

Minutes of Meeting for Climate Action and Community Strategic Policy Committee

Held on Monday, 14 June 2021 at 9.30 a.m.

Via Teams

Present:

Cllr. John King, Chairperson

Cllr. James Kelly

Cllr. Padraig Fleming,

Cllr. PJ Kelly

Ms. Ann Fingleton, Business/Commercial

Ms. Ruth Sullivan, Community/Voluntary

Mr. Bobby Delaney, Environment/Conservation

Mr. Michael Gorman, Social Inclusion

Apologies:

Mr Donald Scully, Agriculture/Farming,

In Attendance:

Ms. Carmel McNicholl Senior Executive Officer, Ms. Elaine Moore A/Administrative Officer, Mr. Tadhg Madden Executive Engineer, Mr Ken Morley, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr Donal Brennan, Director of Services

Cllr John King opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Confirmation of Minutes

Upon the proposal of Cllr. James Kelly and seconded by Cllr John King, the minutes of SPC Meeting held on Monday, 8th March 2021 were confirmed.

Matters Arising

In relation to the Review of the Sports & Leisure Strategy Cllr James Kelly thanked Mr Donal Brennan and Mr Sean Quirke from Portarlinton Leisure Centre for all their work and for the opening of 2 pitches at Portlaoise Leisure Centre to allow games to recommence on them. Cllr John King enquired if there was any development on the repair works in Rathdowney playground. Ms Carmel McNicholl stated that she would check and revert to him with an update.

Cemetery Bye-Laws

Mr Ken Morley gave a short presentation on the further changes from that had been made since the Draft document was considered previously. The main changes were minor amendments to the terms and definitions contained in the bye-laws. He also outlined some new headings such as Independent Cemetery Contractors and the Fixed Payment Notices. He stated that the next steps to implementation of the Draft Cemetery Bye-Laws was to present them to the Council and if agreed by the Council a Public Consultation process would then take place for further consideration and assessment, before the Bye Laws are presented for adoption by Council and they would come into effect on a date to be specified.

Members raised a variety of issues in respect of the Draft Cemetery Bye Laws:

Impact on work that is currently being done by local undertakers who have their own grave diggers;

Would Columbarium's be provided in other graveyards throughout the County;

More signage in cemeteries regarding dogs/dog fouling;

The erection of security fencing in Mountrath;

Would neighbours still be allowed to dig graves as may be common practice in rural areas;

Erection of monuments over the allowed height;

Kerbing in lawn areas;

Old headstones that fall into disrepair/trip hazard;

Treatment of various denominations in cemeteries other than Portlaoise;

The issue of insurances;

Requirement for an audit on what arrangements apply in each cemetery in Laois;

Proposal for engagement with local undertakers regarding proposed bye laws

Mr Donal Brennan said he would arrange to consult with the local undertakers in the County.

He stated that no audit has been carried out in respect of what happens in each cemetery in Laois and would that this would not be possible in the short term due to financial restraints.

He also advised that these bye laws would apply to Council owned cemeteries only.

Climate Action Projects Updates – Decarbonisation Zone & Carbon Footprint Study

Mr Tadgh Madden gave a presentation on the decarbonisation zone and carbon footprint study of Portlaoise Low Carbon Town pilot. This can be achieved through a number of initiatives such as the implementation of renewable energy, provision of electrical vehicle chargers, changing over of internal combustion engines with electric vehicles, dealing with transport, promoting remote working, removing cars from the town centre. This will also include low energy lighting (2,500 lights) with 2,200 led lights already replaced in Portlaoise and 60% of the county wide network has already been upgraded to LED, solar compactor bins, cycle routes, park & ride study. As part of urban renewal there will be provision of approximately 120 residential units at two sites either end of Main St Portlaoise, the old CBS site which will have 67 units and car parking and the old convent site which will have 52 units. Gas Network Ireland are constructing a new Compressed Natural Gas service station at J17 in Portlaoise, discussions are ongoing with the National Transport Authority with a view to securing the provision of a local transport service for Portlaoise to plan a local bus service for Portlaoise. It is hoped that the network would consist of two routes with 40 stops with each route measuring approx. 7km in length.

Laois CLG are delivering a National Pilot Green Stadium Programme initiative for O'Moore Park with the upgrade of the floodlighting in the stadium and the associated buildings to energy efficient LED lights. They also have a programme for the planting of native trees and hedging and native meadows throughout the wider campus along with other initiatives. Portlaoise Rugby Club also began consultations on their Green Infrastructure Plan which will include sporting facilities for other sports on their campus. The first Electric Bus was purchased by a local private company and is the first fully electric bus of its kind in the country and will be used as part of the Local Link services.

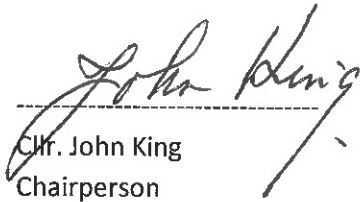
An update was given on the Biodiversity Enhancement Project on the South Link Road Scheme. Kilminchy Residents are also delivering actions identified in their masterplan which was adopted by the local community in 2019. Laois County Council will continue to work on the Portlaoise 2040 vision to make it a reality.

The members of the SPC thanked Mr Tadhg Madden for his presentation and expressed the hope that some of the initiatives in Portlaoise could also be undertaken in other towns and villages in Laois.

Any Other Business

Mr Michael Gorman raised the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was ratified in Ireland in 2018. There is an obligation with respect to upgrading access arrangements for people with disabilities to premises and services throughout the county of Laois. He stated that there should be a Strategy in place for doing this work and it should be updated year on year. Mr Donal Brennan/Ms Carmel McNicholl advised that such arrangements are incorporated in to any new public buildings at design stage and indicated as an example the fact that all Council playgrounds are under review to ensure that they are fully inclusive, with works underway at particular locations.

That concluded the business of the meeting.



Cllr. John King
Chairperson



Mr. Donal Brennan,
Director of Service

