

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE ON 14TH OF DECEMBER 2009**

PRESENT:	Councillors	James Daly	In the Chair
		William Aird	Rotimi Adebari
		Pat Bowe	Patrick Bracken
		Ray Cribbin	James Deegan
		John Joe Fennelly	Catherine Fitzgerald
		Padraig Fleming	David Goodwin
		John King	Michael Lalor
		Jerry Lodge	Seamus McDonald
		Paul Mitchell	John Moran
		Tom Mulhall	Kathleen O' Brien
		Brendan Phelan	Martin Phelan
		Brian Stanley	Mary Sweeney

APOLOGIES: Councillors John Bonham Ben Brennan

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers Peter Carey, County Manager, Gerry Gibson, Director of Services, Declan Byrne, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, John Daly, Director of Services, Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services, Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Senior Executive Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary.

189. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, it was agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to Councillor John Bonham on the recent death of his father, Mr. John Bonham, Snr. On the proposition of Councillor William Aird, the meeting was adjourned for ten minutes.

On the proposition of Councillor James Daly seconded by Councillor John Moran, it was agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to Councillor Ben Brennan on the recent death of his cousin in the United Kingdom.

**190. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING HELD ON THE
30TH OF NOVEMBER 2009**

On the proposal of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor, it was agreed that the minutes of the November meeting held on the 30th of November 2009, as circulated be adopted and signed.

191. REPORTS ON AREA MEETINGS HELD IN SEPTEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

On the proposal of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor, the reports on Area Meetings held in September/December 2009 were noted.

192. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001

On the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley, it was agreed to dispose of the freehold at No. 56 Beladd, Portlaoise for a consideration of €127 under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

193. ONE SHARED SUSTAINABLE VISION FOR COUNTY LAOIS – A POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Members were circulated with a policy document for Sustainable Development which was approved in draft form at the June meeting. The Policy document has been amended to take account of the submissions received and on the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor, the members unanimously agreed that the policy be approved.

The Members queried if solar energy would be used in the refurbishment works on the third floor of Áras an Chontae. Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services indicated that there are a number of energy saving measures being used on this project including installation of special glazing.

194. ADOPTION OF CORPORATE PLAN 2009 – 2014

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, the Members adopted the Corporate Plan for the period 2009 – 2014.

195. CORRESPONDENCE

The Members were circulated with one item of correspondence which was an acknowledgement from Deputy Sean Fleming in relation to St. Vincent's Hospital,

Mountmellick and Shaen Hospital, Portlaoise in relation to a request to Minister Mary Harney for a meeting.

196. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 33/09

Councillor Paul Mitchell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council put pressure on Department of Social Welfare to cease the practice of having rows of people standing outside every social welfare office in the Country”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Department in this regard

Notice of Motion No: 34/09

Councillor Paul Mitchell proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council introduce a special scheme of rates to give new businesses a chance to get set up and to encourage new business into our County”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley. The County Manager indicated that there is no legal provision for this. He indicated that Laois is in a very competitive position and are proactive in their approach. He encouraged individual businesses to contact the Council if they are in difficulty.

Notice of Motion No: 35/09

Councillor William Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council call on the Minister for Health to intervene to ensure that no further patients are removed from Shaen Hospital without permission of their next of kin”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney. Members were informed that correspondence had been issued following the last monthly meeting to The Minister for Health & Children and also to Professor Brendan Drumm seeking clarification on retaining the services at Shaen and also at St. Vincent’s Hospital, Mountmellick. A lengthy discussion ensued and it was agreed that further correspondence would issue in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 36/09

Councillors James Daly, Willie Aird, John Moran, Pdraig Fleming & James Deegan proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That Laois County Council vehemently oppose the construction of a 400/110KV Eirgrid electrical sub-station, up to seven high velocity power lines and all associated works which is proposed for construction in the Ratheniska area, County Laois”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming.

EIRGRID’s Strategy for the development of Ireland’s Electricity Grid, GRID 25, states that the capacity of the transmission system has remained largely unchanged in the last twenty years, a period that has seen a growth of 150% in the electricity demand being carried by the system.

Eirgrid calculates that to facilitate the necessary increase in renewable generation and to adequately meet the demands of the electricity customer, the capacity of the bulk transmission system will need to be doubled by 2025.

The Strategy will involve upgrading the high voltage system and an investment of €4 billion over the period to 2025. It states that this new infrastructure is as essential to the future growth of the Country as investment in road, rail and broadband.

According to Eirgrid, GRID 25 is essential for:-

- Supporting growth in the regions and ensuring continued reliability and security of supply
- Providing high quality, high-voltage bulk power supply for Ireland that will enable the different regions to attract in future industry and boost existing industry
- Exploiting Ireland’s natural renewable sources of energy (wind and wave)
- Reducing Ireland’s carbon emissions by transmitting renewable energy in line with Government policy
- Increasing Ireland’s connectivity to the European Grid, allowing for both bulk exports of electricity and imports of electricity when appropriate.

If the necessary infrastructural investment does not take place, key parts of the grid will have reached capacity within the next five to ten years, resulting in loss of supply to customers and inability to supply electricity to new residential and commercial clients.

Access to the market will not be possible for all low-cost generators, limiting competitiveness in the electricity market and Ireland will not be strongly connected to the European Grid and will be unable to participate fully in a pan-European electricity market.

The estimated investment in the Midlands Region is €310 million. This includes upgrading of 225 kms of transmission network and new circuit build and tapping into the existing 400 KV line to strengthen the 110 KV network around Portlaoise, providing capacity to supply the continuing growth of Laois and Kildare.

The investment planned by Eirgrid is considered critical for the future economic development of County Laois.

Any application by Eirgrid will be made to An Bord Pleanala under the Strategic Infrastructure Act. The Board will refer the application to Laois County Council as the planning authority. Within 10 weeks, the planning authority must prepare a report and submit it to the elected Council. The elected Members may attach recommendations to the report by resolution. The report and the recommendations are then submitted to the Board, who will make a final decision on the application.

The Members indicated their strong opposition to the construction of the Eirgrid Electrical Sub-Station at this location.

Notice of Motion No: 37/09

Councillors Martin Phelan, John Bonham, John Joe Fennelly, Michael Lalor, Brendan Phelan & John King proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council write to the D.O.E.H.L.G. regarding the delay in approving the Six Towns Sewerage Schemes”

This motion was seconded by Councillor James Deegan. Mr. Gerry Gibson, Director of Services indicated that this matter is currently with the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

Notice of Motion No: 38/09

Councillors Martin Phelan, John Bonham, John Joe Fennelly, Michael Lalor, Brendan Phelan & John King proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council write to the D.O.E.H.L.G. asking that a single body be established to take responsibility for river maintenance, a National River Management Authority”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan.

Notice of Motion No: 39/09

Councillors Martin Phelan, John Bonham, John Joe Fennelly, Michael Lalor, Brendan Phelan & John King proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council inspect all County roads, locate all water gullies and mark on local maps, in the interest of proper drainage in the future”

This motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. The Members were advised that on foot of a previous Notice of Motion No. 31/09 in relation to flooding in general and the Council’s response to flooding incidents, the matter was raised at the Water & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on Monday, December 7th 2009.

It was agreed that this subject be included on the S.P.C. agenda for 2010. This particular proposal to identify and record water gullies in the County can be considered within the context of this subject. However, this work will depend on resources available and will have to be prioritised.

Notice of Motion No: 40/09

Councillor Jerry Lodge proposed the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council request the British Government to repatriate the remains of the late Henry Grattan, M.P., from Westminster in accordance with his stated wish to be buried at Moyanna, Co. Laois.

This motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____ **CERTIFIED:** _____
CATHAOIRLEACH **DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS**