

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
16TH OCTOBER 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 SEPTEMBER MEETING OF PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 25TH OF SEPTEMBER 2019

On the proposal of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the minutes of the September meeting held on the 25th of September 2019 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 25TH OF SEPTEMBER 2019

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley referred to Notice of Motion No: 120/2019 regarding the bridge at Lower Bridge Street, Portlaoise. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. confirmed the temporary solution of propping the bridge to allow the bridge to open until a scheme is designed. The Members requested that the Residents be kept apprised of the situation.

Councillor Willie Aird raised the matter of Fr. Browne Avenue – Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. confirmed that a number of meetings had been held. A recommendation has been sent to the Senior Engineer, Mr. Adrian Barrett to engage the licence agreement. Mr. Wes Wilkinson will follow up on this matter.

3. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 131/2019

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Portlaoise Municipal Authority calls on Laois County Council to allocate funds to alleviate flooding on the New Road, Portlaoise and to investigate the presence of raw sewerage on the road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will liaise with Water Services to examine the surface water & sewage issue at this location.

Councillor Willie Aird indicated that there is an issue with water on the opposite side of the road in the vicinity of the Laois Shopping Centre and also raw sewerage flowing from manholes. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. indicated that he would again liaise with Water Services with a view to resolving the matter.

Notice of Motion No: 132/2019

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Portlaoise Municipal Authority calls on Laois County Council to realign the road at Burnwood, Clonad in the vicinity of the old railway line”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will call to site to this location to examine the vertical alignment of the road and associated drainage issues at Burnwood, Clonad in the vicinity of the old railway line

Notice of Motion No: 133/2019

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Portlaoise Municipal Authority calls on Laois County Council to investigate the possibility of installing a pedestrian crossing at the entrance/exit to Dun Masc on the Dublin Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that the Road Design Section will arrange a site meeting with Councillor Aird to identify exact location for Pedestrian Crossing on the Dublin Road. Installation of Pedestrian crossing will be subject to funding being available.

Notice of Motion No: 134/2019

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

“That this Council install traffic calming measures in Buttercup Avenue, Esker Hill”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make myself available to meet with Councillor Dwane Stanley to examine the issue at this location and discuss possible solutions for traffic calming measures.

It was noted that there are also other estates in Esker Hill that require traffic calming.

Notice of Motion No: 135/2019

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

“That this Council take appropriate action on the derelict sites beside the Garda Station in the square and the one in Stanhope Street in Ballinakill”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that a site inspection will be carried out on this premises. Subject to this site inspection a Derelict Site file will be opened and progressed. This matter has been referred to Laois County Council’s Technician to carry out a site inspection immediately.

Notice of Motion No: 136/2019

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

“That this Council contact the National Transport Authority to request bus stops at the following location, Boughlone Roundabout, Maryborough Village and Portlaoise College, Mountrath Road”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Road Design will contact the NTA to request bus stops at these locations.

Councillor Dwane Stanley indicated that bus stops are urgently required at these locations and various other locations around Portlaoise and requested that Mr. Farhan Nasiem follow up the matter with the N.T.A. Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services confirmed that he would follow up the matter and that it was a matter for Laois County Council to designate bus stops and to make them available for bus service providers.

Notice of Motion No: 137/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council address the problems with the play area and fencing at Rosdarragh Glen”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make myself available to meet with Councillor Fitzgerald to examine the issue at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 138/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council upgrade public lighting on Borris road up to the Grange and also repair two flashing lights on Colliers Lane near roundabout at secondary schools”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that existing street lights on the Borris Road up to Grange will be upgraded to LED next year under Urban Regeneration Development Fund.(URDF)

Flashing Lights on Colliers lane has been reported to maintenance contractor and will be fixed as soon as possible.

Notice of Motion No: 139/2019

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council try to resolve the major traffic congestion that still remains at schools in the Aughnaharna area”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E., the Senior Planner and the Road Safety Officer recently met with the Principals of the schools to examine improvements that can be made to managing traffic flows into and out of the Holy Family campus near Aughnaharna. The Principals of the schools will be liaising with their architects/designers to review the possible options and determine if the changes can be put in place.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Members expressed concern regarding the traffic congestion at this location.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed that a meeting be arranged with all the relevant bodies including representatives from the Department of Education with a view to finding a solution. Simon Walton confirmed that the Council was happy to facilitate such a meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 140/2019

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

“That this Council contact ESB in connection with the charger for electric cars in Temperance Street, Abbeyleix as this charger unit has not been working for the last four months and also to outline where extra charging points are to be installed going forward”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that as part of the upgrade strategy ESB have indicated that they have undertaken a full review of the charging network and are currently upgrading/replacing AC charges. The charger at Temperance Streetm Abbeyleix is included in these plans and will be replaced/upgraded in the coming months. In relation to the extra charging points up to now ESB Networks has installed and maintained Electric Vehicle Charging Points. Currently Road Section is reviewing installation of New EV Charging points. Charging points will be installed in Portlaoise under Low Carbon Town Initiative. It is intended that Charging points will also be installed outside Portlaoise next year subject to funding being available.

Notice of Motion No: 141/2019

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

“That this Council install new sensor units at the traffic lights in Abbeyleix as the current sensors are not working at present”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. The Members were advised that re-surfacing works have recently been completed at this location, the traffic control loops will be installed and made operational within the next 1-2 weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 142/2019

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

“That this Council contact Killaree Lighting to give a timescale when the public lights at the top of Main Street, Abbeyleix will be repaired – these lights have been not been operational for a number of months”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that street lights in Abbeyleix were burned out due to Electricity Surge. These are Heritage Lanterns and had to order special lighting gear which took longer time than normal. Lighting gear will be arriving next week and lights should be operation afterwards.

Notice of Motion No: 143/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council attend to the deterioration of the road markings at the Junction of Parkview and the Ridge Road, Portlaoise”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that this location will be examined and considered for renewal of road markings.

Notice of Motion No: 144/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council undertake interim works at Lyster Square, Portlaoise, to allow for pedestrians to cross the area safely, namely from AIB towards the Laois Pharmacy, while we await allocation of funds from the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. The Members were advised that Member’s approval of Part 8 proposals for Lyster Square provide a basis for the works sought in this Motion which, as stated, in their entirety, await a funding allocation from the UR& D Fund. The delivery of interim improvements to the pedestrian paved areas and linkages from AIB to Laois Pharmacy and onto the Bus stop on JFL Avenue is a priority for LCC in 2020. The Council is currently working to secure funding in the 2020 budget to carry out works in the area set out in the Motion.

Notice of Motion No: 145/2019

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council provide an update in relation to the installation of ramps at Lime Tree Avenue, Kilminchy, Portlaoise.”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that a speed ramp was installed in recent weeks in Lime Tree Avenue, Kilminchy. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. indicated that he could make himself available to meet with Councillor Connell to examine any additional locations in Lime Tree Avenue, Kilminchy that may be required.

Notice of Motion No: 146/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council install signage to allow for two wheelchair users at Boston Lane, Shanahoe”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that the 2019 version of the Traffic Signs manual does not contain a warning sign to alert road users of the presence of a wheel chair user on the public road.

However Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will make himself available to meet with Councillor Sweeney on site to examine the issues at Boston Lane, Shanahoe and to see if there are any other solutions to improve the situation at this location. This was agreed.

Notice of Motion No: 147/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council review the provision of lights at Sue Ryder & Chapel Street, Ballyroan”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the Public Lighting section will review this section for additional lights. Installation of new street lights if required will be subject to funding being available.

Notice of Motion No: 148/2019

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council carry out repairs to the R427 at Cashel, Ballyroan”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that this location will be considered for re-surfacing in the 2020 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 149/2019

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council review the progress on the pedestrian crossing on the Abbeyleix Road across from the premises formerly known as Ronnie Rice’s”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that this pedestrian crossing will be operational after resurfacing works at this location will be completed. Resurfacing works will be completed by end of October.

Notice of Motion No: 150/2019

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give an update on the re-opening of the Public Toilets in Lyster Square”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that designs are to hand for the Portlaoise Toilets and a tender package for the delivery of the required works is currently being prepared. An opening date for the toilets will be available at the next MDC Meeting.

Notice of Motion No: 151/2019

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council congratulate our local tidy towns groups on their great work”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell. The Members were advised that a letter of congratulations will issue to our local tidy towns groups.

4. Correspondence

The following items of correspondence which had been received since the last meeting were circulated and noted by the Members:-

- (i) Correspondence dated 15th of October 2019 from the Office of the Local Returning Officer in relation to Notice of Motion No: 118/2019 in relation to the provision of adequate polling stations in Portlaoise. Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley requested that further correspondence issue to the County Registrar in relation to the unsuitability of Dunamase College and suggested that St. Francis School be made available for a polling station. The Members requested that additional polling stations be provided particularly in the town centre of Portlaoise.
- (ii) Correspondence dated the 11th of October 2019 from Minister Katherine Zappone in relation to Notice of Motion No: 130/2019 in relation to the lack of affordable childcare places

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

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 20th of November 2019 at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

John Joe Fennelly, Cathaoirleach