

**MINUTES OF THE JULY MONTHLY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE ON 27th OF JULY 2009**

PRESENT: Councillors

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messers Peter Carey, County Manager, Gerry Gibson, Director of Services, Ian McCormack, A/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

135. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

On the proposal of Councillor Michael Lalor seconded by Councillor John King, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 19th of June 2009, as circulated be adopted and signed.

On the proposal of Councillor Ray Cribbin seconded by Councillor Patrick Bracken, it was agreed that the Minutes of the June Meeting held on the 29th of June 2009, as circulated be adopted and signed.

Councillor Paul Mitchell indicated that at the June monthly meeting he had raised the issue of rainwater harvesting. Mr. Gerry Gibson, Director of Services stated that this would be referred to the Planning & Transportation S.P.C.

**136. ELECTION OF 9 MEMBERS OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL TO BE MEMBERS OF
LAOIS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE (TWO OF MUST BE FEMALE)**

This matter was raised at the June Monthly Meeting of Laois County Council and the following Members were nominated to the Vocational Educational Committee:

Councillors Patrick Bracken, Brian Stanley, Rotimi Adebari, Pat Bowe, Mary Sweeney, Paul Mitchell, John Bonham, William Aird & John King

The V.E.C. indicated that the current composition is improperly constituted and contravenes S.1 No. 924 of 2004 in relation to gender balance.

On the proposition of Councillor Jerry Lodge seconded by Councillor Seamus McDonald, the Members unanimously agreed that Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald be nominated to the board of the Laois Vocational Educational Committee in place of Councillor Patrick Bracken. It was also agreed that Councillor Patrick Bracken replace Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald on the board of the Midland Regional Authority 2009-2014.

137. NOMINATIONS TO THE LOCAL TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Members were advised that approval is required for the appointment of representatives of local travellers and traveller groups and officials of the appointing authority to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley, the Members unanimously agreed that the following representatives of local travellers be appointed to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee:-

- Ms. Kathleen McDonagh (Portlaoise)
- Ms. Kathleen Nevin (Portlaoise)
- Ms. Lisa Harty (Portarlington)
- Ms. Kathleen McInerney (Moutrath)
- Ms. Bridget McInerney (Mountrath/Mountmellick)
- Ms. Julie Nevin/Ms. Marie Carnicer (Local Traveller Action Group)

It was also agreed that the following officials of Laois County Council be appointed to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee:-

- Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services
- Mr. Martin Daly, Senior Executive Officer
- Ms. Fionnuala Daly, Senior Social Worker

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

- (a) Disposal of 14 unsold affordable housing units to be used for temporary social housing for a period of five years – to be managed and maintained under a five year leasing arrangement under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) - at Clonboyn Close, Clondarrig Close & Boughlone Way, Mountrath Road, Portlaoise

- (b) Disposal of 18 unsold affordable housing units to be used for temporary social housing for a period of five years – to be managed and maintained under a five year social leasing arrangement at Colliers View, Colliers Lane; Buttercup Avenue, Esker Hills; Hawthorn Way, Esker Hills & Brockra Walk, Mountrath Road, Portlaoise
- (c) Disposal of 24 unsold affordable housing units to be used for temporary social housing for a period of five years – to be managed and maintained under a five year social leasing arrangement at Market Mews, Mountrath Road; Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise; Rush Hall, Shannon Road, Mountrath; Landsdowne Court, Portarlinton; Landsdowne Road, Portarlinton, Corrig Glen, Portarlinton & Ossory Court, Borris-in-Ossory

The County Manager informed the Members that due to the changes in the housing market there are 110 affordable units on hand at the moment with Laois County Council and that it would prove very difficult to sell the units in the short term. This proposal is a five year leasing arrangement with the voluntary housing associations which is part of a new initiative put forward by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. It is proposed that the Council will enter into a Service Level Agreement with the voluntary housing associations for the term of the lease (5 years) for the management and repair of the units and management of the social housing tenants. The County Manager indicated that the interest repayments total approximately €800,000 for this year alone. This initiative would reduce the interest by 50%. The tenants will have a range of options at the end of the five years including incremental purchase of the property, buying out the property, extending the lease or the Council may have the option of taking the property into it's own housing stock.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Members expressed concern in relation to the proposal. The Members enquired if Laois County Council could maintain and manage the houses ourselves. However, they were advised that this is a national scheme and that unsold units under the lease or RAS arrangement must be managed by a housing association. The Members requested more time to consider the proposal.

It was agreed that the matter be adjourned until September and be discussed in further detail at the special meeting scheduled for the 14th of September 2009.

139. DISPOSAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 IN RESPECT OF LAND AT TOGHER, PORTLAOISE

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Jerry Lodge, the members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.1 acres in the townland of Clonadadoran for a consideration of €500.00.

140. SERVICE PRESENTATION BY MS. MARNA HATTON, CO-ORDINATOR OF LAOIS SUPPORT SERVICE AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE

Ms. Marna Hatton, Co-Ordinator of the Laois Support Service Against Domestic Abuse was welcomed to the Council Chamber by the Cathaoirleach & Members.

Ms. Hatton gave a presentation to the Members on the services provided by the Laois Support Service Against Domestic Abuse. The Members thanked Ms. Hatton for her very comprehensive presentation.

141. RURAL WATER PROGRAMME 2009

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Rural Water Programme for 2009 detailing the funding received from Laois County Council and the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government totaling €2,030,000.

A discussion ensued during which Mr. Gerry Gibson, Director of Services responded to the various queries raised.

142. HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT SCHEME 2009

The Members were advised that the Higher Education Grant Scheme for 2009 had not yet been received from the Department of Education. The Members were informed that this item would be discussed at the special meeting scheduled for the 14th of September 2009. Details of the scheme would be forwarded to Members when received.

143. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items of correspondence were received since the June Meeting of Laois County Council :

- (i) Correspondence from the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform dated the 8th of July 2009 in relation to a major review of gambling
- (ii) Correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Social & Family Affairs dated the 16th of July 2009 in relation to the Register of Electors
- (iii) Correspondence from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government dated the 17th of July 2009 in relation to the an increase in litter fines and other issues

144. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motions No: 22/09

Councillor Brian Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council include in it’s tenancy agreements a clause regarding all households having a means of disposing of their waste in a proper manner. Also that we write to the Minister for the Environment to request that a similar condition be put on private rented dwellings”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird. The Members were advised that Laois County Council’s Tenancy Agreement currently states “The tenant shall not cause any damage to the dwelling and shall keep same in a clean and proper state, and shall not allow any refuse or offensive matter to accumulate in any portion thereof”. It is the opinion of the Housing Department that this clause covers the issue of tenant’s responsibility for disposing of waste in a proper manner. This can also be referred back to the SPC if the Members wish.

It was also agreed that a letter issue to the Minister in this regard

Notice of Motion No: 23/09

Councillor Martin Phelan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Council call on Minister Brendan Smith to re-instate REPS 4 as agreed”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall. It was agreed that a letter issue to the Minister in this regard

Notice of Motion No: 24/09

Councillor Martin Phelan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That the Council form a committee to manage and maintain the River Nore and it’s tributaries”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor. The Members were advised that the management and maintenance of the River Nore and it’s tributaries is a matter for the Office of Public Works. It was agreed that Laois County Council will contact the Office of Public Works to ascertain their plans.

Notice of Motion No: 25/09

Councillor Martin Phelan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council present a complete update on developments on the M7/M8 Motorway and have the N.R.A. come to a meeting of this Council as soon as possible”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly.

The Members were circulated with the most recent and up to date monthly report prepared by P.J.V. for the M7/M8 Motorway. Following the last Council meeting, the County Manager formally wrote on the 2nd of July 2009 to the N.R.A. expressing concerns on a number of issues.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____ CERTIFIED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS