

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 26TH OF
APRIL 2021 BY MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:	Councillor	Catherine Fitzgerald	In The Chair
	Councillors	Willie Aird	Paddy Bracken
		John Joe Fennelly	Aidan Mullins
		Padraig Fleming	James Kelly
		Seamus McDonald	Aisling Moran
		Mary Sweeney	Noel Tuohy
		Caroline Dwane Stanley	John King
		Thomasina Connell	Paschal McEvoy
		Ollie Clooney	Conor Bergin
		Ben Brennan	P.J. Kelly

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Simon Walton, Director of Services, Mr. Joe Delaney, Director of Services, Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Ms. Irene Delaney, A.O., & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

62. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously extended a vote of sympathy to the following families:-

- (i) The Teehan family, Coolderry, Birr, Co. Offaly on the recent death of Mrs. Margaret Teehan, mother-in-law of Councillor Paschal McEvoy, Laois County Council
- (ii) The Clooney family, Ballytarsna, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mr. Cathal Clooney, son of Mr. William Clooney, Water Services Department
- (iii) The Murphy family, Reanagoshill, Newmarket, Cork on the recent death of Mr. Benjamin Murphy, father of Ms. Catherine M. Murphy, Roads Department

On the proposition of Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously extended a vote of sympathy to the following families:-

- (i) The O' Neill family, Doonane, Crettyard, Carlow on the recent death of Mr. James O' Neill
- (ii) The Mahon family, Derrymoyle, Carlow/Laois on the recent death of Mr. Arnold Mahon

63. Confirmation of the Minutes of the March monthly meeting held on the 29th of March 2021

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed the minutes of the March monthly meeting held on the 29th of March 2021 as circulated.

Councillor James Kelly raised the issue of Notice of Motion No: 06/2021 under Paragraph No. 48 of the Minutes of the March meeting as follows:-

“That this Council carry out a survey on the Spa Hill to Forest Road Mountrath with the purpose of installing the unfinished footpath for the safety of all road users”

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that the proposal for these works is outlined in the Roadworks Programme which would be discussed at No. 9 on the agenda.

64. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 22ND OF MARCH 2021

On the proposition of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald the report on the CPG meeting held on the 22nd of March 2021 was agreed as circulated.

65. REPORT ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN MARCH 2021

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan the report on Municipal District meetings held in March 2021 were agreed as circulated.

66. FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

The Members were advised that notification had been received from the Fine Gael Party on the 15th of April 2021 nominating Mr. P.J. Kelly, Bellgrove, Ballybrittas, Co. Laois. to fill the casual vacancy.

On the proposition of Councillor Aisling Moran seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, Mr. P.J. Kelly was unanimously co-opted to Laois County Council to fill the casual vacancy on Laois County Council arising from Councillor Tom Mulhall’s resignation.

The Members individually and collectively formally welcomed Councillor Kelly to the Council and in so doing paid tribute to Mr. Tom Mulhall and wished him well in his recovery. The Chief Executive, Mr. John Mulholland on behalf of the Management & Staff of Laois County Council also extended a warm welcome to Councillor Kelly to the ranks of Laois County Council and also conveyed his best wishes for a return to good health to Mr. Tom Mulhall. Councillor Kelly thanked the Fine Gael Members for their support over the last number of weeks and acknowledged the good wishes from all Members and subsequently took his seat on Laois County Council. The Members assured Councillor Kelly of their support to him going forward.

67. Nomination of Member of Laois County Council to the following:

 Climate Action & Community Strategic Policy Committee

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously nominated Councillor P.J. Kelly to the Climate Action & Community Strategic Policy Committee.

 Joint Policing Committee

On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously nominated Councillor P.J. Kelly to the Joint Policing Committee

 **Placenames Committee**

Councillor John King proposed that Councillor P.J. Kelly be nominated to the Placenames Committee and this proposal was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney.

Councillor James Kelly proposed that Councillor Ben Brennan be nominated to the Placenames Committee and this proposal was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. A roll call was taken which resulted as follows:-

COUNCILLOR		FOR Councillor P.J. Kelly	FOR Councillor Ben Brennan
FIRST NAME	SURNAME		
William	Aird	✓	
Conor	Bergin	✓	
Paddy	Bracken	✓	
Ben	Brennan		✓
Ollie	Clooney	✓	
Thomasina	Connell	✓	
Caroline	Dwane Stanley		✓
John Joe	Fennelly	✓	
Catherine	Fitzgerald	✓	
Padraig	Fleming	✓	
James	Kelly		✓
P.J.	Kelly	✓	
John	King	✓	
Seamus	McDonald		✓
Paschal	McEvoy	✓	
Aisling	Moran	✓	
Aidan	Mullins		✓
Mary	Sweeney	✓	
Noel	Tuohy		✓

The result of the Roll Call was 13 votes for Councillor P.J. Kelly and 6 votes for Councillor Ben Brennan nominating Councillor P.J. Kelly to the Placenames Committee.

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously nominated Councillor P.J. Kelly to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

Rural Water Monitoring Committee

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed that Councillor P.J. Kelly be nominated to the Rural Water Monitoring Committee and this proposal was seconded by Councillor Conor Bergin

Councillor Caroline Dwane proposed that Councillor Ben Brennan be nominated to the Rural Water Monitoring Committee and this proposal was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. A roll call was taken which resulted as follows:-

COUNCILLOR		FOR Councillor P.J. Kelly	FOR Councillor Ben Brennan
FIRST NAME	SURNAME		
William	Aird	✓	
Conor	Bergin	✓	
Paddy	Bracken	✓	
Ben	Brennan		✓
Ollie	Clooney	✓	
Thomasina	Connell	✓	
Caroline	Dwane Stanley		✓
John Joe	Fennelly	✓	
Catherine	Fitzgerald	✓	
Padraig	Fleming	✓	
James	Kelly		✓
P.J.	Kelly	✓	
John	King	✓	
Seamus	McDonald	✓	
Paschal	McEvoy	✓	

Aisling	Moran	✓	
Aidan	Mullins		✓
Mary	Sweeney	✓	
Noel	Tuohy		✓

The result of the Roll Call was 14 votes for Councillor P.J. Kelly and 5 votes for Councillor Ben Brennan nominating Councillor P.J. Kelly to the Rural Water Monitoring Committee.

Portarlinton Enterprise Centre

On the proposition of Councillor Aisling Moran seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously nominated Councillor P.J. Kelly to the Portarlinton Enterprise Centre

Laois Partnership Company Limited

Councillor Willie Aird proposed that Councillor P.J. Kelly be nominated to the Laois Partnership Company Limited and this proposal was seconded by Councillor John King.

Councillor Caroline Dwane proposed that Councillor James Kelly be nominated to the Laois Partnership Company Limited and this proposal was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. A roll call was taken which resulted as follows:-

COUNCILLOR		FOR Councillor P.J. Kelly	FOR Councillor James Kelly
FIRST NAME	SURNAME		
William	Aird	✓	
Conor	Bergin	✓	
Paddy	Bracken	✓	
Ben	Brennan		✓
Ollie	Clooney	✓	
Thomasina	Connell	✓	
Caroline	Dwane Stanley		✓
John Joe	Fennelly	✓	
Catherine	Fitzgerald	✓	
Padraig	Fleming	✓	
James	Kelly		✓

P.J.	Kelly	✓	
John	King	✓	
Seamus	McDonald		✓
Paschal	McEvoy	✓	
Aisling	Moran	✓	
Aidan	Mullins		✓
Mary	Sweeney	✓	
Noel	Tuohy		✓

The result of the Roll Call was 13 votes for Councillor P.J. Kelly and 6 votes for Councillor James Kelly nominating Councillor P.J. Kelly to the Laois Partnership Company Limited.

Irish Public Bodies A.G.M.

Councillor Conor Bergin proposed that Councillor P.J. Kelly be nominated to attend the A.G.M. of Irish Public Bodies and this proposal was seconded by Councillor John King.

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed that Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley be nominated to attend the A.G.M. of Irish Public Bodies and this proposal was seconded by Councillor Aidan Mullins. A roll call was taken which resulted as follows:-

COUNCILLOR		FOR Councillor P.J. Kelly	FOR Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley
FIRST NAME	SURNAME		
William	Aird	✓	
Conor	Bergin	✓	
Paddy	Bracken	✓	
Ben	Brennan		✓
Ollie	Clooney	✓	
Thomasina	Connell	✓	
Caroline	Dwane Stanley		✓
John Joe	Fennelly	✓	
Catherine	Fitzgerald	✓	
Padraig	Fleming	✓	
James	Kelly		✓

P.J.	Kelly	✓	
John	King	✓	
Seamus	McDonald	✓	
Paschal	McEvoy	✓	
Aisling	Moran	✓	
Aidan	Mullins		✓
Mary	Sweeney	✓	
Noel	Tuohy		✓

The result of the Roll Call was 14 votes for Councillor P.J. Kelly and 5 votes for Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley nominating Councillor P.J. Kelly to attend the A.G.M. of Irish Public Bodies.

68. Part VIII of the Local Government Planning & Development Regulations 2001 in respect of proposed Playground & MUGA development by Laois County Council and Borris-in-Ossory Community Development Association

Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services indicated that this development is being done in association with Borris-in-Ossory Community Development Association. The works will consist of the construction of a playground, entrance, car parking, sports court and open space at Borris-in-Ossory to the south of the Main Street. This Part VIII approval will allow the Community Development Association to make their application for funding for this project.

On the proposition of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor Conor Bergin, the Members unanimously agreed to the proposals as outlined in the planning report.

69. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 in respect of SITE NO. 14 COMPRISING 0.108 HECTARES OF LAND AT CASTLETOWN, CO. LAOIS.

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of Site No. 14 comprising 0.108 hectares of land at Castletown, Co. Laois in the townland of Churchfield for a consideration of €30,000

70. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 IN RESPECT OF freehold comprising .020 hectares at 16 Silverbrook, Mountmellick, Co. Laois

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising .020 hectares at 16 Silverbrook, Mountmellick, Co. Laois in the townland of Ballycullenbeg for a consideration of €1.00

71. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The Members were circulated with a copy of the draft Annual Report 2020. Mr. Donal Brennan, Director advised that Section 221 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended provides that a draft of the Annual Report be submitted to the Elected Members no later than April 30th each year. On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the draft Annual Report for 2020. It was noted that the final report will be listed for consideration at the June meeting of the Council.

72. AGREE DATE FOR SPECIAL MEETING WITH NATIONAL BROADBAND IRELAND

Mr. Joe Delaney, Director of Services indicated that the proposed date for the above special meeting is Monday, May 10th 2021 at 11.00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams.

It was recommended that Members should submit their questions by email to Laois County Council prior to the meeting so that they can be addressed by National Broadband Ireland.

73. ROADWORKS SCHEME 2021

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Roadworks Scheme 2021 in an overall amount of €36,901,854. The scheme summarises the various funding streams identifies multiple and various road schemes and public realm enhancements to be delivered in full or progressed during 2021.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services responded to the various queries that were raised by the Members and the scheme was unanimously agreed on the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly and seconded by Councillor James Kelly.

74. Monthly Management Report for April 2021

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Monthly Management Report for April 2021 and the Directors of Services responded to the various queries raised by the Members.

75. Correspondence

The following correspondence was noted which had been received since the last meeting:-

- (i) Acknowledgment e-mail from the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., dated the 16th of April 2021 in relation to vaccination centres
- (ii) Acknowledgment e-mail from the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., dated the 1st of April 2021 in relation to the list of groups for vaccinations
- (iii) Correspondence from the Minister for Agriculture, Food & The Marine, Mr. Charlie McConalogue to Deputy Charles Flanagan, dated the 13th of April 2021 in relation to sulky racing in County Laois

- (iv) Acknowledgement from the Department of Transport dated the 24th of March 2021 in relation to inadequate funding for national roads in County Laois
- (v) Correspondence from the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine dated the 19th of April 2021 in relation to the appointment of an independent Meat Regulator
- (vi) Correspondence from Mayo County Council dated the 29th of March 2021 in relation to the proposed provisions of the Land Development Agency Bill 2021
- (vii) Correspondence from Cork County Council dated the 8th of April 2021 in relation to the support condemning the racial and misogynistic abuse being inflicted on the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Hazel Chu
- (viii) Correspondence from the Development of Rural and Community Development to Roscommon County Council dated the 15th of April 2021 in relation to the establishment of an annual fund for necessary capital works projects at our nations cemeteries
- (ix) Correspondence from Limerick City & County Council dated the 16th of April 2021 in relation to the retention of existing policies in relation to one-off rural housing
- (x) Correspondence from Limerick City & County Council dated the 16th of April 2021 in relation to the delivery of new housing units

76. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 23/2021

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council call on the Minister for Finance to commission a report through The Central Bank as to why it is proving so difficult to attract alternative competitors into the Irish market in the business of banking, why we are losing Financial Institutions and also to have the Central Bank engage with International entities across Europe as to what would be required to attract such business, particularly when Ireland has such a long history in the delivery of Financial Services."

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Minister for Finance in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 20/2021

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That this Council support the change to the Bye-laws to give additional powers to the Gardaí to allow for them to confiscate horses if there are not chipped or registered or if they are involved in illegal activity and to put in place measures to fine and arrest those involved"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that a meeting is being arranged between the Environment and Housing Departments of Laois County Council and the Gardaí on this matter. This meeting will examine the effectiveness of the current Control of Horses byelaws. An update will be given at the next Council meeting on the progress made. Any changes that are considered necessary will subsequently be brought forward to Council for their consideration.

Councillor Moran requested that the sub-committee be set up. Mr. Joe Delaney, Director of Services advised that the Council already has SPC committees for dealing with policy matters but confirmed that a sub-committee could be set up for a short period if Council so wish to consider the detail and any proposals would be brought to both the Transport, Environment & Emergency Services and the Housing, Regeneration & Planning SPCs for their consideration.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Fitzgerald proposed that the Chair of each Municipal District submit two nominations from each district for the sub-committee.

Notice of Motion No: 21/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council supports the development of market and production outlets for dairy output from this County”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John King. The Notice of Motion was noted and discussed.

Notice of Motion No: 22/2021

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council request a reply from the Minister for Education as to the commencement date for work on Kolbe Special School for Laois children”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Minister for Education in this regard. Councillor Aird indicated that there has been no commencement date for the refurbishment of the Kolbe Special School.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald referred to a press release which she had received last week from Minister Sean Fleming which issued from the Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley, T.D. confirming that the Kolbe Special School has recently been authorised to progress to Stage 2B – detailed design which includes applications for all statutory consents, including planning permission, disability certificate and fire safety certificate and also the preparation of tender documentation. The brief is to provide a new replacement school building designed for special needs pupils on a greenfield site and the project will deliver a single storey building, providing an 8 classroom special school and appropriate ancillary accommodation including a general purpose room, a Home Economics Room, a Daily Living Skills room, library and resource area.

Notice of Motion No: 24/2021

Councillor Conor Bergin proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council contact the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Ms. Heather Humphreys, T.D seeking an update on the Local Improvement Scheme (L.I.S) allocation for County Laois for 2021”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John King. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has recently engaged with the Department of Rural and Community Development and has been informed that the Department is currently finalising the scheme criteria and will announce allocations for 2021 in the coming weeks.

It was agreed that the matter be referred to the Minister for Rural and Community Development.

SIGNED:

CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED:

**DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
CORPORATE AFFAIRS**