

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 15TH OF JUNE 2022 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT Mr. John Joe Fennelly, Leas Cathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C.
Ms. Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C.
Mr. Willie Aird, M.C.C.
Mr. Noel Tuohy, M.C.C.
Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.
Mr. Barry Walsh, M.C.C.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services
Mr. Seamus Quinn, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 18TH OF MAY 2022

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th of May 2022 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 18TH OF MAY 2022

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley raised the following Notice of Motion which had been considered at the May meeting of the Municipal District and sought a report on the assessments that were carried out:-

Notice of Motion No: 73/2022

"That this Council give a safety report on the 2 burnt out houses in Lakeglen and outline the required works necessary"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that a preliminary structural assessment, undertaken by a Structural Engineer, has yielded no immediate structural concerns regarding both properties. Additional, more detailed structural assessments have also been carried out and a detailed report on these assessments is due by Friday 20th May 2022. These reports will advise areas of the existing property elements that can be retained and other, replacement remedial works required

to make the properties habitable. Further updates will be provided as matters progress.

Councillor Dwane Stanley acknowledged that the matter is being pursued and requested that the Senior Engineer for Housing take into consideration housing those with disabilities in considering the refurbishments.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that an update would be sought from Mr. Trevor Hennessy, A/Senior Engineer, Housing Department in relation to same and that the Members would be advised in early course.

3. Notice of Motions

Notice of Motion No: 93/2022

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

"That this Council be given an update on the Road Safety Audit that was carried out in the area of Scoile Bhríde, Hillview Drive, Parnell Crescent, Oakleaf Place and Clonrooske View, Knockmay and its recommendations"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office have received a Draft Road Safety Impact Assessment Report for Harpur's Lane. The assessment examined 500m of Harpur's Lane from the roundabout including its junctions with Scoile Bhríde, Hillview Drive, Parnell Crescent, Oakleaf Place and Clonrooske View. The draft recommendations in the report are currently under discussions and consideration by Laois County Council. Broadly, the draft recommendations include a range of various road safety interventions. Once the report is agreed and finalised, Laois County Council will confirm these recommendations and endeavour to identify funding opportunities to progress the project through detailed design and construction stages.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested that this matter be tabled on the agenda for the September meeting of the Municipal District and that the findings be made available to the Members over the summer period.

Notice of Motion No: 94/2022

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

"That this Council give an update on the Road Safety Audit that was carried out on Green Mill Lane and its recommendations"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office are currently awaiting the Draft Road Safety Impact Assessment Report for Green Mill Lane. We will advise Councillors on the recommendations once received.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested that this matter be tabled for the agenda for the September meeting of the Municipal District and that the findings be made available to the Members over the summer period.

Notice of Motion No: 95/2022

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

"That this Council move ahead with a new build for the Civil Defence in Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that previous discussions regarding NOM 181/2021 refer together with update, as set out in the February 2022 Minutes. In February 2022 it was confirmed that, should a suitable, Portlaoise-based property for Civil Defence not emerge on the market by mid-2022, Laois County Council will progress the option of a Part 8 proposal and delivery of new Civil Defence premises on Council owned lands. This process has commenced and Part 8 proposals will be developed with a view to publication later in 2022 assuming a suitable property cannot be purchased on the market in the interim.

It was noted that the emerging, preferred site is on the Mountrath Road.

Notice of Motion No: 96/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council consider supporting an application for the community of Ballyroan in the Town & Village Renewal Scheme"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council are currently accepting Expressions of Interest for projects under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2022 with a closing date of Friday 24th June, 2022 for receipt by the Council of Expressions of Interest for the main aspects of the scheme. Communities who have potential projects are advised to contact the Community Section at an early date.

Notice of Motion No: 97/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council consider incorporating a learning to cycle park within the proposed Tyrells Land Development, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise. In addition, could Laois County Council consider a bike rental scheme currently being piloted in other jurisdictions"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council is examining options for the provision of a cycle park (cycling learning facility), including options for such a facility on Tyrrell's Lands. Separately, bike rental schemes are largely dependent on critical mass and generally not independently viable for populations less than 100,000 or targeted at specific populations such as university students etc.

Notice of Motion No: 98/2022

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council change the broken centre white line to a solid continuous white line on the road outside the entrance to Ballyroan Abbey GAA Grounds"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will review the central line road markings at the Ballyroan Abbey GAA grounds and carry out any changes as required in accordance with the regulatory road markings standards.

Notice of Motion No: 99/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council insert a double yellow line at the end of the play area in Beladd Lower to ensure access for emergency services"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office have examined this location and will provide the road markings around the apex of the green area.

Notice of Motion No: 100/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council change the Yield Right of Way sign from Dr. Murphys to a Stop Sign going onto a road of more importance"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a new Stop sign will be installed at this junction.

Notice of Motion No: 101/2022

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council put a 60 kpm speed sign on the orbital route heading off the roundabout at the Ballyfin Road onto the road heading towards Fairgreen"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that a 60km/h speed limit sign will be installed on the orbital route after the Ballyfin Rd Roundabout in line with the existing 60km/h speed limit sign on the opposite side.

Notice of Motion No: 102/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council consider when carrying out the works on the cycle lanes at Fr. Browne Avenue to include a digital radar sign indicating the speed of vehicles"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that as part of the scheme that is under development, signage and speed control proposals will be developed including the use of speed radar signs.

Notice of Motion No: 103/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council include in its programme of works at Sheffield a stretch of roadway on the left hand side at the entrance which is a Cul de Sac also be included"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will carry out maintenance works on this Cul de Sac as required.

Notice of Motion No: 104/2022

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give a date as to when works will be carried out at the road at Clonkeen, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office are carrying out road repairs on the road at Clonkeen, Portlaoise this week.

Notice of Motion No: 105/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council give an up date on the provision of the Womens Refuge"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that The Housing Department together with Laois Domestic Abuse Service has been trying to secure a site for the service for some time now. While it is challenging in the current climate to identify and acquire an appropriate site to meet the needs of the service provider and end users and we have not been successful to date, we will continue to work on identifying a site and progress on acquiring a site in a collaborative manner.

The Members expressed concern regarding this matter and it was noted that Laois is one of 9 Counties that does not have a refuge for women. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee seeking support for the provision of the refuge (with a copy sent to the Members and that a meeting be convened between the Members of the Portlaoise MD and the Chief Executive to discuss the progression of the project.

Notice of Motion No: 106/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council upgrade the existing lights and add extra lights at Portlaoise Leisure Centre"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that previous Notice of Motions refer and improved lighting levels at this location will be provided in July 2022.

It was further noted that on the footpath on the left hand side it is covered in nettles and weeds and that the top capping of the stone wall on the Ridge Road has come away and as a result there are stones on the ground in between the bridge and St. Brigids Place.

Notice of Motion No: 107/2022

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council clean up The Triogue Park (Behind Croydon Court) and under the bridge which is completely overgrown"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will carry out landscape maintenance to trim back encroaching vegetation along the pathway edges and at the bridge at Triogue Park. The biodiversity grass meadows in the park will be cut later in the summer.

Notice of Motion No: 108/2022

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

"That this Council re-line the road markings on junction of Rathmoyle Road, Abbeyleix outside Murphy's house and install more safety measures"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will renew road markings at Rathmoyle and will examine the location for any road safety measures that are required

Notice of Motion No: 109/2022

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

"That this Council remove the two trees at the bottom end of the cemetery at the Church of the Most Holy Rosary, Abbeyleix as branches are falling off them onto graves and adjoining land over property and set plan in place to install new footpaths for this section of graveyard"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that Laois County Council is currently preparing a tender for footpath works and tree removal at Abbeyleix cemetery. It is expected that this tender will be published before the end of June 2022 and that subject to budgetary considerations, the works will be undertaken as soon as possible thereafter.

Notice of Motion No: 110/2022

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

"That this Council ask Irish Water to investigate the flooding on land at Balladine, Abbeyleix that may be caused by sewerage pipes going through this land"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council in conjunction with Irish Water will investigate the public wastewater infrastructure in this area to try and establish if any flooding is being caused by the wastewater infrastructure."

Notice of Motion No: 111/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal District provide an update on the provision of cycle lanes in Portlaoise, when and where the next cycle lanes can be expected to be delivered"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Fr. Browne Avenue & Dublin Road Cycle Improvement Schemes will go to Part VIII in the coming weeks - Phase 2 of the Triogue Way is currently being assessed in advance of the submission of an application for consent to An Bord Pleanála. Further cycle infrastructure improvements are currently under review.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that a meeting in committee will be scheduled within the next four weeks with a view to outlining proposals for Fr. Browne Avenue & Dublin Road Cycle Improvement Schemes with a view to public consultation. It was also noted that A Natura Impact Statement must be submitted to An Bord Pleanala for the development of the Triogue Way (People's Park to Greenmill Lane).

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested the inclusion of the Mountmellick Road and Ballyfin Road in forthcoming cycling schemes.

Notice of Motion No: 112/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council set out the current status of the development of the Tyrells Land site, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise to include whether the final design has been completed from the consultants side, whether the question of the tenure of the housing to be constructed has been proposed with the department of housing or whether AHBs have been approached and when it can be expected that the sod is turned on the construction of housing on the site"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Housing Section has been progressing this site with the commissioning of the Housing Agency to provide technical assistance with the tendering of a design team and Stage 1 submission to the Department for the housing element of the site. The design options on the site however are fundamental to indicating how the different tenures of housing can integrate and work together on the site. Cost rental tenure is being explored with the Housing Finance Agency to ascertain how this can be worked through for this site given the current levels of rent being experienced in Portlaoise. Once a Design Team has been appointed and options have been developed, Consultation with the MD members will be progressed. It is anticipated that development on this site will not happen until 2025 onwards given the design/ planning and financial approval stages that have to be overcome.

Councillor Connell requested regular updates in relation to this matter. Councillor Dwane Stanley emphasised the importance of a mix of housing on the site to include social, affordable and cost rental. It was also agreed that local residents be kept apprised of developments.

Notice of Motion No: 113/2022

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Municipal District confirm the date for completion of the works at Tower Hill”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Snagging of the works is currently ongoing and works are due for completion at the end of June 2022.

It was noted that the landscaping works would be planter based and that road resurfacing works would take place later in the Summer to restore the road and compliment the works already undertaken. It was agreed that the Members would be kept appraised and updated on completion of the works.

4. Correspondence

It was noted that no correspondence had been received since the last meeting.

Councillor Aird raised the matter of the use of electric scooters and sought clarification on their use and the laws on same. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that they are currently unregulated and that there is proposed legislation which was announced by Minister Eamon Ryan but has yet to be published.

5. Fix Date for Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 14th of September, a week earlier than the scheduled date of the 21st of September 2022 as the National & World Ploughing Championships takes place on the scheduled date. This was agreed by all Members.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Director of Corporate
Affairs