**MINUTES OF THE JUNE MONTHLY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE ON 29TH OF JUNE 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, Declan Byrne, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, John Daly, Director of Services, Ms. Carmel McNicholl, A/Director of Services & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary

**119. VOTE OF SYMPATHY**

On the proposal of Councillor Ben Brennan, the Members unanimously agreed to pass a vote of sympathy to the Egan family on the recent death of Mrs. Olive Egan, Aughaterry, Ballickmoyler, Carlow

On the proposal of Councillor Ray Cribbin, the members unanimously agreed to pass a vote of sympathy to the Shortall family, Station Road, Portarlington on the recent death of Ms. Kitty Kennedy.

**120. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS**

On the proposal of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously agreed to pass a vote of congratulations to the Portlaoise U/14 Hurlers who recently won the All-Ireland Feile.

**121. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL**

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, it was agreed that the Minutes of the May meeting held on the 25th of May 2009 as circulated be adopted and signed.

**122. REPORT ON AREA MEETINGS & S.P.C. MEETINGS HELD IN JUNE 2009**

The Members noted the reports on the Area Meetings & SPC Meetings held in June 2009 as circulated.

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

The following Members formed a group:

Councillors Rotimi Adebari, Pat Bowe, Ben Brennan, Brian Stanley, Catherine Fitzgerald, Padraig Fleming, Brendan Phelan, Raymond Cribbin, Paddy Bracken, John Joe Fennelly, Jerry Lodge & Seamus McDonald:

On the proposal of Councillor Jerry Lodge seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley, it was agreed that the following Members be elected to the Laois Vocational Education Committee:

***Councillor Patrick Bracken***

***Councillor Brian Stanley***

***Councillor Rotimi Adebari***

***Councillor Pat Bowe***

On the proposal of Councillor John Moran seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor, it was agreed that the following Members be elected to the Laois Vocational Education Committee:-

***Councillor Mary Sweeney***

***Councillor Paul Mitchell***

***Councillor John Bonham***

***Councillor William Aird***

***Councillor John King***

**124. APPOINT 1 ADDITIONAL MEMBER TO THE LAOIS PARTNERSHIP LTD**

The following Members formed a group:

Councillors Rotimi Adebari, Pat Bowe, Ben Brennan, Brian Stanley, Catherine Fitzgerald, Padraig Fleming, Brendan Phelan, Raymond Cribbin, Paddy Bracken, John Joe Fennelly, Jerry Lodge & Seamus McDonald:

On the proposal of Councillor Brian Stanley seconded by Councillor Jerry Lodge, it was agreed that the following Member be elected to the Laois Partnership Company Ltd:

***Councillor Pat Bowe***

**125. APPOINT 1 MEMBER TO THE HERITAGE FORUM (1 S.P.C. CHAIR) & 1 NOMINEE FOR RATIFICATION BY THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

On the proposal of Councillor John Moran seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor, it was agreed that the following Member be elected to the Heritage Forum:-

***Councillor Martin Phelan***

It was agreed that the remaining nominee to be appointed would be deferred to a later meeting.

**126. DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2009-2012**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the Draft Climate Change Strategy which sets out the actions taken or to be taken to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions under various headings. The Members welcomed the document. Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that the strategy would be reviewed on an annual basis.

On the proposal of Councillor Mary Sweeney seconded by Councillor Paul Mitchell, the members unanimously adopted the Draft Climate Change Strategy for 2009-2012

**127. ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRESS REPORT – PRESENTATION BY MARK MACCAULAY, MIDLANDS ENERGY AGENCY**

Mr. Mark Maccaulay, Manager of the Midlands Energy Agency provided a presentation to the Members on the work and progress to date of the Midlands Energy Agency in relation to energy savings.

The Members thanked Mr. Maccaulay for his very comprehensive presentation. Mr. Peter Carey, County Manager also complimented both Mr. Maccaulay and also Mr. Richard Morton and acknowledged the progress to date.

**128. DRAFT POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2009-2012**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the draft policy for Sustainable Development 2009-2012 which was prepared by the Local Agenda 21 Committee. On the proposal of Councillor Paul Mitchell seconded by Councillor John Moran, the members unanimously adopted the Draft Policy for Sustainable Development 2009-2012

**129. ABBEYLEIX LIBRARY – R.I.A.I. AWARD 2009**

Mr. Gerry Maher, County Librarian welcomed Mr. Shane de Blacam & Ms. Chloe Street from De Blacam and Meagher to the Council Meeting. Mr. Maher indicated that Abbeyleix Library has won the Royal Institute of Architects Ireland Architecture Award in the Conservation Category for 2009.

Mr. Blacam expressed thanks to Mr. Declan Byrne, Director of Services, Mr. Gerry Maher, County Librarian, Mr. P.J. Dempsey, Senior Executive Engineer and also to Mr. Aidan O’ Connor, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government for their assistance during the works. He indicated that the library is now a tourist attraction and will be a legacy to hand down to generations.

Mr. Peter Carey, County Manager & Mr. Declan Byrne, Director of Services acknowledge the work of De Blacam and Meagher and also thanked the Members for their support. Mr. Carey expressed thanks also to Ms. Norma McDermott in the Library Council for her assistance and support on all projects to date and complimented all the staff in the library service.

**130. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN (2006-2010) FOR THE MIDLANDS REGION**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the progress report on the implementation of the Waste Management Plan (2006-2010), which was noted.

Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that this is update on the previous plan and sets out the framework for the sustainable management of waste within the five local authority areas. Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald requested to see a breakdown of the Laois figures rather than the Midland figures. Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that these would be provided.

Councillor William Aird expressed disappointment in relation to the reduction of opening hours at the landfill on a Saturday. Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that this is due to the fact that there has been a reduction of waste going to landfill resulting in a reduction of income in this area. Councillor Aird complimented all involved with the Green Schools Flag

Councillor Brian Stanley expressed concern in relation to illegal dumping and indicated that this should be addressed. Councillor Stanley requested that a letter issue to the Minister requesting that legislation be brought forward that each household should show how they dispose of their waste. Councillor John Joe Fennelly also indicated that Council tenants are not disposing of rubbish correctly and that this should be a condition in their tenancy agreement.

Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that correspondence has issued to the Minister requesting that litter fines be increased substantially. Mr. Daly indicated that a reminder would issue in this regard.

Councillor Mary Sweeney expressed concern in relation to the collection charges and requested that a letter issue to A.E.S. as to why they are charging €100 more per annum that what is being charged in other Counties. Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that we would have this matter investigated.

**131. COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD STRATEGY REVIEW 2009-2012**

The Members were circulated with a copy of the County Development Board Strategy Review 2009-2012

On the proposal of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Patrick Bracken, the Members unanimously agreed to adopt the County Development Board Strategy Review 2009 – 2012

**132. LAUNCH OF ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

On the proposal of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor John Moran, the Members unanimously agreed to launch the Annual Report 2008. The Members were circulated with a copy of the Annual Report 2008 on CD-Rom

The Members expressed concern in relation to the Register of Electors indicating that there is huge room for improvement in this area. It was suggested that people with local knowledge or people in the postal service be employed to act as Fieldworkers. Councillor Paul Mitchell suggested that when a child comes off the Children’s Allowance register that there should be a system in place to automatically go on the Register of Electors.

Councillor William Aird proposed that a meeting be scheduled to discuss the Register of Electors in more detail.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor James Daly expressed his thanks to Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Ms. Marie O’ Hora, Ms. Catherine Gorman and the staff in the Corporate Affairs Section on their work/input on the Register.

**133. CORRESPONDENCE**

The following items of correspondence were circulated to the Members:-

1. Letter from the Health Service Executive regarding Cystic Fibrosis services at St. Vincent’s University dated the 19th of May 2009
2. Letter from the Department of Transport regarding the Irish Rail Sleeper factory dated the 25th of May 2009
3. Letter from the Regional Disability Services regarding the Special Needs Assessment dated the 15th of June 2009
4. Letter from Iarnród Eireann regarding the production of concrete railway sleepers in Portlaoise dated the 26th of May 2009
5. Letter from the Department of Transport regarding the Iarnróid Eireann sleeper factory in Portlaoise

**134. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND**

The Members were circulated with a copy of correspondence dated the 24th of June 2009 from the Local Government Finance Section in relation to adjustments arising from the supplementary budget and anticipated shortfall in motor tax receipts

Mr. Peter Carey, County Manager informed the Members of the recent notification from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government regarding a further cut of 3.22% in the Local Government Fund which equated to a reduction of €584,777.

He stated that, in addition to the previous cut in the Local Government Fund and the significant reduction in road grants, this had serious implications for the Council’s revenue budget. He also referred to the various income streams such as rates , water charges, parking fees, planning fees and landfill income which were likely to be well below budget. He said that significant expenditure savings were necessary and that while every effort was being made, it would be difficult to balance the revenue account in the current year.

He acknowledged the positive response of staff and union representatives to proposals put forward by Management and said even greater flexibility was needed. He further stated that due to the cutbacks there would be a negative impact on customer service standards. The Members acknowledged the position outlined by the County Manager and requested that every effort be made to protect the most vulnerable customers of the Council.

1. **SHAEN HOSPITAL**

Councillor William Aird condemned the recent decision by the Health Services Executive to reduce the number of beds at Shaen Hospital. He proposed that a representative from the Health Services Executive be invited to attend a Council meeting to outline to the members the rationale for this decision. Councillor Brian Stanley seconded the proposal

1. **BALLINAKILL SWIMMING POOL**

Councillor John Bonham wished to record a note of thanks to Councillor Padraig Fleming for his assistance in the recent provision of emergency water supplies to Ballinakill Swimming Pool.

**T**his concluded the business of the meeting.

**SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_CERTIFIED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
 CATHAOIRLEACH DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS**