laurel Drive) with a view to carrying out tree maintenance & pruning as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 102/2024

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

"That this Council install a yellow box on the Ballinakill Road at entrance to Temperance Street Abbeyleix and review road markings at the junction"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine the junction of the R430 and L-57312 Temperance Street Abbeyleix with a view to installing road markings as appropriate

Notice of Motion No: 103/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That Portlaoise municipal district calls on Laois County Council to make safe the junction at Derrygarren / Eyne with additional signage and road markings"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD have previously carried out works at this location - we will re-examine for any further works and also submit an application for funding for road safety improvement works in 2025.

Notice of Motion No: 104/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to provide a wheelchair accessible crossing on the Dublin Road at Dun Masc"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Laois County Council recognises the requirement for a pedestrian crossing on the Dublin Road at Kilminchy. In that regard the Council has engaged the design consultant working on the Dublin road active travel enhancement scheme to assess pedestrian movement in the area and identify the most appropriate location for the installation of an accessible pedestrian crossing.

Notice of Motion No: 105/2024

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Portlaoise Municipal district calls on Laois County Council to upgrade footpaths in Newpark to enable safe movement for people with a visual impairment."

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer will make himself available to meet Councillor Aird on site to examine the footpaths in Newpark.

Notice of Motion No: 106/202

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide a layby & road markings outside Brady's house Rathmoyle Road Abbeyleix. This should also include no parking signage"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will examine the location on the L-67203 at Rathmoyle adjacent to Scoil Mhuire Abbeyleix with a view to installing a passing bay and roadmarkings as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 107/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council provide traffic calming signage to all approach roads to Ballyroan Village. Local amenities and facilities to be considered in each location"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council will review the existing signage in place and develop a proposal for traffic calming signage in Ballyroan.

Notice of Motion No: 108/2024

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council include Blandsfort Cross to Graigue Cross in the roads programme 2025"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the Portlaoise MD Office will include the L-7780 Blandsfort Cross to Graigue Cross on the list of roads for consideration for resurfacing under the Multi-Annual Roads Programme 2025-2027.

Notice of Motion No: 109/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install bollards on right hand side at entrance to Summerhill Lane"

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 Cllr Fitzgerald on site to examine the issues at this location with a view to installing bollards as appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 110/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council change the pedestrian crossings between Tesco and Dunnes Kyle Centre"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Road Design Dept. will meet Councillor Fitzgerald on site to discuss the proposals, following this a road safety inspection will be carried out.

Mr. Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services advised that a representative from the Road Design Section will arrange to meet Councillor Fitzgerald on site in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 111/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install safety measures at Sheffield exit onto the Timahoe Road"

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 Fitzgerald on site to examine the junction of the R425 Ballyroan Rd and R426 Timahoe Rd at Sheffield Cross Portlaoise with a view to making arrangements to carry out works as appropriate and/or make an application for safety scheme if appropriate.

Notice of Motion No: 112/2024

Councillor Marie Tuohy was absent from the meeting and requested Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley to propose the following Notice of Motion on her behalf:

"That this Council install a stop sign in Highfield Meadows at the top of the hill in front of the green as you enter the estate"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tommy Mulligan. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will be installing a stop line and stop sign on the T junction on the L-81016 Highfield Meadows entrance road to the estate approaching the green area.

Notice of Motion No: 113/2024

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

"That this Council install extra parking stoppers at Market Square, Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will make arrangements to install additional wheel stops at parking bays adjacent to the footpath in Market Square Abbeyleix.

Notice of Motion No: 114/2024

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

"That this Council in conjunction with the TII erect a speed radar sign on the Durrow Road, Abbeyleix between the Manor Hotel and the Well Road junction"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council Road Design Dept will liaise with TII with regards to the implementation of a speed radar at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 115/2024

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

"That this Council apply for funding for safety measures at Cromogue Junction on the R430"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that I will make myself available to meet Cllr Fennelly on site to examine Cromogue Cross junction on R430. The Portlaoise MD Office will submit an application for funding later this years for a 2025 safety improvement scheme.

Councillor Fennelly requested that interim works be carried out to improve sightlines at the junction in advance of a proposed Safety Improvement Scheme being carried out.

5. Correspondence

The Members were advised of the correspondence which had been received from Bord na Móna in relation to the following Notice of Motion:-

"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"

The response advised that Bord na Móna had previously been in contact with Laois County Council on the development of Greenways on Bord na Móna lands in Co. Laois. The lands owned by Bord na Móna in Laois are Garrymore, Cuilnamona, Cashel, Cuilnacarton, Abbeyleix (under lease), Clonenagh, and lands on the borders with other counties are Templetouhy, Knocknhaw, Garryhinch and Monettia. Bord na Móna is

open and supportive of further discussions with Laois County Council on the feasibility of Greenways on its lands. Routes would be subject to the sourcing of funding outside of Bord na Móna to fund the construction of the Greenways; subject to planning; and subject to timing of when potential construction could happen given some timing constraints on Bord na Móna lands, and the maintenance needs post construction. It was also confirmed that regarding the existing loco rail lines, Bord na Móna is lifting the tracks as part of the rehabilitation process, but leaving the rail-bed intact to ensure that it could be made available for alternative use.

6. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Municipal District would take place on the 16th of October 2024 at 11.00 a.m.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Services