

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 27<sup>th</sup> of SEPTEMBER 2021 IN THE DUNAMAISE ARTS CENTRE & THEATRE & BY MICROSOFT TEAMS**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor	Conor Bergin	In The Chair
	Councillors	Willie Aird John Joe Fennelly Padraig Fleming Seamus McDonald Noel Tuohy John King Paschal McEvoy Ollie Clooney Ben Brennan	Paddy Bracken Aidan Mullins James Kelly Aisling Moran Caroline Dwane Stanley Thomasina Connell P.J. Kelly Catherine Fitzgerald
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Councillor	Mary Sweeney	

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Messers John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Paul McLoughlin, A/Director of Services, Ms. Angela McEvoy, A/Director of Services, Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Ms. Irene Delaney, A.O., & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

**119. NOTICE OF INTENTION OF RESIGNATION OF MS. MARY SWEENEY, M.C.C.**

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Conor Bergin noted the correspondence which had been received from Councillor Mary Sweeney in relation to her intention to resign as Member of Laois County Council . All Members expressed their good wishes to Councillor Sweeney. The Chief Executive on behalf of the Management & Staff of Laois County Council joined in the sentiments expressed.

**120. VOTE OF SYMPATHY**

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Conor Bergin, the Members unanimously agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the following families:-

- The Donoher Family, The Rock, Mountmellick on the recent death of Mrs. Patricia Donoher, mother of Ms. Siobhan Donoher, Environment Department
- The Lynch Family, Fieldbrook, Portlaoise, Co. Laois on the recent death of Ms. Patricia Keating(nee Lynch), former employee of Laois County Council
- The Hooban Family, St. Patrick's Terrace, Castletown, Co. Laois on the recent death of Mrs. Bridget Hooban, mother of Mr. Gerry Hooban, General Services Supervisor, Roads Department and grandmother of Ms. Michelle McEvoy, Property Management Section.
- The McEvoy Family (New York, formerly of Mountmellick, Co. Laois & Laois Association New York on the recent death of Mr. Larry McEvoy

**121. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 26<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY 2021**

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Minutes of the July monthly meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2021 were confirmed as circulated.

Councillor John King raised a query in relation to extending the deadline for receipt of applications under the Town and Village Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2021. Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of

Finance advised that the deadline was extended by a one week period and applications are currently being vetted. An extension will be sought and Members will be advised of the outcome.

**122. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED JULY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 28<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY 2021**

On the proposition of Councillor Ollie Clooney Aird seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Minutes of the adjourned July meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2021 were confirmed as circulated

**123. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2021**

Ms. Angela McEvoy, A/Director of Services briefed the Members on Submission No. LS C9 DCDP-61 – Booth Partnership in relation to the lands on Vicarstown Road requesting more TC zoning within the parcel of land referenced which was considered in the CE report and at MD workshop but omitted from discussion. The CE response to the submission was agreed on the proposition of Councillor Pascal McEvoy seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming. It was agreed to amend the minutes accordingly.

**124. REPORT ON C.P.G. MEETING HELD ON THE 19<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY 2021**

On the proposition of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming, the report on the CPG meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2021 was confirmed as circulated.

**125. PART VIII OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 IN RESPECT OF THE PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A TOTAL OF 26 DWELLING UNITS, OPEN SPACE, INTERNAL ROADS AND ALL ASSOCIATED SITE WORKS AT A SITE OF 1.9 HECTARES AT STRADBALLY, CO. LAOIS WITH A NEW ACCESS ROAD FROM THE MAIN STREET – N80**

The Members were circulated with the Planning Report on this proposed development consisting of the construction of a residential development of a total 26 dwellings and new entrance off the Main Street, Stradbally.

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the development seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming

A Counter Proposal was proposed by Councillor Aisling Moran seconded by Councillor PJ Kelly to defer consideration to of the proposal to facilitate an amendment to the layout. The Chief Executive, Mr. John Mulholland outlined the provisions of the Local Government Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended in relation to Part VIII developments and outlined the rationale as to why such a deferral would not be appropriate.

A Roll Call Vote was taken on Councillor Paschal McEvoy’s proposal:-

COUNCILLOR		FOR	AGAINST
FIRST NAME	SURNAME		
William	AIRD	✓	
Conor	BERGIN	✓	
Paddy	BRACKEN	✓	
Ben	BRENNAN		✓
Ollie	CLOONEY	✓	
Thomasina	CONNELL	✓	

Caroline	DWANE STANLEY	✓	
John Joe	FENNELLY	✓	
Catherine	FITZGERALD	✓	
Padraig	FLEMING	✓	
James	KELLY		✓
P.J.	KELLY		✓
John	KING	✓	
Seamus	MCDONALD	✓	
Paschal	MCEVOY	✓	
Aisling	MORAN		✓
Aidan	MULLINS	✓	
Mary	SWEENEY	ABSENT	
Noel	TUOHY		✓

Total Number of Votes 13 votes in favour of Councillor Paschal McEvoy's Motion, 5 against and 1 absent.

**126. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 IN RESPECT OF**

**(i) DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD COMPRISING 0.435 HECTARES AT 2 DOONANE TERRACE, CRETTYARD**

On the proposition of Councillor Ben Brennan seconded by Councillor Padraig Fleming, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.435 hectares at 2 Doonane Terrace, Crettyard, Co. Laois in the townland of Doonane for a consideration of €300.00

**(ii) DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD COMPRISING 0.163 HECTARES AT 7 EMMETT TERRACE, MOUNTMELICK, CO. LAOIS.**

On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.163 hectares at 7 Emmett Terrace, Mountmellick, Co. Laois in the townland of Townsparks for a consideration of €300.00

**(iii) DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD COMPRISING 0.020 HECTARES AT 4 LIOGARD**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.020 hectares at 4 Liogard, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Maryborough for a consideration of €1.00

**(iv) DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD COMPRISING 0.29 HECTARES OF LAND AT BALLYMULLEN, ERRILL**

On the proposition of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.29 hectares of land at Ballymullen, Errill, Co. Laois in the townland of Ballymullen for a consideration of €1.00

**(v) DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD COMPRISING 0.0290 HECTARES OF LAND AT 32 SLIEVE BLOOM HEIGHTS, RATHDOWNEY**

On the proposition of Councillor Noel Tuohy seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.0290 hectares of land at 32 Slieve Bloom Heights, Rathdowney, Co. Laois in the townland of Rathdowney for a consideration of €1.00

**(vi) DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD COMPRISING 0.0172 HECTARES OF LAND AT 38 CLONROOSKE ABBEY, PORTLAOISE**

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of freehold comprising 0.0172 hectares of land at 38 Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Clonroosk for a consideration of €1.00

**(vii) DISPOSAL OF SITE NO. 11 COMPRISING 0.087 HECTARES OF LAND AT CASTLETOWN, CO. LAOIS.**

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of Site No. 11 comprising 0.087 hectares of land at Castletown, Co. Laois in the townland of Churchfield for a consideration of €30,000.00

**(viii) DISPOSAL OF SITE NO. 12 COMPRISING 0.087 HECTARES OF LAND AT CASTLETOWN, CO. LAOIS**

On the proposition of Councillor James Kelly seconded by Councillor Ollie Clooney, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of Site No. 12 comprising 0.087 hectares of land at Castletown, Co. Laois in the townland of Churchfield for a consideration of €30,000.00

**127. TAKING IN CHARGE OF BELLINGHAM, PORTLAOISE – PHASE 2, AREA 1**

On the proposition of the Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the Taking in Charge of Bellingham, Portlaoise – Phase 2, Area 1.

**128. TAKING IN CHARGE OF COURT VIEW, STRADBALLY**

On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming, the Members unanimously agreed to the Taking in Charge of Court View, Stradbally.

**129. NOMINATION OF ONE MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF THE NEW LEISURE CECNTRE COMPANY**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Thomasina Connell, the Members unanimously agreed that Councillor Noel Tuohy be nominated to the Board of the new Leisure Centre.

On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming, the Members unanimously ratified Councillor Aidan Mullins' nomination to the new Board.

**130. NOMINATION OF TWO MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF THE PORTLAOISE INNOVATION CENTRE DAC**

It was noted that the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Conor Bergin is already a nominee on the Board of the Portlaoise Innovation Centre DAC.

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Members unanimously agreed that Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald be nominated to the Portlaoise Innovation Centre DAC

On the proposition of Councillor Ben Brennan seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed that Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley be nominated to the Portlaoise Innovation Centre DAC.

**131. NOMINATION OF MS. HONOR DEEVY, ACTING HEAD OF LOCAL ENTERPRISE TO THE LAOIS LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**

On the proposition of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed that Ms. Honor Deevy, Acting Head of Local Enterprise be nominated to the Laois Local Community Development Company.

**132. APPROVAL OF OVERDRAFT ACCOMMODATION - €8 MILLION FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> OF DECEMBER 2022 TO FINANCE WORKING CAPITAL**

On the proposition of Councillor Ollie Clooney seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed to the overdraft accommodation in respect of €8 million for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2022 to finance working capital.

**133. APPROVAL OF OVERDRAFT ACCOMMODATION - €15 MILLION FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022 TO FACILITATE ANY TIMING ISSUES REGARDING THE PAYMENT OF PAYROLL AND PENSIONS FOR MY-PAY**

On the proposition of Councillor Ollie Clooney seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed to the overdraft accommodation in respect of €15 million for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to facilitate any timing issues regarding the payment of payroll and pensions for My-Pay

**134. FIX DATE AND VENUE FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

**On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to the following dates and venues for forthcoming meetings of Laois County Council**

- (i) October Monthly Meeting is scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the Donaghmore Workhouse & Museum, Donaghmore
- (ii) Budget Meeting in Committee – November 4<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 11.00 a.m. – this meeting is now scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber or the Donaghmore Workhouse & Museum (depending on the changes in Covid-19 Restrictions due to be lifted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2021)
- (iii) Statutory Budget Meeting – November 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber or the Dunamais Arts Centre & Theatre (depending on the changes in Covid-19 Restrictions due to be lifted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2021)
- (iv) In-Committee Briefing on ‘Housing for All’ – is scheduled for the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber or the Dunamais Arts Centre & Theatre (depending on the changes in Covid-19 Restrictions due to be lifted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2021)

**135. CONSIDERATION OF A JOINT CIVIC RECEPTION FOR MS. NICOLE TURNER & MR. GARY O’ REILLY (AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CORPORATE POLICY GROUP ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2021**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously agreed the according of individual civic receptions to Ms. Nicole Turner & Mr. Gary O’ Reilly in recognition of their recent success at the Paralympics.

#### **136. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2021**

The Members were circulated with the Monthly Management Report for August/September 2021 and the Director of Services responded to the various queries raised.

#### **137. RATIFICATION OF CONFERENCES & TRAINING**

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to ratify the conferences and training as circulated.

#### **138. CORRESPONDENCE**

The following correspondence was circulated which had been received since the last meeting:-

- (i) Correspondence received from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage dated the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 in relation to a recent Notice of Motion regarding maintenance and payments and the social housing assessment of eligibility process.

#### **139. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

##### **Notice of Motion No: 41/2021**

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:

***“That Laois County Council request that a representative of the HSE address next month’s meeting regarding ambulance services”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that a letter would issue to the HSE in this regard. The Members requested that the correspondence to the HSE include also the issue of ambulance services to Care Homes and that a copy of the correspondence be copied to Mr. Paul Reid, CEO of the HSE.

##### **Notice of Motion No: 42/2021**

**Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-**

***“That this Council requests that a representative of Irish Water attends our October meeting to discuss the future of pumping stations and their fees for the use of their services”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that correspondence would issue to Irish Water in this regard.

##### **Notice of Motion No: 43/2021**

**Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-**

***“That Laois County Council be informed how this Council are complying with the “Housing for all” document to meet the needs of those above the income threshold”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that The National ‘Housing for All’ Plan recently published, sets out a number of key objectives in respect of housing delivery over the next 5 years.

As a requirement under the plan, each local authority must publish a Housing Delivery Action Plan by December 2021, which will set out how housing will be delivered over the next 5 years.

While no guidance or circulars have yet been issued by the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, relevant local authorities with a the requisite level of affordability constrained demand, as confirmed by its Housing Need and Demand Assessment, will be required to determine the requirement for affordable housing with the support of the new Affordable Housing Fund, replacing the previously entitled Serviced Sites Fund. Local authorities will also be invited by the Department to bring forward proposals for affordable advance purchase type projects. We await further guidance in this regard.

It is proposed to present to the elected members in-committee in the short term, our progress to date in meeting our targets for social housing delivery in Laois and to examine also the specific need and demand for housing in the county, with a view to developing our 5-year Housing Delivery Action Plan by December.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 44/2021**

Councillor Conor Bergin proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue, T.D and the Minister of State for land use and biodiversity, Senator Pippa Hackett to take urgent measures to introduce a single consent system for forestry in Ireland to address the crisis in the industry at present”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister of State in relation to this.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 45/2021**

In the absence of Councillor Sweeney, Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council light up county hall in yellow and purple on 15th October in recognition of Developmental Language Disorder Awareness Day”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Aisling Moran. The Members were advised that this would be arranged.

#### **Notice of Motion No: 46/2021**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council give an update on the re-opening of Portlaoise Leisure Centre”***

This Notice of Motion was dealt with during the discussion on the Monthly Management Report

#### **Notice of Motion No: 47/2021**

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council write to the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D., requesting extra funding in the next budget to support charities that are involved in the provision of Mental Health Services and Suicide prevention”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. It was agreed that the matter be referred to the Minister for Health in this regard.

**Notice of Motion No: 48/2021**

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council give an update as to how we have progressed in relation to the (A) The Barrow Blueway. (B)The installation of motor home aires in towns and villages and (C)if there has been any further development in providing grants to land owners willing to develop serviced campsites on their land, increasing tourism in Laois”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor James Kelly. The Members were advised of the following:

**A) Barrow Blueway**

***Planning permission was granted to Waterways Ireland by an Bord Pleanala on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019 for 46km of “Blueway” from Lowtown to Horse Bridge in Athy***

- • ***Estimated cost of infrastructure €6.8m***
- • ***Kildare 33.2km***
- • ***Laois 13km***

***A Project Steering Group (PPG) was established with representatives of Waterways Ireland, Kildare County Council and Laois County Council to manage the delivery of the project and to deal with parking, signage, etc.***

***A Marketing Sub-group was established to co-ordinate marketing activity by the Partners to maximise the potential of the Blueway by activating, animating and delivering a quality visitor experience.***

***A presentation was given by Waterways Ireland to the Graiguecullen / Portarlington Elected Members on the 23/06/2021.***

***The Barrow Blueway Economic Plan to look at the business potential along the route was completed and launched in July 2021.***

***Works from Courtwood to Fisherstown are complete and this stretch of the canal is opened. The stretch from Ballymanus to Vicarstown is also completed. Works continues between Fisherstown and Monasterevin, with a target completion date of the end of September 2021. Works will then return to Vicarstown.***

**B) Motor Home Areas**

***Members are advised that Laois County Council has been undertaking a preliminary scoping exercise on this matter having regard to demand assessment, preferable locations , availability of services for water and wastewater, set up costs, operations and management. The Council is also engaging with private sector interests that may be in a strong position to delivery such services at***



key locations in the County. For example, discussions have taken place with Coillte with regard to the provision of such facilities as part of the Mountain Bike Trail development  
 This Council has no suitable land available for the provision of motor homes in the County as existing land banks are for the provision of housing and development sites. .

**C) Provision of Grants**

The Council has no budget for the provision of grants to landowners for the development of serviced campsites. There are, however, grants available from Laois Partnership for works associated with developing campsites by private land owners on their lands. 50% of the cost is available to a maximum of €200,000. Grants for feasibility studies are, also, available (75% for Private and 90% Community up to maximum of €30,000).

**Notice of Motion No: 49/2021**

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give details of annual consultancy costs incurred by Laois County Council since 2019”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised of the following:

<b>Service / Division</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Housing and Building</b>	<b>947,622</b>	<b>402,308</b>	<b>432,004</b>
<b>Road Transportation and Safety</b>	<b>254,833</b>	<b>303,755</b>	<b>105,188</b>
<b>Water Services</b>	<b>267</b>		<b>1,815</b>
<b>Development Incentives and Control</b>	<b>250,544</b>	<b>545,931</b>	<b>115,142</b>
<b>Environmental Protection</b>	<b>23,914</b>	<b>83,821</b>	<b>10,740</b>
<b>Recreation and Amenity</b>	<b>116,901</b>	<b>63,259</b>	<b>13,530</b>
<b>Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare</b>	<b>72,720</b>	<b>213,397</b>	<b>286,029</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>138,100</b>	<b>146,448</b>	<b>64,241</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,804,901</b>	<b>1,758,919</b>	<b>1,028,689</b>

**Notice of Motion No: 50/2022**

Councillor Aisling Moran proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council call on the Government to show the Nations appreciation to all those that worked in our hospitals, Nursing and Care homes at the start of the pandemic. Working on the front line with direct Covid-19 patient contact. These people put their own lives at risk, having to leave the safety of their homes and families, to go work in an unknown environment, where they knew that they were at a high risk of getting this, as of then, untreatable virus themselves. I’m

asking that this bravery and selflessness be recognised in a meaningful way, by either a financial bonus or in the form of a well deserved extra weeks holidays”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Noel Tuohy.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**CATHAOIRLEACH**

**CERTIFIED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
CORPORATE AFFAIRS**