

**MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 29<sup>TH</sup> OF  
MAY 2023 IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Messrs John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services, Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services, Ms. Carmel McNicholl, A/Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, A.O., & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

**65. VOTES OF SYMPATHIES**

On the proposition of the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Thomasina Connell, M.C.C., the Members unanimously agreed to pass a vote of sympathy to the following families on their recent bereavements:-

- (i) The Walton family, 73 Dean Cavanagh Place, Kilkenny on the recent death of Mr. Joe Walton, father of Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services with Laois County Council
- (ii) The Fennell family, 28 Grattan Street, Portlaoise on the recent death of Ms. Anne Fennell, mother of Mr. Ollie Fennell, Chief Technician with Laois County Council.
- (iii) The McEvoy family, Clonaheen, Rosenallis on the recent death of Ms. Kathleen McEvoy, mother of Mr. Michael McEvoy, Roads Department, Laois County Council
- (iv) The Kilcare family, 6 Ossory Terrace, Rathdowney on the recent death of Mr. James Kilcare, former employee of Laois County Council.

Councillor Willie Aird proposed the following Votes of Sympathies which were unanimously agreed:-

- (i) The Doody family, Eyne, Portlaoise on the recent death of Ms. Sarah Doody
- (ii) The Hogan family, Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Michael Hogan
- (iii) The McDonald family, Tierernan, Ballickmoyer on the recent death of Mr. James McDonald
- (iv) The Maher family, Market Square, Portlaoise on the recent death of Ms. Mairead Maher
- (v) The Bracken family, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Tom Bracken

- (vi) The Baldwin family, Ballymaddock, Stradbally on the recent death of Mr. Sean Baldwin
- (vii) The Boland family, Cork Road, Stradbally on the recent death of Ms. Margaret Boland
- (viii) The Byrne family, Rathleague, Portlaoise on the recent death of Mr. Richard Byrne. This vote of sympathy was also endorsed by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed a vote of sympathy to the Sherlock Family on the recent death of Mr. Will Sherlock, Eyne, Portlaoise.

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed a vote of sympathy to the Delaney family, Newtown Bog, Crettyard on the recent death of Mr. Michael Delaney.

Councilor Ollie Clooney proposed a vote of sympathy to the Dooley family, Coolrain on the recent death of Ms. Janet Dooley. Councillor Clooney also proposed a vote of sympathy to the Gaughan family, Mary's Street, Durrow on the death of Mr. Michael Gaughan.

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed a vote of sympathy to the Lally family, Abbeyleix on the recent death of Mr. Cormac Lally. This vote of sympathy was also endorsed by Councillor Willie Aird.

#### **66. MINUTES OF THE APRIL MONTHLY MEETING HELD THE 24<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2023**

On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed the minutes of the April meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.

#### **67. REPORT ON CPG MEETING HELD ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2023**

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming the Members unanimously agreed the report on CPG meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. Councillor James Kelly referred to the introduction of a Support Officer within Local Authorities to deal with the provision of integrated services for international protection applicants and refugees and sought an update in relation to same. The meeting had been advised that no further information had been received. It was agreed that a letter would issue from Laois County Council to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth requesting that consultation be undertaken with communities in relation to the accommodation of persons seeking international protection.

#### **68. REPORT ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN APRIL 2023**

On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the Members unanimously agreed the report on the Municipal District meetings held in April 2023.

**69. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 – DISPOSAL OF 0.0423 HECTARES OF LAND AT THE TOWER, AVONDALE, MOUNTRATH, CO. LAOIS**

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.0423 hectares of land at the Tower, Avondale, Mountrath, Co. Laois in the townland of Mountrath for a consideration of €300.00.

**70. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 – DISPOSAL OF 0.14 HECTARES OF LAND (RECTIFICATION OF BOUNDARY) AT 1 THE SWAN, CO. LAOIS.**

On the proposition of Councillor Padraig Fleming seconded by Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.14 hectares of land (rectification of boundary) at 1 The Swan in the townland of Slatt Lower, Co. Laois for a consideration of €300.00

**71. CONSIDERATION OF SUB-COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON LIVE STREAMING**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the report of the Sub-Committee on Live Streaming. It was noted that the sub-committee has extensively discussed and debated the topic and that the Members hold divergent views on this area. Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services responded to the various queries raised by the Members. Councillor Aisling Moran proposed that arrangements be put in place for the Live Streaming of meetings – this proposal was seconded by Councillor Aidan Mullins. A number of Elected Members expressed their opposition to the proposal and it was agreed to take a Roll Call Vote which resulted as follows:-

COUNCILLOR		FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
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	✓		
John	KING		✓	
Seamus	MCDONALD		✓	
Paschal	MCEVOY		✓	
Aisling	MORAN	✓		
P.J.	KELLY		✓	
Aidan	MULLINS	✓		
Marie	TUOHY	✓		

Barry	WALSH		✓	
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Total number of Votes 6 votes in favour of the proposal, 12 against and one abstention. Councillor Clooney abstained from the vote as he held the position of Chairperson of the Sub-Committee Group.

## 72. CONFIRM DATE FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

On the proposition of Councillor Conor Bergin seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed that the Annual General meeting of Laois County Council would take place on Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup> 2023 at 2.30 p.m. in accordance with Section 3 (Schedule 10) of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended.

## 73. NOMINATION OF MEMBER – BUILDING EUROPE WITH LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services referred to previous discussions on this matter and in order to progress same now, it is necessary for the Elected Members to nominate a Member to same.

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed Councillor Aisling Moran and this was seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy. Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed Councillor Paschal McEvoy and this was seconded by Councillor P.J. Kelly. As a result of the Counter Proposal, a Roll Call Vote took place which resulted as follows:-

COUNCILLOR		FOR COUNCILLOR MORAN	FOR COUNCILLOR MCEVOY	ABSTAIN
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	✓		
John	KING		✓	
Seamus	MCDONALD		✓	
Paschal	MCEVOY		✓	
Aisling	MORAN	✓		
P.J.	KELLY		✓	
Aidan	MULLINS	✓		
Marie	TUOHY	✓		
Barry	WALSH		✓	

Total number of Votes 6 votes in favour of Councillor Moran, 13 votes in favour of Councillor Paschal McEvoy.

**74. CONSIDERATION OF A CIVIC RECEPTION TO MR. SEAMUS DOOLEY AS RECOMMENDED BY THE C.P.G. ON THE 22<sup>ND</sup> OF MAY 2023**

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor Willie Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to accord a Civic Reception to Mr. Seamus Dooley as recommended by the C.P.G. on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2023.

**75. ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2022 INCLUDING APPROVAL OF OVER-EXPENDITURE AND TRANSFERS TO CAPITAL**

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance briefed the Members on the Annual Financial Statement for 2022 including approval of over-expenditure and transfers to capital. On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming, the Members unanimously agreed to the Annual Financial Statement 2022 including approval of over-expenditure and transfers to capital as presented.

**76. REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS**

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance briefed the Members on the 2022 Development Contributions and the report as circulated was noted and agreed.

**77. ADOPTION OF SCHEME OF PRIORITY FOR AFFORDABLE DWELLING PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Members were circulated with the draft scheme of priority for affordable dwelling purchase arrangements. Ms. Angela McEvoy, Director of Services, Ms. Louise McEvoy, Administrative Officer & Ms. Lisa Bergin, A/Staff Officer responded to the various queries raised by the Members.

On the proposition of Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken the Members unanimously adopted the Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements.

**78. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR MAY 2023**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Monthly Management report for May 2023. The Director of Services responded to the various queries raised by the Members.

**79. TRAINING AND CONFERENCES**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the conferences and training for ratification and same was agreed on the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor John King.

**80. CORRESPONDENCE**

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

- (i) Correspondence from Westmeath County Council dated the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 in relation to the construction of affordable housing
- (ii) Correspondence from Mayo County Council dated the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 in relation to the grants for the Croí Cónaithe Scheme
- (iii) Correspondence from Clare County Council dated the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 in relation to Rural Revival Steps for Our Future Campaign
- (iv) Correspondence from Kerry County Council dated the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 in relation to a paperless system for Elected Members
- (v) Correspondence from Kerry County Council dated the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 in relation to the National Pension Scheme for the State

## **81. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

### **Notice of Motion No: 23/2023**

Councillor Padraig Fleming proposed the following Notice of Motion: \_

***“That Laois County Council ensure that all public parks have the appropriate signage on the awareness and dangers of Lyme disease”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. The Members were advised that The HSE has recently conducted an awareness campaign, highlighting issues around Lyme’s disease. Laois County Council will consult with the HSE regarding the best means by which the Council can raise awareness regarding Lyme’s Disease.

### **Notice of Motion No: 24/2023**

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That this Council call on the Minister for Health to urgently intervene and address the chronic staff shortages and waiting times which patients are having to endure at the A and E unit in Midlands Regional Hospital in Portlaoise”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Minister for Health in this regard.

### **Notice of Motion No: 25/2023**

Councillor Marie Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion-

***“That this Council support the call by the Dyslexia Association of Ireland to the State Examinations Commission to allow extra time to students with dyslexia who are sitting exams in the Junior and Leaving Certificates next month”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Dyslexia Association in this regard.

### **Notice of Motion No: 26/2023**

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

***“That this Council ensure that the proposed new Civil Defence building is refurbished and that the works commence as soon as it comes into Council ownership”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy. The Members were advised that Laois County Council has agreed terms by which the Council will purchase a property in Kea Lew, to be refurbished and used as the Laois Civil Defence Headquarters. Surveys are currently being conducted with a view to arriving at the most appropriate and efficient layout of the premises, to meet the ongoing and future needs of Laois Civil Defence.

### **Notice of Motion No: 27/2023**

Councillor Barry Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage concerning the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) with a view to a clause being applied to the relevant Act that temporary exemption from taxation of lands within defined zones be applied where owners are actively trying to sell or develop the zoned areas. Encouraging engagement rather than penalising it would yield a more positive outcome. In addition, if lands are clearly actively used for agricultural purposes an exemption should be applied”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor P.J. Kelly. The Members were advised that a letter would issue to the Department in this regard.

### **Notice of Motion No: 28/2023**

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

***“That Laois County Council write to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage requesting that the requirement for those voters seeking a postal vote due to illness or disability to have their application form certified by a medical practitioner be replaced with an alternative means of approval which will not incur a fee”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Willie Aird. It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Department in this regard. It was further agreed that the correspondence also be forwarded to the Oireachtas Members for Laois.

### **Notice of Motion No: 29/2023**

Councillor Thomasina Connell & Councillor Conor Bergin proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

***“That Laois County Council introduce a reusable nappy initiative to encourage the use of cloth nappies, in line with other local authorities”***

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Barry Walsh. The Members were advised that the Cloth Nappy Incentive Scheme is operated and administered by VOICE Ireland. To date, the Scheme has operated as a pilot, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency together with a number of local authorities, including Fingal County Council, Dublin City Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Limerick City and County Council and Kerry County Council. The Scheme aims to support the use of reusable nappies among families who could not otherwise have considered trying them owing to the upfront costs in buying the nappies. Currently, costs involved in participating in the Scheme vary from €3500 per annum, for 20 families supported, to €9000 per annum, for 75 families supported. To be eligible for the scheme a family must be in permanent residence in a participating local authority administrative area. At this point in time, Laois County Council is not a participating Local Authority.

**Notice of Motion No: 30/2023**

Councillor P. J. Kelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That Laois County Council contact the Department of Education and Minister Norma Foley to make funds available to help supplement the high costs rural primary schools face in trying to provide transport to offsite activities such as swimming lessons, Cuman na mBunscoile matches, educational field trips etc.”*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Marie Tuohy. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Department of Education in this regard.

**Notice of Motion No: 31/2023**

Councillor Thomasina Connell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That Laois County Council calls on the Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr. Neale Richmond T.D., to urgently engage with our large supermarket retailers specifically with regard to the rising cost of Infant Formula Milk”*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor P.J. Kelly. The Members were advised that a letter will issue to the Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment in this regard.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

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