

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
20TH NOVEMBER 2019 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services
Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER MEETING OF PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 16TH OF OCTOBER 2019

On the proposal of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the minutes of the October meeting held on the 16th of October 2019 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH OF OCTOBER 2019

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th of October 2019

3. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 152/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council improve road safety on the L6717 at Raheenabrogue Road, Ballyroan”

This Notice of motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet residents with Councillor Sweeney on site to discuss the issue.

It was noted that a meeting is scheduled with Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. on the 2nd of December 2019.

Notice of Motion No: 153/2019 & 164/2019 were taken together as follows:

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council address road safety issues at the Bog Road, Ballyroan”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council put please drive slowly markings on the Bog Road in Ballyroan”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

The Members were advised the Portlaoise MD Office will install SLOW road markings at this location in early 2020.

Notice of Motion No: 154/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council light up Áras an Chontae in purple on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on the 3rd of December 2019”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that as currently set up the lighting system in the Council Headquarters is poorly adapted to accommodate changes of lighting colour for different events –however during 2020 we will examine the potential for lights capable of adapting to different colours.

Notice of Motion No: 155/2019

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to arrange for Ms. Angela McEvoy, Senior Planner to inform this body of discussions they have had regarding the development of the lands at Tower Hill, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Elected members will be fully briefed on the proposed developments once the design drawings are available for discussion.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services, noted the various comments and advised that an indicative proposal will be brought before the members in early course.

Notice of Motion No: 156/2019

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Portlaoise Municipal District calls on the Roads Section of Laois County Council to install a pedestrian crossing from the footpath on the Rathleague Road to the pedestrian entrance at the Portlaoise G.A.A. Club”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Road Design office will arrange meeting with Councillor to identify exact location for initial design of this Pedestrian crossing.

Notice of Motion No: 157/2019 & Notice of Motion No: 159/2019 were taken together:

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Portlaoise Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to upgrade footpaths at Lynden Court and Westlands with financial assistance from the Irish Public Bodies Footpath Fund”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

“That this Council replace the footpaths in Lynden Court, Ballyfin Road, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

The Members were advised that footpath works have commenced in Westlands, Portlaoise. Footpath works funded through Councillors Discretionary Works are due to be carried out adjacent to No. 10 Lyndon Court within the next few weeks. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will examine and cost the works to address the other sections of footpath in Lyndon Court. These works may be carried out in early 2020 subject to footpath funding being available.

Notice of Motion No: 158/2019

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

“That this Council give an update on progress made to obtain funding for the three roundabouts that are needed on the Mountmellick Road at Harpur’s Lane, Old Dunnes Stores and Ballyfin Road and also to contact the Contractor who put in a new section of footpath recently, from Mill lane up to New Row, Mountmellick and get them to reinstate the footpath properly”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the Road Section is in the process of carrying out Junction Capacity Analysis Report. This will identify the engineering solutions for these locations. More detailed design will then be carried out and a funding application will be submitted to TII. The footpath on Mountmellick road will be repaired by end of next week.

A lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that a Consultant has been appointed who will assess traffic volumes and other, relevant traffic management issues on the Mountmellick Road. This, in turn, will advise an application to T.I.I. with the aim of identifying funds for implementation. It was also suggested that Dunnes Stores be contacted at a later stage as regards the proposals (i.e. after the assessment has been completed) and that, together with any other third party land impacts can be discussed and addressed at that time.

Notice of Motion No: 160/2019

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

“That this Council put in place two dropped kerbs and mark a safe crossing area for the elderly residents crossing from Sue Ryder Nursing Home, Kilminchy to the shops in the area”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that the installation of a new section of footpath and drop kerbs at this location can be considered for funding in early 2020.

Notice of Motion No: 161/2019

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

“That this Council reinstate the rumble strips on the Abbeyleix Road, Ballyroan opposite the houses close to St. Patrick’s Cemetery”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. The Members were advised that The Portlaoise MD Office will reinstate the road markings at this location in early 2020.

Notice of Motion No: 162/2019

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

“That this Council update the Members on the works programme for cemeteries that was due to commence this year especially the footpaths at Raheen Cemetery and the removal of trees at S. Patricks Cemetery Abbeyleix”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. The Members were advised that the tenders for the scheduled cemetery works including Raheen & Abbeyleix cemeteries for 2019 have been issued & the works will be completed by the end of the year.

Please note that works at Abbeyleix will be footpath improvement works and not tree removal works. The footpath improvement works are considered a priority over the tree removal works.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the removal of trees and the Members requested if works could commence as soon as possible to include both footpath enhancement and tree removal. Subject to budget it was agreed that works would include a combination of both tree removal and footpath enhancements.

Notice of Motion No: 163/2019

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

“That this Council install stop sign at the Moate Road, Ballinakill at Gees Cross and at the Warthbush Cross”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. The Members were advised that Mr. We Wilkinson, S.E.E. will examine both of these locations and install stop signs where required.

Notice of Motion No: 165/2019

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council update the position re lowering Kerbs outside 2 houses alongside St. Francis School on the Timahoe Road to facilitate car parking for owners”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the properties in questions do not currently have off street vehicle parking at their premises. As such there is no requirement to facilitate the installation of drop kerbs for vehicle entrances across the footpath at these locations.

Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. indicated that this may be re-examined.

Notice of Motion No: 166/2019

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council update the position re disability access and equipment in the playground adjacent to the Leisure Centre in Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that UCC Department of Occupational Therapy have completed the audit of 3 play areas in Stradbally, Mountrath & at Portlaoise Leisure Centre. They will revert with a report detailing recommendations to improve physical/play accessibility throughout these playgrounds in the next 2 weeks and will be available to present their findings and recommendations to Elected Members, as necessary. The recommendations will be analysed and costed and works undertaken in Quarter 1 2020. Funding of €8,000/play area with a match funding requirement has been secured for each of the three playgrounds from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2019.

Councillor Connell requested that the plans be made available to the members prior to work commencing. Councillor Tuohy requested that the railing at the corner of the Leisure Centre be examined.

Notice of Motion No: 167/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give an update on the future planning of Portlaoise Cemetery”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that this year Laois County Council carried out site investigation work at Portlaoise Cemetery to ascertain the ground conditions in the remaining part of the Cemetery and in order to maximise remaining space. As a result of that, investigation work is to commence within the Cemetery to remove boulders in certain parts of the cemetery to facilitate future burials.

As Councillors will have seen in the Capital Budget, a provision has been made for the advance planning for future burial needs within Portlaoise - this is in recognition that the population of Portlaoise has grown and, in time, there will be pressure for burial spaces. Planning work in this regard will continue next year.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Members expressed concern regarding the future of Portlaoise Cemetery. The purchase of additional land, the provision of a crematorium were among the matters discussed. The provision of a gate at the cemetery was also discussed as, it was claimed, there has been some minor accidents recently.

Notice of Motion No: 168/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council seek funding to provide a walking/cycling route from Broomfield Cross over to the Dublin Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Road Design office will arrange meeting with Councillor to identify this route for initial design.

The Members enquired regarding funding that could be used for projects in the town of Portlaoise. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that there was approval under the URDF last year of €2 million for Portlaoise Low Carbon Town and Laois County Council will be delivering on various aspects including lighting, cycle ways and walkways, e-charging points etc.

Notice of Motion No: 169/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council upgrade street lights at Dun Masc Estate”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that lights in Dun Masc will be upgraded under URDF funding in 2020.

Notice of Motion No: 170/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council attend to the deterioration of the cobble lock road surface at Bull Lane, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. The Members were advised that the upgrade of the 3 laneways and Lyster Square were not approved funding under the initial call for URDF Funding in late 2018. The upgrade of the surface in Bull Lane may be considered for funding as part of the 2020 Annual Roads Programme

Notice of Motion No: 171/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council address the issue of fencing at The Green, Kilminchy and carry out necessary repairs”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson would make himself available to meet Councillor Connell on site to examine the issue.

Notice of Motion No: 172/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council take action on creating a plan to improve Chapel Street, Ballinakill and also provide an update in relation to the derelict buildings thereon”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that there is currently only 1 site on Chapel Street Ballinakill on the Derelict sites register. Many of the properties were removed from the register following intervention by the Council i.e works being carried out to render them not derelict. An examination of the properties on Chapel street will be carried out by the Planning technician to ascertain the current condition of the properties and we will inform the MD at a future meeting in January 2020.

4. Correspondence

There was no correspondence since the last meeting.

8. Fix Time, Date & Venue for the next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 11th of December **2019** at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

John Joe Fennelly, Cathaoirleach