

**MINUTES OF THE PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
21st OF OCTOBER 2020 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services
Mr. Adrian Barrett, Senior Engineer
Mr. Wes Wilkinson, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Farhan Nasiem, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff Officer

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING OF PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON THE 16TH OF SEPTEMBER 2020

On the proposal of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, the minutes of the September meeting held on the 16th of September 2020 were confirmed as circulated.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH OF SEPTEMBER 2020

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of meeting held on the 16th of September 2020

3. AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the amendment to Standing Orders in light of the Standard Operating Guidance – Attendance at Council Meetings by Elected Members & Council Officials/Others (Media & Public) and attendance at other meetings or Council Buildings issued on the 25th of September 2020 as follows:-

The maximum duration of a meeting of Laois County Council shall be 115 minutes (as measured) from the notified start of the meeting. It shall not be in order for the Cathaoirleach to accept any motion (whether in relation to urgent business or otherwise) which seeks to extend the duration of the meeting.

4. PRESENTATION BY MR. BRIAN GAYNOR, GREEN PINE CONSULTANTS & MR. GERRY BROWNE, PORTLAOISE TIDY TOWNS – BIODIVERSITY PROJECT ON THE PORTLAOISE SOUTHERN RING ROAD

It was agreed that, in light of the amendment to standing orders, this presentation be deferred to the November 2020 Meeting of the Municipal District.

5. PRESENTATION BY MR. FARHAN NASIEM, A/SENIOR EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ON THE PORTLAOISE LOW CARBON TOWN – PUBLIC LIGHTING RETROFIT PROGRAMME

Mr. Farhan Nasiem, A/Senior Executive Engineer delivered a comprehensive presentation on the Public Lighting Retrofit Programme.

The Presentation made reference to the National Climate Action Plan, associated actions to reduce energy consumption/carbon footprint, the phasing out of light types that currently form a large proportion of the existing public lighting network in County Laois, Portlaoise's designation as a Low Carbon Town. It was further noted that, under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, €1.3 million was allocated to Portlaoise to specifically fund the retrofit to LED in Portlaoise. The presentation went on to outline the significant energy savings that accrue from the Retrofit Programme enabling Laois County Council to comply with energy consumption reduction targets that have been set down for the Council from Central Government.

It was further noted that the provisions of the contract underpinning the LED Retrofit provide that the standard of lighting from the new LED lights must match the pre-existing standard but must also meet a minimum standard in cases where the existing standard is below the minimum standard.

It was noted by various Elected Members and acknowledged by Management that, in some estates, arising from light column heights and/or light column spacing and/or vegetation and/or a combination thereof, the overall quality of lighting from the new LED bulbs does not meet the previous standard. On the issues arising in these estates, it was agreed that Mr. Adrian Barrett S.E. and Mr. Farhan Nasiem, A/S.E.E. would meet Elected Representatives in the various estates to agree appropriate measures to resolve the issues. Some funds have been reserved as part of the Fund to specifically address those issues.

6. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 118/2020

This Notice of Motion was withdrawn.

Notice of Motion No: 119/2020

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That Laois County Council provide funding for the development of a network of cycle cafe"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that under Round 3 of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme Laois County Council has sought and secured funding in the total sum of €65,000 for the introduction of Smart Cycling Stops along the Slieve Bloom Cycle Route(s) and also in Durrow. Once introduced the measures will go a long way towards achieving the objectives of this Motion and will provide support to local economic activity in addition to enhanced facilities for cyclists. This will hopefully give rise to opportunities to expand the network of such facilities and similar facilities that support local wellbeing, tourism and economic activity.

Notice of Motion No: 120/2020

Councillor Mary Sweeney proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That Laois County Council install safety bollards adjacent to Bowes Garage at Timahoe Road, Portlaoise to prevent cars from mounting the footpath"

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 with Councillor Sweeney on site on the Timahoe Road to examine the issue as specific location in relation to cars parking on the footpath.

Notice of Motion No: 121/2020

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

"That this Council act urgently to address the inadequate new LED public street lighting that is currently being rolled out across the County"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy and was dealt with under the presentation by Mr. Farhan Nasiem, A/S.E.E.

Notice of Motion No: 122/2020

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

"That this Council act quickly to turn the uncontrolled crossing outside of Scoil Bhríde Knockmay School into a controlled crossing"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that there was a new controlled pedestrian crossing installed when the new school was constructed. Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will arrange meeting with elected member to identify the exact issue at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 123/2020

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

"That this Council calls on Irish Water to immediately restart site visits in Housing Estates without further delay"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that, in normal circumstances, in moving an estate towards the Taking in Charge process, a Site Resolution Plan is prepared whereby Laois County Council and Irish Water agree any deficiencies in the Water Services networks together with the means by which any such deficiencies can be addressed. In the case of Millbrook, together with previous Notice of Motion in this matter (July 2020), a public notice proposing the taking in charge of Millbrook will be published by mid November 2020. Thereafter the statutory process can continue with a view to having the estate taken in charge. A Site Resolution Plan will be prepared with Irish Water in due course and Laois County Council is satisfied that deficiencies in the Water Services networks arising from that Site Resolution Plan can be addressed in consultation with Irish Water.

A discussion ensued during which Members expressed concern in relation to this matter. It was requested that a letter issue to Irish Water & Minister Darragh O' Brien, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage requesting that Irish Water recommences inspections of Housing Estates to support the development of Site Resolution Plans.

Notice of Motion No: 124/2020

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

"That this Council include the road L5677 from Tarbett Cross to Roskelton Cross on the Roads Programme for 2021"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that the L5677 will be examined for considerations for resurfacing as part of the 2021 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 125/2020

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

"That this Council investigate the ongoing flooding problem of land on the Mountrath Road, Abbeyleix from the stream at Balladine"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E., would make himself available to meet Councillor Fennelly on site to examine the flooding issue on the Mountrath Road, Abbeyleix adjacent to Balladine.

Notice of Motion No: 126/2020

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

"That this Council explore the possibilities of pedestrianising Coleman's Road, Abbeyleix in conjunction with residents who live on that road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson would make himself available to meet Councillor Fennelly on site to discuss the possible proposal for the pedestrianisation of Coleman's Road, Abbeyleix.

Notice of Motion No: 127/2020

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council address the issue of parking / rubbish at Jessop Court"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that previous Notice of Motion in this matter resulted in a commitment for the undertaking of surveys in Jessop Court to ascertain the degree to which parking spaces within Jessop Square are underutilised during normal business hours. A number of such surveys have been undertaken and the conclusion is that there is underutilisation of spaces in Jessop Square in the hours 9am to 5pm. The options available to Laois County Council are to retain the status quo which provides for parking subject to display of a valid residents parking

permit 24/7 or to vary the provision whereby some general parking provision is made during normal business hours on Mondays through to Fridays.

It was noted that parking surveys have been carried out from Monday to Friday – it was requested that Saturdays be included in order that the parking issue can be looked at over a 6 day period. The Members requested that a map be made available for the next meeting that would indicate proposals for a portion of the parking to be used for general visitors to the Town Centre during those hours where there is capacity for such activity. It was also requested that consideration be given to one 15 minute space being included.

Fly-tipping of domestic waste has taken place at this location over the last three weeks. On each occasion the Litter Warden has inspected the site, collected the discarded waste material and has investigated the waste material for any incriminating evidence. Two litter fines have been issued based on evidence gathered during the above investigation. No litter fine payment has been received by the Council to date.

Notice of Motion No: 128/2020

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council request testing on water quality in Newpark"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that Portlaoise Public Water Supply (EPA Code 1600PUB1004) is tested in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations S.1.122 of 2014 and European Union (Drinking Water) (Amendment) Regulations S.1. 464 of 2017. This entails analysis of 32 samples per annum obtained throughout the distribution network. All samples taken thus far in 2020 have been compliant for both microbiological and chemical parameters specified in aforementioned legislation. The most recent sample in closest proximity to Newpark was taken at Portlaoise AFC, Mountmellick Road on the 29th of September 2020. Results of analysis for the Portlaoise public water supply scheme are available on the Irish Water website at <https://www.water.ie/water-supply/water-quality>.

Mr. Walton outlined that, arising from Covid 19 restrictions, sampling from the tap in an individual's property was prohibited currently. However, he would arrange for the Water Services section to engage directly with the residents raising the concerns with a view to having matters resolved.

Notice of Motion No: 129/2020

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install double yellow lines on the new stretch of road in Marian Avenue"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. would meet with Councillor Fitzgerald and the Residents Association on Marian Avenue to examine and install yellow lines on the newly widened road near the green area of Marian Avenue.

Notice of Motion No: 130/2020

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to resurface the road at Ashton Manor, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that this road will be considered for re-surfacing as part of the 2021 Roads Programme.

Notice of Motion No: 131/2020

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Municipal District calls on Laois County Council to install a clearly marked bicycle lane at Fr Brown Avenue from the roundabout on the Mountrath Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Laois County Council have recently commissioned and received a Stage F Road Safety Audit for the provision of cycling infrastructure on Fr Brown Avenue from the junction with The N77 to Clonminam. Members will be aware that this is a busy section of road with a considerable number of mainly commercial entrances, right turning lanes, traffic calming islands, a railway crossing on the public road with a restricted road width and a high volume of HGV traffic. It is Laois County Council's intention to deliver consistent and safe cycling infrastructure along this route to tie into that already provided for from Clonminam to the Mountrath Road. To achieve this, it will require the remaining facilities to be provided in their entirety rather than in a piecemeal approach. Proposals will be developed in this regard and funding application made when and where an opportunity presents to do so.

Notice of Motion No: 132/2020

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Portlaoise Municipal district meeting calls on Laois County Council to make safe the junction from the Rathmoyle road to the Carlow road in Abbeyleix"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that Mr. Wes Wilkinson, S.E.E. will meet with Councillor Aird to examine the safety issues at this junction on the R430 Carlow Road, Abbeyleix.

Notice of Motion No: 133/2020

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That this Council provide an update on it's progress and plans for cycling initiatives for Portlaoise, to include cycleways, installation of bicycle lanes and bike racks, to include timelines for same and also set out current and prospective funding streams."

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. The Members were advised that with the support of Urban Regeneration and Development Funding (€450,000) Laois County Council is currently upgrading and enhancing existing cycle lanes in Portlaoise e.g. Mountrath & Dublin Roads. Further works to expand the cycle facilities available on both these routes will be undertaken in the coming months. The Triogue Blueway, also funded under the URDF (€650,000), delivers a very significant off-road walking and cycling route connecting key residential, commercial, recreational, amenity and educational facilities within Portlaoise Town. Subject to agreement on land acquisition it is hoped that a planning

application (Part 8) for Phase 1 of the Triogue Blueway will be published before the end of 2020 or very early in 2021. Phase 2 will require a planning application to An Bord Pleanála which will be made in early 2021. It is acknowledged that enhanced provisions for cycle parking facilities are required in the Town Centre and measures to address this shortfall will be put into place in the short term. Where possible, cycling infrastructure is incorporated into all new road schemes.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services, with the agreement of Elected Members, committed to a presentation updating Members on various Low Carbon Town proposals for Portlaoise at the December 2020 Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District.

Notice of Motion No: 134/2020

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council set out its proposals to remedy the situation which has resulted in many of our urban areas being left dimly lit as a result of the installation of LED Bulbs over the past number of months"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy and was dealt with under the presentation by Mr. Farhan Nasiem, A/S.E.E.

Notice of Motion No: 135/2020

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council consider alternatives to the current pay and display parking regimes in place in the County Towns, in particular Portlaoise, and consider the installation of an automated barrier system and automated payment station for Lyster Square, Portlaoise"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that there are considerable resource implications for Laois County Council regarding the imposition of barriers to control access and egress from the Car Park at Lyster Square. A barrier system will require dedicated personnel in situ to manage the day to day operation of the barrier. There are a number of access and egress points to/from the Lyster Square car park that would require to be barriered and/or discontinued as access/egress points.

The Members complimented Laois County Council on the parking app and requested that it be advertised more widely.

Notice of Motion No: 136/2020

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council install a yellow box on the junction of New Row on the Mountmellick Road to assist residents in exiting in to the Mountmellick Road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that line marking works at this location will be included on our list works in the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 137/2020

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That this Council repair a dangerous pothole outside property at Rathnamanagh"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that road repairs will be carried out at this location in Rathnamanagh.

7. Correspondence

There was no correspondence received since the last meeting.

Councillor Aird raised the matter of recent planning consent issued by An Bord Pleanála issued to Bodergh Developments Ltd., in relation to residential development at Foxburrow, Beladd, Portlaoise and requested that the MD Members have a briefing on same at the next Meeting.

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

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on **18th of November 2020** at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Thomasina Connell, Cathaoirleach