

**MINUTES OF JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD IN ARAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE ON 26th OF JANUARY 2009**

PRESENT: Councillors

Tom Jacob	In the Chair
William Aird	John Bonham
Paddy Bracken	Ray Cribbin
James Daly	James Deegan
Geraldine Delaney	David Goodwin
John Joe Fennelly	Catherine Fitzgerald
Laurence Kavanagh	Michael Lalor
Jerry Lodge	Seamus McDonald
Michael Moloney	Dick Miller
Paul Mitchell	John Moran
Martin Phelan	Michael Rice
Brian Stanley	Mary Sweeney
John D. Turley	

APOLOGIES: Councillor Brendan Phelan

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

1. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS

On the proposal of Councillor Mary Sweeney and seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley, it was agreed that a letter of support and congratulations be sent to Mr. John Ging who is heading up the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Gaza Region. Mr. Ging is a native of Laois and it was agreed that Mr. Ging should be invited to a future meeting of the Council to report on the situation in Gaza. Councillor Michael Moloney also proposed that Laois County Council write to the Israeli Ambassador regarding human rights issues.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

On the proposal of Councillor Ray Cribbin seconded by Councillor James Deegan, it was agreed that the Minutes of the December meeting held on the 15th of December 2008 as circulated be adopted and signed.

On the proposal of Councillor John Bonhan seconded by Councillor Paddy Bracken, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Budget meeting held on the 19th of December 2008 as circulated be adopted and signed.

3. DRAFT FIVE YEAR PROGRAMME FOR THE ACCOMMODATION OF TRAVELLING FAMILIES IN COUNTY LAOIS 2009-2013

The Members were circulated with the draft Five Year Programme for the accommodation of travelling families in County Laois 2009-2013. Laois County Council undertook a comprehensive consultation process with all stakeholders including meetings with Travellers themselves, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, the Housing Strategic Policy Committee and members of the Council.

Councillor Brian Stanley proposed the programme and this proposal was seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney.

Councillor John Moran indicated that a letter should issue to the Department of the Environment expressing concern in relation to the cost to local authorities as a consequence of illegal parking of travellers and that additional powers should be given to the Gardaí in dealing with the issue.

Councillor William Aird welcomed the programme and congratulated all staff involved in the preparation of the plan. He also acknowledged the work of the Consultative Committee. He also indicated that proper legislation must be put in place so that more powers can be vested in the Gardaí to have the laws respected.

The County Manager complimented Ms. Fionnuala Daly, Senior Social Worker and the staff involved in the preparation of the programme, acknowledged the input of the Consultative Committee and also thanked the Members for their contribution.

4. PART VIII OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT) REGULATIONS 2001 - 2007

(A) RATHDOWNEY FIRE STATION

The members were circulated with a copy of the planning report for the provision of a new fire Station facility at Johnstown Road, Rathdowney. The project involves:-

- (i) the erection of a new fire station facility comprising two appliance bays, a muster bay for a crew of nine, a drying room, a watch room, ablution facilities and a training room
- (ii) provision of outdoor training facilities including drill yard, drill tower for ladder drills, hydrants and underground storage tanks for house drills and parking facilities for crew members
- (iii) Ancillary works including landscaping and removal of a derelict shed from the site

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor seconded by Councillor Martin Phelan, the Members unanimously agreed to proceed with the proposed development.

(B) IMPROVEMENTS TO THE R445 MOUNTRATH ROAD BETWEEN MARKET SQUARE ROUNDABOUT AND THE PALLAS ROAD L-2113

The Members were circulated with the planning report on the proposed improvements to the R445 Mountrath Road between Market Square Roundabout and the Pallas Road L-2113. The works extend from Market Square Roundabout westwards to the Pallas Road (L-2113) junction at Lewis's Garage, a distance of 1.75 kms.

Queries were raised in relation to the timeframe for the works. Mr. Gerry Gibson, Director of Services indicated that it would be dependent on funds becoming available. The Members welcomed the proposed works.

On the proposition of Councillor Brian Stanley seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, the Members unanimously agreed to proceed with the proposed development.

5. TAKING IN CHARGE

(A) TAKING IN CHARGE OF ASHLEY GARDENS, BORRIS ROAD, PORTLAOISE

On the proposal of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Ashley Gardens, Borris Road, Portlaoise.

(B) TAKING IN CHARGE OF GROVE PARK ESTATE, BALLYCULLENBEG, MOUNTMELICK

On the proposal of Councillor Patrick Bracken seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed to the taking in charge of Grove Park Estate, Ballycullenbeg, Mountmellick.

6. INDICATIVE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009-2011

The Members were circulated with an indicative list of the likely capital projects to be undertaken over the next three years.

Councillor Jerry Lodge requested that the provision of a third level college be included in the proposed projects and suggested that perhaps the third floor of Áras an Chontae be used as the start of this initiative which has been discussed at County Development Board meetings.

Councillor John Joe Fennely raised the issue of traffic management at the National School in Abbeyleix.

Councillor Michael Lalor enquired if Lacca bridge could be included on the list. Councillor Lalor was advised that this would be going out to tender shortly.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items of correspondence, received since the last meeting, were circulated to the Members:-

- (i) An acknowledgment from the Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in relation to installation aid grant to young farmers dated the 12th of January 2009
- (ii) Correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas in relation to affordable housing schemes dated the 17th of December 2008
- (iii) Correspondence from the Department of Health & Children in relation to cervical vaccinations for 12 year old girls dated the 18th of December 2008

8. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Councillor Brian Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council contacts the Minister for the Environment and Local Government and the Minister for Housing to impress on them the need to re-direct resources towards the purchase of Affordable and Social Housing units and away from short term measures such as rent subsidies”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Jacob. It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government in this regard.

9. Any Other Business

Councillor Martin Phelan advised the meeting that he had met with the Derryguile Residents regarding their serious concerns regarding the odours at Kyletelisha. Councillor Patrick Bracken informed the Members that there has been continuous odours since last August at the landfill and it's surrounding areas. A full debate is needed on this issue.

Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that all the filled cells have been capped up to Cell 14. The first two mini-cells of Cell 14 will be capped by April 2009 and this should reduce odours at the Landfill. The main cause of odours is the amount of organic waste being disposed of in landfills. Waste Bye-Laws coming before the Council in the near future will provide for the introduction of a Brown Bin Collection and the biological treatment of organic waste.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

_____ **Cathaoirleach**

_____ **Director of Corporate Affairs**