

**MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS  
AN CHONTAE ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY 2013**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillors	Paul Mitchell	In the Chair
		Rotimi Adebari	William Aird
		John Bonham	Paddy Bracken
		Ben Brennan	Ray Cribbin
		James Daly	James Deegan
		John Joe Fennelly	Catherine Fitzgerald
		Padraig Fleming	David Goodwin
		Alan Hand	John King
		Michael Lalor	Jerry Lodge
		Seamus McDonald	John Moran
		Tom Mulhall	Kathleen O'Brien
		Brendan Phelan	Martin Phelan
		Mary Sweeney	Lisa Delaney

**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.

**46. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 29<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2013**

On the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor John Moran, the Minutes of the April Meeting of Laois County Council held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 were confirmed as circulated.

Councillor James Deegan raised a query on the Minutes of the April Meeting of Laois County Council held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 11/2013 as follows:

*“That Laois County Council amend the County Development Plan in relation to Wind Energy Strategy so that wind turbines shall be located further away from dwelling houses in view of new technology and the increased height of wind turbines”*

Councillor Deegan enquired if a variation of the County Development Plan could be carried out as regards the Wind Energy Strategy. A query was also raised in relation to the Laois Wind Energy Awareness Group making a presentation to the meeting. The County Manager clarified that he had met with the group on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 in relation to same. Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, advised that the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government are conducting a review of the National Wind Energy Development Guidelines and in that context Laois County Council will undertake a review of the Wind Energy Strategy as part of its mid-term review of the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017. This review is scheduled to commence before the end of the year. Any such amendment as proposed would be premature.

**47. NOMINATION OF MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF HERITAGE HOUSE, ABBEYLEIX**

The Members were advised that notification had been received from Councillor John Bonham of his resignation from the Board of Heritage House, Abbeyleix. On the proposition of Councillor Martin Phelan and seconded by Councillor Alan Hand, the Members unanimously agreed that Councillor John King be nominated to the Board of Heritage House, Abbeyleix.

**48. DISPOAL OF LAND UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001**

- (i) **DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AT 16 ERKINDALE DRIVE, DURROW IN THE TOWNLAND OF DURROW, TOWNSPARKS FOR A CONSIDERATION OF €42,000**

On the proposition of Councillor John Bonham seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of property at 16 Erkindale Drive, Durrow in the townland of Durrow, Townsparks for a consideration of €42,000.

**49. CONFIRM DATE FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL**

On the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed that the Annual General meeting of Laois County Council would take place on Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 2.30 p.m. (in accordance with Section 3(Schedule 10) of the Local Government Act, 2001.

**50. SECTION 85 AGREEMENT BETWEEN KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL AND LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 85 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2001 FOR THE LEINSTER BRIDGES REHABILITATION CONTRACT NO: 1 – 2013 PART 1**

The Members were circulated with an agreement between Kildare County Council and Laois County Council for the Leinster Bridges Rehabilitation Contract No. 1 – 2013 – Part 1. Mr. John O' Donoghue, Senior Engineer briefed the Members on the Agreement. It was noted that it would be more convenient if all statutory powers, functions and duties exercised and performed by it in relation to the construction of the project were exercised and performed by Kildare County Council on behalf of Laois County Council.

On the proposition of Councillor Mary Sweeney seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously adopted the Section 85 Agreement in accordance with the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as circulated.

## **51. REPORT ON SERVICE INDICATORS 2011**

The Members were circulated with the report on service indicators for 2011 and Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services briefed the Members on same.

## **52. HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT SCHEME 2013/2014**

The Members were circulated with the summary as issued by the Department of Education and Science which outlines the changes in the 2013/2014 Scheme.

The main changes were outlined, i.e, the 3% reduction in the income thresholds and the increase in the student contribution by €250.00 to €2,500 for the 2013/2014 academic year.

The Members expressed disappointment with the reductions in thresholds and in particular the increase in the student contribution which could reduce the number of students being eligible for a third level grant. The Members views were taken into account. However, Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services indicated that it is a National scheme and in order to begin the process of renewals of grants the changes in the scheme would have to be adopted.

Students were urged to apply to SUSI for the grant before the Leaving Cert results are received in order to avoid delays.

On the proposition of Councillor Mary Sweeney seconded by Councillor James Deegan, the Higher Education Grant Scheme for 2013/2014 was adopted as presented.

## **53. PRESENTATION BY MR. JIM BOLGER, HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER ON HEALTH & SAFETY/RISK MANAGEMENT**

Mr. Jim Bolger, Health & Safety Officer delivered a presentation to the Members on Health & Safety including a H.S.A. update, ongoing issues and developments and future/challenges. The Members complimented the Health & Safety Officer on his presentation and work to date in continually developing a safety culture throughout the organisation.

## **54. CORRESPONDENCE**

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

- (i) Correspondence received from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government dated the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 09/2013
- (ii) Correspondence received from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 07/2013

- (iii) Correspondence received from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 10/2013
- (iv) Correspondence received from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government dated the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2013 in relation to Notice of Motion No: 11/2013

## 55. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

### Notice of Motion: 12/2013

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That this Council inform the Members of how it proposes to pay the Property Tax on Housing Stock”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor Alan Hand. The Members were advised that the cost to Laois County Council of the property tax on Council houses in 2013 will be approximately €90,000. The payment of same was not included in the 2013 estimates. A new national differential rent scheme is awaited and this issue may be dealt with as part of that scheme.

### Notice of Motion No: 13/2013

Councillor Tom Mulhall proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That this Council call on the Minister for Housing, Ms. Jan O’ Sullivan for extra funding for the housing maintenance grant which was reduced by over 50% this year”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald. It was noted that this matter is of serious concern to the Members of Laois County Council and again it was suggested that a deputation be sought to the Minister in this regard.

### Notice of Motion No: 14/2013

Councillor Martin Phelan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That this Council call on the Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government, Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D., to introduce a 25 cent deposit on containers in which alcohol is sold as this would reduce the volume of cans and bottles being dumped from cars and trucks on the roadside”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor John Joe Fennelly. It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government in this regard.

### **Notice of Motion No: 15/2013**

Councillor Martin Phelan proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That this Council request the RSPCA to address a future meeting of Laois County Council to discuss the issue of stray dogs which kill and worry sheep flocks”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor John Bonham. It was agreed that a letter would issue in this regard.

### **Notice of Motion No: 16/2013**

Councillor Martin Phelan proposed the following Notice of Motion:

*“That this Council request the Minister for Agriculture, Marine & Food, Mr. Simon Coveney not to sell or lease our forestry”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan. It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Department of Agriculture, Marine & Food in this regard.

### **Notice of Motion No: 17/2013**

Councillor William Aird proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

*“That Laois County Council request the Minister for Housing & Planning, Ms. Jan O’ Sullivan to review the current Shared Ownership Loans in particular the equity part of the loan where it continues to increase annually”*

This motion was seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald.

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, indicated that he was a member of a national committee which had been set up to review mortgage arrears and that the Shared Ownership Scheme was being examined as part of this review. He advised that a preliminary draft report had been prepared by the Housing Agency and that it was being examined at present. He stated that he would advise the members further when decisions on the report were finalised.

Mr. Murphy re-iterated that anyone in difficulty can come in to meet the Finance Staff to discuss their particular situation.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

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