

**MINUTES OF THE GRAIGUECULLEN/PORTARLINGTON MUNICIPAL
DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20th SEPTEMBER 2017 in ÁRAS
AN CHONTAE AT 2.00 p.m.**

PRESENT Mr. Tom Mulhall, Leas Chathaoirleach (In the Chair)
Mr. Aidan Mullins M.C.C.
Mr. Paschal McEvoy, M.C.C.
Mr. Tom Mulhall, M.C.C.
Mr. Ben Brennan, M.C.C.

APOLGOIES: Mr. John Moran, M.C.C.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance
Mr. John Ormond, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Michelle McCormack, Staff officer

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE MEETING OF
GRAIGUECULLEN/PORTARLINGTON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD
ON THE 21ST OF JUNE 2017**

On the proposal of Councillor Ben Brennan seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the minutes of the June meeting held on the 21st of June were confirmed as circulated.

**2. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM OF THE
GRAIGUECULLEN/PORTARLINGTON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD
ON THE 21ST OF JUNE 2017**

On the proposition of Councillor Aidan Mullins seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan, the minutes of the AGM of the Graiguecullen/Portarlington Municipal District held on the 21st of June 2017 were confirmed as circulated

3. PROGRESS REPORT

The report was noted and the Members complimented Mr John Ormond, A/Senior Executive Engineer on the works that had been completed since the last meeting. A discussion ensued regarding Japanese Knotweed wherein Mr. Ormond outlined that approximately 25 locations had been identified and treated and that it may take up to 3 years to eliminate the problem.

The civil works for the underground cabling in Portarlington would be completed during the week ending 29th of September 2017 and that a meeting was also being arranged with the ESB in relation to their element of the works.

4. COMMUNITY FACILITIES SCHEME 2017

The Members were circulated with details of the Community Facilities Scheme for 2017 and advised that the process had been approved by the LCDC. On the proposal of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor Aidan Mullins, the Members approved the Community Facilities Scheme 2017 as presented.

5. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 91/2017

Councillor Tom Mulhall proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council erect a ‘Dangerous Bend’ sign and also indicate ‘Minor Road’ on same at Garryduff at The Heath”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy. The Members were advised that an advance warning sign will be procured and erected once delivered. These works will be completed within the next 4 to 6 weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 92/2017

Councillor Tom Mulhall proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council repair approximately 50 metres of the road at Inch, Stradbally on the L7950”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy. The Members were advised that Mr. John Ormond, A/S.E.E. will arrange to have this road inspected and for the patching unit to complete any necessary repairs

Notice of Motion No: 93/2017

Councillor Tom Mulhall proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council take steps to stop illegal dumping in the Portarlinton area”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy. The Members were advised that The Environment Section had prepared a targeted action plan to reduce dumping in early 2017. The plan included the following:

1. A number of mobile cameras were purchased for use in known black spots. To date we have been very successful in catching illegal dumpers with the mobile cameras and have increased the number of fines to twice the number issued at this time last year. We have, also, identified a serious illegal waste

issue in the Portarlinton area through the use of the mobile cameras. The individual has been cautioned and has been fully co-operative in cleaning up the site of the illegal dumping which is anticipated to run to thousands of euro. We also have a number of cases pending before the Courts. We are rolling out new signage across the county on known black spot areas and including these areas on our schedule for the mobile cameras.

2. To ensure that our Litter Wardens, who are continuously on patrol throughout the county, are more readily identifiable their uniforms have been changed and branding of their vehicles will be complete in the coming weeks. Litter wardens are carrying out increased foot patrols in all towns and villages and can meet with Elected Members, Tidy Towns Groups and the Community at large to identify problem areas for inclusion in the action plan. You can contact the Environment Section to make arrangements.
3. We continue to operate our confidential FREEPHONE Litter Hotline 1800 32 32 30, and members of the public have been very helpful in giving details of illegal dumping. We would encourage everyone to report illegal waste dumping.
4. Something we are very concerned about is the increase in the operation of illegal waste collectors in the County. Individuals are advertising waste collection services and house/garage/garden clean ups and targeting our most vulnerable. We are later finding material illegally dumped and have issued fines/legal proceedings against the householder whose details are found from evidence at the dump sites. This has proved very stressful and embarrassing for individuals who thought they were having their waste disposed of in a responsible manner. An awareness campaign for September/October will include the use of a Billboard in addition to letter drops, publications in parish newsletters, facebook and twitter. Only permitted waste collectors can collect waste. If you are in any doubt contact the Environment Section.
5. I wish to confirm that the Portarlinton bring banks site, located in Supervalu, is the busiest bottle bank in the County. Additional bring bank sites in Portarlinton are required to cater for its significant population.

The Members paid tribute and extended their thanks to Ms. Orla Barrett, Senior Executive Engineer and her team on the work carried out in this area and in particular for acquiring the site for the bottle bank in Stradbally. The issue of illegal waste collectors was discussed. The Members enquired as to the possibility of illegal waste collectors being prosecuted. It was agreed that an update be provided at the next meeting. Councillor Paschal McEvoy requested that a notice be advertised in the local papers setting out details of the registered Waste Collectors.

On the proposition of Councillor Tom Mulhall seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members requested that a letter issue to Coillte requesting that cameras be installed on lands owned by them around the County to assist in the prevention of illegal waste dumping.

Notice of Motion No: 94/2017

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council continue the pedestrian railing on the footpath from the turn onto Church Avenue, Stradbally down to the entrance to the school. This measure is a safety requirement as the drop off point for the school bus is on the Main Street"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall. The Members were advised that if pedestrian railings were to be installed - 92m would be required. It would cost in the region of €30,000 to procure and install pedestrian railings. They would greatly reduce the sight distance for vehicles exiting the school. The provision of railings would narrow the existing footpath from 1.4m to 1.2m. They would be a danger to cyclists as the road is very narrow to facilitate both cyclists and vehicles.

As per the TII Document - Pedestrian Crossing Specification and Guidance:

"Guard rail should only be used where it is needed to prevent hazardous crossing, as it creates an uncomfortable environment for cyclists who can get squeezed against it. Long lengths of guard rail provide little extra pedestrian benefit and should be avoided."

Councillor McEvoy advised that this is a very dangerous location. Mr. John Ormond, A/S.E.E. indicated that he would investigate the area in question with a view to exploring options and Councillor McEvoy indicated that he would liaise with the parents of school going children.

Notice of Motion No: 95/2017

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council give an update on the prospect of a social housing development in Stradbally"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Padraig Fleming. The Members were advised that the Council is presently considering the construction of approximately 55 houses on lands in Stradbally. Discussions have taken place with officials from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in the context of our 2018 - 2020 housing programme. The Members will be advised of progress.

Notice of Motion No: 96/2017

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council build a new boundary wall at the front of Timahoe Cemetery, this wall is in poor condition"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Padraig Fleming. The Members were advised that this wall will be examined and if appropriate it will be included in the list of cemetery capital works to be completed subject to funding.

It was agreed in the absence of Councillor Moran that the replies to his Notices of Motion be read out and noted in the Minutes.

Notice of Motion No: 97/2017

Councillor John Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council carry out hedge cutting from Graiguecullen to Knockbeg as the hedge is currently overgrowing onto the road"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan. The Members were advised that Mr. John Ormond inspected this location on the 15/09/2017. It appears that these works have recently been completed by individual landowners.

Notice of Motion No: 98/2017

Councillor John Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council erect an 'Advance Warning Stop' sign at Cullenagh Cross on the road coming from Castletown"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy. The Members were advised that Mr. John Ormond will arrange to meet Councillor Moran on site to assess the location and any signage required.

Notice of Motion No: 99/2017

Councillor John Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council check the road surface at Killabin Cross as some of the chippings are loose at this location"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Padraig Fleming. The Members were advised that Mr. John Ormond will arrange for this location to be inspected and have any loose chipping removed.

Notice of Motion No: 100/2017

Councillor Aidan Mullins proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council put in road markings and yield /stop signs in Castlegate and Crann Nua estates in Portarlinton in the interest of road safety"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall. The Members were advised that Mr. John Ormond will meet with Councillor Mullins at both locations to review the requirements for signage and road markings.

Notice of Motion No: 101/2017

Councillor Aidan Mullins proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That Laois County Council widen the entrance road in St. Brigid's Square in Portarlinton in the interests of safety for children and road users and to facilitate safe roadside parking"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall. The Members were advised that the area office is currently liaising with Eir and the ESB as they have services located in the verge where it is proposed to facilitate roadside parking. The Council will prepare a cost estimate for these works once the works required by each utility is established.

Mr. Aidan Mullins advised that over 120 householders use this entrance at Bracklone Street to access St. Brigid's Square and Arlington Estate housing estates. Councillor Mullins enquired if raised tables or flashing beacons could be provided to slow traffic down at this location. Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance indicated that an update would be provided at the October meeting in relation to traffic calming at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 102/2017

Councillor Aidan Mullins proposed the following Notice of Motion:

"That Laois County Council consider what additional road safety measures need to be implemented at Kilmullen outside Portarlinton, for example measures to remove the sharp bends and re-align the dangerous section of road; flashing road speed detection signs; speed cameras etc"

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall. The Members were advised that the Council has carried out a traffic count / speed survey on this section of road. The survey indicated that excessive speeds are a significant issue on this road. The Council has been in contact with An Garda Siochana (AGS) regarding the designation of this section of road as a speed enforcement (speed camera) zone. AGS has confirmed that this proposal will be considered. The Council also proposes to install a speed radar sign on this road. A surface road test has been carried out.

Councillor Tom Mulhall advised that there had been 35 accidents over the last three years at this location. Speed radar signs were required at each end, some of the bends need to be softened and the issue of spare ground being available was also discussed. The Members enquired as to the possibility of a TII representative attending a future meeting regarding this location. It was noted that a Notice of Motion was being tabled for the September meeting of Laois County Council in the same regard.

Notice of Motion No: 103/2017

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council clarify why outside Contractors are being used for road works instead of using Laois County Council’s qualified staff and Council machinery which is of good quality”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall. The Members were advised that in excess of 50% of the annual restoration maintenance budget for surface dressing and associated works is spent on works completed by Council staff. Staff and machinery resources available to each Area are, also, required to complete various other works within the area therefore it has been necessary in recent years to contract part of the restoration maintenance works to ensure all agreed works get completed. The programming of restoration maintenance works is reviewed and determined on a yearly basis based on the resources available.

Notice of Motion No: 104/2017

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council remove soil from the side of the road at Killeshin Church with a view to making the road wider and safer for those attending mass and funerals”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pádraig Fleming, The Members were advised that Mr. John Ormond will meet with Councillor Brennan at this location to examine this request.

Notice of Motion No: 105/2017

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council cut back the hedges on the R430 at the Castlecomer Road roundabout as they are causing an obstruction for traffic travelling from the Numbers side”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Padraig Fleming. The Members were advised that these works are currently ongoing and will be completed over the coming weeks.

Notice of Motion No: 106/2017

Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council indicate the time line and the up to date position for the taking in charge of The Village Estate, Ballylinan”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy. The Members were advised that the taking in charge of this estate has been included on the Agenda for the Council meeting of Monday 25th September 2017.

Notice of Motion No: 107/2017

Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That Laois County Council cut the bulging hedges / briars at the footpaths on the Sleaty Road, Graiguecullen as families with Prams have to go out on the road to pass which is also creating a safety hazard”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan. The Members were advised that the cutting of hedgerows along the Carlow Northern Relief Road (N80) is currently ongoing and will be completed within the next week. The hedgerows on Sleaty Road will be included in these works.

Notice of Motion No: 108/2017

Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council repair surface water pipe on R 429 in Ballickmoyler Village as it leads to flooding”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan. The Members were advised that the repairs required here will be completed within the next 3 to 4 weeks.

5. LOCAL AREA PLAN CONSIDERATION

The Members were advised that the Planning Department is commencing the process of preparing new Local Area Plans for Portlaoise, Mountmellick and Portarlington. The pre draft preparation process has already commenced with a view to having Draft Plans on display in January/February 2018. It is proposed to carry out a range of consultations in the pre draft stage with all relevant stakeholders including statutory bodies, groups registered on the PPN and the general public. There will be a non statutory, pre draft, public consultation period between the 9th and 27th October 2017. To facilitate this, an issues paper will be published at the start of October to generate discussion and invite written submissions. A number of events such as meetings, focus groups and an open morning will be held to garner public opinion on the key issues relating to the three towns. Notification of events will be via Laois County Council's website and by written invitation where appropriate.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (1) Lights on the Northern Relief Road - the meeting noted that the lights have recently been changed to LED. The Members requested that the lights be changed back to the 'Swan Neck' type as the LED lights in some case are hidden by overgrown trees.
- (2) Drainage at Mullins Lane - Mr. John Ormond, A/S.E.E. to investigate
- (3) Tenant Liaison Services - Councillor Aidan Mullins raised the issue of the Tenant Liaison Section - Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance indicated that a Notice of Motion in relation to same was tabled for the agenda for the September meeting of Laois County Council scheduled for the 25th of September 2017. A full update would be given at this meeting.
- (4) Ballymorris Housing Project, Mr. Gerry Murphy indicated that 22 houses have been approved. Site layout has been finalised.
- (5) Footpath repairs in Portarlington - Virgin Media has submitted a proposal to the Roads Management Office
- (6) Derelict Sites Register for Portarlington - Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance indicated that an update would be circulated at the next meeting.
- (7) Avon site Portarlington - Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance confirmed to the members that Laois County Council have no proposal to purchase the site due to the environmental issues associated with it.

6. Time and date of next meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 18th of October, 2017 at 2.00 p.m. and that the Budget Meeting would follow.

On the proposition of Councillor Padraig Fleming seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously agreed that the September 2018 meeting would be held on the 4th Wednesday in September, viz: 26th September 2017

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Tom Mulhall, Leas Chathaoirleach