

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN  
ÁRAS AN CHONTAE ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH 2013**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Paul Mitchell In the Chair  
Rotimi Adebari William Aird  
John Bonham Paddy Bracken  
Ray Cribbin James Daly  
James Deegan John Joe Fennelly  
Catherine Fitzgerald Pdraig Fleming  
David Goodwin Alan Hand  
John King Michael Lalor  
Jerry Lodge Seamus McDonald  
John Moran Tom Mulhall  
Brendan Phelan Martin Phelan  
Mary Sweeney

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Ben Brennan Kathleen O' Brien

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Messers Peter Carey, County Manager, Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services, Ms. Josephine Kavanagh, Administrative Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary.

**20. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING OF  
LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> OF FEBRUARY 2013**

On the proposition of Councillor Michael Lalor seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Minutes of the February Meeting of Laois County Council held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 were confirmed as circulated.

**21. REPORTS ON AREA & SPC MEETINGS HELD IN MARCH 2013 FOR NOTING**

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Reports on Area & SPC Meetings held in March 2013 were noted as circulated.

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

**DISPOSAL OF 0.4031 HECTARES OF LAND AT CASTLETOWN, DONAGHMORE IN THE TOWNLAND OF CASTLETOWN FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €1.00**

On the proposition of Councillor Brendan Phelan seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.4031 hectares of land at Castletown for a consideration of €1.00.

**DISPOSAL OF 79 M2 OF LAND AT POUND STREET, RATHDOWNEY, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF RATHDOWNEY FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €100.00**

On the proposition of Councillor Brendan Phelan seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 79 m2 of land at Pound Street, Rathdowney, Co. Laois in the townland of Rathdowney for a consideration of €100.00.

**DISPOSAL OF 370 MARKET MEWS, MARYBOROUGH VILLAGE, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONROOSK LITTLE FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €65,000**

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 370 Market Mews, Maryborough Village, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Clonroosk Little for a consideration of €65,000.

**DISPOSAL OF 358 MARKET MEWS, MARYBOROUGH VILLAGE, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONROOSK LITTLE FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €65,000**

On the proposition of Councillor Mary Sweeney seconded by Councillor John Bonham, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 358 Market Mews, Maryborough Village, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Clonroosk Little for a consideration of €65,000.

**DISPOSAL OF 412 MARKET MEWS, MARYBOROUGH VILLAGE, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONROOSK LITTLE FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €65,000**

On the proposition of Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 412 Market Mews, Maryborough Village, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in the townland of Clonroosk Little for a consideration of €65,000.

## **LEASE OF 2.464 HECTARES OF LAND AT CAMROSS, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS, IN THE TOWNLAND OF LONGFORD FOR A PERIOD OF 10 YEARS FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €300 PER ANNUM**

On the proposition of Councillor Michael Lalor seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan, the Members unanimously agreed to the lease of 2.464 hectares of land at Camross, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, in the townland of Longford for a period of 10 years for a consideration of €300 per annum.

## **23. ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2012 INCLUDING APPROVAL OF OVER-EXPENDITURE AND TRANSFERS TO CAPITAL**

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance briefed the Members on the Annual Financial Statement for 2012. The summary of capital expenditure and income shows a debit balance of €5,993,380 at the 31st of December 2012 compared to a debit balance of €5,017, 537 at the beginning of 2012. 2013 budgetary provisions will reduce this amount to less than €4.4 million. He advised that 2012 was again a difficult year with reductions in the Local Government Fund and in some grants from Government Departments as well as reductions in many of our own income sources. The percentage yields from rates and housing loans are a reflection of the financial situation businesses and mortgage holders are in. There has been, however, an improvement in commercial water and rent/annuity collections and every effort is being made to collect all monies owed.

It was necessary also during the course of the year to reduce expenditure across most service divisions mainly as a result of the loss of €409,600 in the Local Government Fund due to the level of compliance achieved in the payment of the Household Charge. These measures together with strict budgetary controls and prudent financial management resulted in a surplus of €5,428 on Laois County Council's revenue account for the year. The Head of Finance extended thanks to Ms. Julie Bergin, Financial Management Accountant and all the staff in the Finance Department for the significant work carried out in the preparation of the A.F.S. He, also, thanked the Cathaoirleach, Members, Manager and Directors for their support in ensuring a balanced budget for 2012.

The County Manager, Mr. Peter Carey indicated that quarterly returns had to be submitted to the IMF and that balancing the books is an ongoing challenge and paid tribute to the Head of Finance and his staff. The Members welcomed the report and complimented Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance and all staff in the Finance Section. The Head of Finance responded to the various queries raised by the Members.

On the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Ray Cribbin, the Members unanimously adopted the Annual Financial Statement 2012 including approval of over-expenditure and transfers to capital.

## **24. REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Members were circulated with a report on Development Contributions detailing monies received in respect of development contributions and how such monies have been expended.

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance responded to the various queries raised by the Members in this regard.

## **25. ADOPTION OF DRAFT MIDLANDS REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN 2013-2016**

The Members were circulated with the Midlands Region Homelessness Action Plan 2013-2016 which outlines a comprehensive model of the various components of homeless services and arrangements required. This constitutes an overall policy framework for homeless services in the Midlands Region. Following completion and analysis of more detailed data and completion of a rigorous review of homeless service requirements, the Action Plan will be supplemented by a detailed Implementation Blueprint of homeless services.

This Blueprint will provide the necessary detail to give effect to the framework model with more specific identification of the nature and extent of homeless services, facilities and arrangements required during the life of the plan.

The Members complimented the Housing Officer, the Senior Social Worker & Housing staff and the outside agencies on the provision of housing to the homeless. On the proposition of Councillor Tom Mulhall seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously adopted the draft Midlands Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2013-2016.

## **26. APPROVAL OF AWARD OF ARTS ACT GRANTS 2012**

The Members were circulated with details on the successful applicants for funding under the Arts Act Grants 2013.

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Mary Sweeney, the Members unanimously approved the Arts Act Grants for 2013 as outlined. The Members were advised that the grants would be paid in April to the recipients. Compliments were paid to Ms. Muireann Ni Chonaill and the Arts Office and also congratulations were extended to the recipients of the grants.

## **27. DRAFT LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

Members were circulated with a copy of the draft Laois County Council Annual Report 2012. Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Service indicated to the Members that the Local Government Act, 2011 requires that a draft report be presented to the

Members by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor Rotimi Adebari, the Members unanimously agreed to adopt the draft Laois County Council Annual Report for 2012.

## **28. DRAFT AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

The Annual Report for 2012 of the Audit Committee as circulated to the Members was noted and Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services outlined the progress made by the Audit Committee in 2012.

## **29. CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION TO MS. PAM QUIRKE & THE CPR TEAM OF PORTARLINGTON LEISURE CENTRE**

Mr. Sean Quirke, Manager of Portarlington Leisure Centre was in attendance with his staff Ms. Pam Quirke, Ms. Margaret Rose, Ms. Julie Murray, Ms. Sharon Fitzgerald and Mr. Michael Carroll to receive Certificates of Recognition from Laois County Council.

The Members were advised that the team had contributed significantly to the successful resuscitation of a patron of Portarlington Leisure Centre who had suffered a serious cardiac arrest in the steamroom at the Leisure Centre recently. The team were commended on their achievement by the Cathaoirleach and Members of Laois County Council and wished every success in their future career and personal life.

Mr. Sean Quirke, Portarlington Leisure Centre Manager thanked the Council for their presentation and recognition and also congratulated his team on their actions and in doing so raising the profile of Portarlington Leisure Centre.

## **30. PRESENTATION BY MR. DECLAN POWER, ACTING CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ON 'KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE'**

Mr. Declan Power, Acting Chief Fire Officer delivered a presentation to the Members on 'Keeping Communities Safe'. He briefed the Members on delivery of services, the range of services, incident types, fire safety, fire prevention and emergency management. Mr. Power also briefed the Members on the CAMP 11 – Computerised Aided Mobilisation Project and the review of same including the implications for Laois.

The Members complimented Mr. Power and indeed all of the Fire Service on their work throughout the County.

## **31. CORRESPONDENCE**

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

- (i) Correspondence from Student Universal Support Ireland regarding the Higher Education Grants
- (ii) Correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Justice & Equality dated the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2013 in relation to Garda Resources
- (iii) Correspondence regarding emergency contact numbers for the Laois County Council Housing Department for the Easter period

## 32. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

### Notice of Motion No: 04/2013

Councillor Jerry Lodge proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That this Council urgently request the Government not to sell off Coillte or it’s harvesting rights and that the asset be used to the maximum in the longterm interest of the Irish people”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor Alan Hand. It was agreed that a letter issue to Coillte in this regard.

### Notice of Motion No: 05/2013

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That Laois County Council clarify the position and indicate whether or not it is proposed to increase rents due to the proposed property tax for Local Authority Houses”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor Jerry Lodge

The Members were advised that the Local Property Tax will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013. It will be administered by Revenue and a half year charge will apply in 2013. In the case of housing provided by Local Authorities, the Local Authority will be liable for (LPT).

Exempt properties include properties owned by a public body and used to provide ‘special needs’ accommodation and support to people who have a particular need in addition to a general housing need, to enable them to live in the community, e.g. sheltered housing for the elderly and disabled. Mobile homes are also exempt.

The rate of LPT will be 0.18% for properties up to a market value of €1 million. The cost to Laois County Council in a full year will be approximately €180,000 and €90,000 in 2013. A National Differential rent scheme is currently in draft and will be available in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2013. It is expected that the issue of Local Property Tax will be dealt with in this Scheme. It was noted that the Housing Officer would keep the Members briefed.

**Notice of Motion No: 06/2013**

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That this Council totally oppose the recent allocation of €260,923.46 for capital allocation for the payment of the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme and request that the Department at least provide the same allocation as last year, i.e. €1,080,000. In doing so, a deputation should be sought with Minister Jan O’ Sullivan in this regard”*

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald indicated that the allocation is 75% less than that of 2012 which was nearly €1.1 million. Mr. Michael Rainey, Housing Officer indicated that the matter had been appealed but was unsuccessful.

It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Minister Jan O’ Sullivan indicating Laois County Council’s dissatisfaction with the allocation and that a deputation also be sought comprising of Councillor Mulhall as Chairperson of the Housing S.P.C. & Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

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