

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE
30TH OF SEPTEMBER 2024 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE**

PRESENT: 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

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ben Brennan

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Simon Walton, Interim Chief Executive, Mr. Pat Grassick, A/Director of Services, Ms. Angela McEvoy, 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.

144. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

The following Votes of Sympathies were agreed:

- (i) The Dunne family on the recent death of Mrs. Phillis Dunne, Woodview, Clonoghil, Ballacolla, Co. Laois, mother of Mr. Dermot Dunne, Roads Department
- (ii) The Phelan family on the recent death of Ms. Joan Phelan, Rose Vale, Shannon Road, Mountrath and former Member of Mountrath Library Staff
- (iii) The Fenlon family on the recent death of Mr. Tom Fenlon, Woodlawn, Portlaoise and father of Station Officer, John Fenlon in the Mountmellick Fire Station
- (iv) The Adebari family on the recent death of Ibironke Olajumoke Aine Adebari, wife of former Member of Laois County Council, Mr. Rotimi Adebari
- (v) The O' Callaghan family on the recent death of Mrs. Maureen O' Callaghan, Main Street, Stradbally and former employee in Stradbally library and also mother of Mr. Jim O' Callaghan
- (vi) The Moloney family on the recent death of Ms. Helen Maloney, Irishtown, Mountmellick, Co. Laois, sister of former Minister & Member of Laois County Council, Mr. John Moloney
- (vii) The Breen family on the recent death of Mr. Darren (Haji) Breen, Hillview Drive, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
- (viii) The Murphy family on the recent death of Mr. Joseph Murphy, 3 Mountain View, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
- (ix) The Grant family on the recent death of Ms. Kathleen Grant, Colt, Ballyroan, Co, Laois
- (x) The Scully family on the recent death of Mr. Pat Scully, Millbrook, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
- (xi) The Moore family on the recent death of Mr. Robert Moore, Woodview, Stradbally, Co. Laois

- (xii) The Brennan family on the recent death of Mr. Pdraig Brennan, Grennan, Attanagh, Co. Laois.
- (xiii) The Donohue family on the recent death of Mr. Douglas Stuart Donohue, 44 Erkindale Drive, Durrow, Co. Laois.
- (xiv) The Kearney family on the recent death of Ms. Sheila Kearney, Sarsfield Street, Mountmellick, Co. Laois.
- (xv) The Lewis family on the recent death of Mr. Sydney Lewis, Summerhill, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
- (xvi) The Callaghan family on the recent death of Ms. Betty Callaghan, Reary, Rosenallis, Co. Laois.
- (xvii) The Wilson family on the recent death of Ms. Annemarie Wilson, Timahoe, Co. Laois, sister of Councillor Paschal McEvoy

145. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS

Councillor Willie Aird proposed that all associated with the recent success of the National Ploughing Championships be congratulated and this was unanimously agreed by all present.

146. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE JULY MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON THE 29TH OF JULY 2024

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John King, the minutes of the July monthly meeting held on the 29th of July 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

147. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON THE 10TH OF SEPTEMBER 2024

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John King, the minutes of the Special Meeting held on the 10th of September 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

148. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 22ND OF JULY 2024

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the minutes of the CPG Meeting held on the 22nd of July 2024 were confirmed as circulated.

149. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 in respect of:

Disposal of land comprising 0.054 hectares at Killamuck, Abbeyleix in the townland of Killamuck

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.054 hectares at Killamuck, Abbeyleix in the townland of Killamuck for a consideration of €8,000.

Disposal of Site No. 8 comprising 0.101 hectares at Castletown, Co. Laois in the townland of Churchfield

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.101 hectares at Castletown, Co. Laois in the townland of Churchfield for a consideration of €30,000

Disposal of Site No. 14 comprising 0.11 hectares at Castletown, Co. Laois in the townland of Churchfield

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of Site No. 14 comprising 0.11 hectares at Castletown, Co. Laois in the townland of Churchfield for a consideration of €30,000.

Disposal of 0.15 hectares at Esker, Timahoe in the townland of Timahoe

In accordance with Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, Councillor Pdraig Fleming, Cathaoirleach advised the meeting of his interest in this matter.

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.15 hectares at Esker, Timahoe in the townland of Timahoe for a consideration of €22,000.

Sub-Lease of office space comprising of 64 m2 at Church Street, Portlaoise in the townland of Maryborough

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh the Members unanimously agreed to the sub-lease of office space comprising of 64 m2 at Church Street, Portlaoise in the townland of Maryborough to Laois TRIP, t/a Local Link Laois Offaly, County Hall, Portlaoise, Co. Laois for a period of 4 years and 11 months for a consideration of €9,000 per annum.

Sub-Lease of office space comprising of 77 m2 at Church Street, Portlaoise in the townland of Maryborough

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the sub-lease of office space comprising of 77 m2 at Church Street, Portlaoise in the townland of Maryborough to Laois Sports Partnership Ltd., Portlaoise Leisure Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois for a period of 4 years and 11 months for a consideration of €11,000 per annum.

Disposal of freehold comprising 0.0291 hectares of land at The Elms, Main Street, Stradbally, Co. Laois

In accordance with Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, Councillor Vivienne Phelan advised the meeting of her interest in this matter. On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.0291 hectares of land at The Elms, Main Street, Stradbally, Co. Laois for a consideration of €300.00.

Disposal of freehold comprising 0.0552 hectares of land at 16 Emmett Terrace, Mountmellick, Co. Laois in the townland of Townsparks

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.0552 hectares of land at 16 Emmett Terrace, Mountmellick, Co. Laois in the townland of Townsparks for a consideration of €300.00.

150. Taking in Charge of Graigue na hAbhainn, Portlaoise Road, Graiguecullen

On the proposition of Councillor Ailsing Moran seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Graigue na hAbhainn, Portlaoise Road, Graiguecullen.

151. Taking in Charge of Dromineen, Church Avenue, Stradbally

On the proposition of Councillor Aisling Moran seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Dromineen, Church Avenue, Stradbally

152. Taking in Charge of Taking in Charge of Doireann Alainn (No's 24-32) Ballylinan

On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Doireann Alainn (No's 24-32) Ballylinan

153. Taking in Charge of Roselawn (public footpath at new development), Harpurs Lane, Portlaoise

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Roselawn, (public footpath at new development

154. Nomination of Mr. Horace Downey representing the Laois PPN(Community & Voluntary Seat) on the Laois Local Community Development Committee

On the proposition of Councillor Aisling Moran seconded by Councillor John, King, the Members unanimously agreed the nomination of Mr. Horace Downey representing the Laois PPN (Community & Voluntary Seat) on the Laois Local Community Development Committee

155. Nomination of Mr. Brian Brennan representing the Laois PPN (Environmental Seat) on the Laois Local Community Development Committee

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously agreed the nomination of Mr. Brian Brennan representing the Laois PPN (Community & Voluntary Seat) on the Laois Local Community Development Committee

156. Assignment of S.P.C. Chairs & Nomination of Elected Members to the following S.P.C.'s: -

- (i) **Housing, Regeneration & Planning S.P.C.**

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed that Councillor Paddy Bracken chair the Housing, Regeneration & Planning S.P.C. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald.

The following Elected Members were nominated and agreed:

- Councillor Barry Walsh
- Councillor Paschal McEvoy
- Councillor Marie Tuohy
- Councillor Aisling Moran

(ii) Climate Action, Community & Integration S.P.C.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed that Councillor John Joe Fennelly chair the Climate Action, Community & Integration S.P.C. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald.

The following Elected Members were nominated and agreed:

- Councillor Seamus McDonald
- Councillor Conor Bergin
- Councillor Aidan Mullins
- Councillor Tommy Mulligan

(iii) Transport, Environment & Emergency Services S.P.C.

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed that Councillor Willie Aird chair the Transport, Environment & Emergency Services S.P.C. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Conor Bergin.

The following Elected Members were nominated and agreed:

- Councillor John King
- Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald
- Councillor Ben Brennan
- Councillor Ollie Clooney

(iv) Enterprise, Economic Development & Tourism S.P.C.

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed that Councillor James Kelly chair the Transport, Environment & Emergency Services S.P.C. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Aidan Mullins.

The following Elected Members were nominated and agreed:

- Councillor Vivienne Phelan
- Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley
- Councillor Pdraig Fleming

157. Local Property Tax – Notice of Consideration of setting a Local Adjustment Factor

The Members were circulated with the report on the Local Property Tax. Mr. Simon Walton, Interim Chief Executive delivered a presentation to the Members. On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor John King, the Members agree that Laois County Council resolve to vary the basic (baseline) rate of Local Property Tax by plus 15% for the period 2025 – 2029, unless a future resolution is approved to vary this Resolution.

158. Approval of Overdraft Accommodation in respect of: -

On the proposition of Councillor Ollie Clooney seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed to the approval of Overdraft Accommodation in respect of: -

- €8 million for the year ending 31st December 2025 to finance working capital
- €15 million for the year ending 31st December 2025 to facilitate any timing issues regarding the payment of payroll and pensions for My-Pay

159. Fix date for Meetings

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to schedule the following meetings:-

- October Monthly Meeting to take place on the 21st of October 2024 at 11.00 a.m.
- The Budget Meeting in Committee to take place on the 14th of November at 11.00 a.m.
- The Statutory Budget Meeting to take place on the 18th of November 2024 at 11.00 a.m.

160. Sister Cities Update – Report on Visit to Tennessee

The Members were circulated with a report on the recent visit to Tennessee following an invitation from Williamson County. The delegation consisted of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Pdraig Fleming & Mr. Simon Walton, Interim Chief Executive and the Members noted the update provided.

161. 12.30 p.m. – Presentation by Ms. Carol Slattery, Director of Portarlinton Enterprise Centre

Ms. Carol Slattery, Director of the Portarlington Enterprise Centre delivered a presentation on the Portarlington Enterprise Centre accompanied by Ms. Mary Keogh, Secretary of the Enterprise Centre. The Members complimented the Centre on their work to date and wished them every success in the future.

162. Monthly Management Report for September 2024

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

163. Training & Conferences

The Members were circulated with details on Training & Conferences.

164. Correspondence

The following correspondence was circulated:

- (i) Correspondence from the Minister for Transport dated the 10th of September 2024 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 57/2023
- (ii) Correspondence from the Minister of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland dated the 30th of July 2024 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 26/2024. In noting the correspondence, the Members requested that a further letter issue in this regard.
- (iii) Correspondence from the Minister of State for Disabilities dated the 16th of August 2024 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 27/2024
- (iv) Correspondence from Minister Sean Fleming, T.D., & Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs in relation to Notice of Motion No: 28/2024
- (v) Correspondence from the Minister of Education dated the 25th of September 2024 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 29/2024. The Members in noting the correspondence expressed their dissatisfaction with same and following a discussion on the matter it was agreed that the matter would be raised at the October meeting of the Portlaoise Municipal District
- (vi) Correspondence from Iarnróid Eireann dated the 25th of September 2024 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 30/2024. The Members in noting the response requested that a further letter issue to Iarnróid Eireann in this matter.
- (vii) Correspondence from Minister Ryan dated the 21st of August 2024 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 30/2024
- (viii) Correspondence from Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley, T.D. dated the 19th of August 2024 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 31/2024
- (ix) Correspondence from the Wexford County Council dated the 9th August 2024 in relation to gender based violence
- (x) Correspondence from Roscommon County Council dated the 2nd of September 2024 in relation to household waste disposal
- (xi) Correspondence from Roscommon County Council dated the 2nd of September 2024 in relation to 9% VAT rate for the hospitality sector

- (xii) Correspondence from Leitrim County Council dated the 6th of September 2024 in relation to the reduction to 9% VAT rate for the hospitality sector
- (xiii) Correspondence from Leitrim County Council dated the 6th September 2024 in relation to the Gas Emergency Reserve in Ireland
- (xiv) Correspondence from Sligo County Council dated the 16th of September 2024 in relation to a review of the existing Community Employment Schemes.

165. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 32/2024

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give an update on the Domestic Violence refuge for Laois”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that In November 2023, Laois County Council purchased a 0.7 acre site to facilitate and support the development of a Domestic Violence Refuge in County Laois. In order to advance the development of the Refuge, LDAS are required to partner with an AHB. Once that partnership is established, Laois County Council will support an application to the Dept. of Housing, under the Capital Assistance Scheme. In parallel, LDAS and Dept. of Housing and Justice requested the acquisition of an additional 0.3 acres, to support the development. The Council is seeking to acquire the additional lands. The County Council is acutely aware of the urgent need for the delivery of a Domestic Violence Refuge within the County and continue to work closely with Laois Domestic Abuse Service, the Housing Agency, CUAN (Dept of Justice) and the Department of Housing on plans to construct a refuge, including advice on funding such the development through the Dept of Housing’s Capital Assistance Scheme. The stakeholders steering Group will meet in October to progress matters.

Following a discussion on the inclusion of Elected Members of Laois County Council on the Board of the Laois Domestic Abuse Service, it was agreed that a letter issue to the Laois Domestic Abuse Service in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 33/2024

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council call on Minister Peter Burke, Minister of Enterprise, Trade & Employment & Minister Dara Calleary, Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation to review the pricing strategies employed by Ticketmaster in regard to concert and event ticket sales”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that a letter issue to the Minister of Enterprise, Trade & Employment & the Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital & Company Regulation in this regard.

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 a Rate Waiver”

This Notice of Motion was deferred to the October Meeting of Laois County Council

Notice of Motion No: 35/2024

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council, in the interest of transparency and accountability facilitate the implementation of live streaming of all public meetings and archiving of same. This will encourage more public engagement and facilitate education of what happens in Local Government. This needs to be done as soon as possible. I first brought forward this motion in June 2021 and every year since. The last Council agreed that it would be considered by the new Council in 2024.

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. A counter motion was proposed by Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor John King that the Council not proceed with the implementation of live streaming. A roll call vote took place on Councillor Aisling Moran’s proposal which resulted as follows:-

A Roll Call Vote was done 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		✓	

The result of the Roll Call Vote was as follows:-

- ❖ 5 votes in favour of Councillor Aisling Moran’s Notice of Motion
- ❖ 9 votes against
- ❖ 5 members absent

Notice of Motion No: 36/2024

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council in recognising the urgent need for enhanced addiction support services within the County and acknowledging the gaps in immediate care available to individuals awaiting long-term treatment response call on the H.S.E. & the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., to allocate funding and provide support for a pilot programme designed to offer interim addiction services and referrals in County Laois”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised that correspondence will issue to the Minister for Health in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 37/2024

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Finance, Mr. Jack Chambers, T.D., to abolish the USC Tax for people under the age of 30, incentivizing our young people to stay, live and work in Ireland”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised that correspondence will issue to the Minister for Finance in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 38/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council support the Occupied Territories Bill and write to the three-party leaders in government, to ask government to enact the Occupied Territories Bill”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that correspondence will issue to An Taoiseach, Mr. Simon Harris, T.D., Tánaiste, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., & Mr. Roderic O’ Gorman, T.D.

Notice of Motion No: 39/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That Laois County Council seek a Neurologist or a Neurology Department for Portlaoise Hospital”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The members were advised that a letter would issue to the Health Services Executive & the Minister for Health in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 40/2024

Councillor Tommy Mulligan proposed the following Notice of Motion

“That Laois County Council explore options to provide facilities for motorhome aires in the County with a view to promoting tourism.

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Cllr. James Kelly. The Members were advised that Laois County Council supports the development of, and investment in new and existing tourism infrastructure and amenities in the County through the County Development Plan, Tourism Strategy and LECP.

The Council and other agencies are supportive of investment in these facilities in appropriate locations subject to planning permission and good environmental standards being met.

Approximately 20 Expressions of Interest have been submitted for camping, glamping, accommodation upgrades in County Laois under the EU Just Transition Fund Scheme B which is being administered by Failte Ireland.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: _____
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
CORPORATE AFFAIRS