

**MINUTES OF THE MAY MONTHLY MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE ON THE 25TH OF MAY 2015**

PRESENT:	Councillor	John Joe Fennelly	In the Chair
	Councillors	William Aird	Ben Brennan
		Paddy Bracken	Catherine Fitzgerald
		Padraig Fleming	David Goodwin
		John King	James Kelly
		Jerry Lodge	Seamus McDonald
		Paschal McEvoy	John Moran
		Tom Mulhall	Aidan Mullins
		Brendan Phelan	Mary Sweeney
		Noel Tuohy	Caroline Dwane Stanley

Messers Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive, Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, Administrative Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary.

56. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the Sweeney family and Councillor Mary Sweeney on the recent death of her mother-in-law, Mrs. Breda Sweeney, Cross Street, Loughrea, Galway.

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the McGlynn family and Mr. Michael McGlynn (Laois County Council Central Area), on the recent death of his father Mr. Michael McGlynn, Killenure, Ballybrittas, Co. Laois and former employee of Laois County Council.

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the McEvoy family on the recent death of Mr. Barry McEvoy, Kilcavan, Mountmellick, Co. Laois.

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly, the Members unanimously agreed that a vote of sympathy be extended to the Saunders family on the recent death of Ms. Keva Saunders, Carmody Way, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

57. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 27TH OF APRIL 2015

On the proposition of Councillor John Moran seconded by Councillor Paschal McEvoy, the Minutes of the April meeting of Laois County Council held on the 27th of April 2015 were confirmed as circulated.

58. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR APRIL 2015 (IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIRCULAR LETTER LG 18/2014)

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive briefed the meeting on this matter and the report for April was circulated. The report for April 2015 was unanimously agreed and noted. A number of queries were raised on the report and the Directors of Services responded to the queries raised.

59. REPORTS ON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN APRIL 2015

The Members were circulated with the reports on Municipal District meetings held in April 2015 as circulated. The Members unanimously agreed the reports as circulated

60. PRESENTATION BY MR. SEAN GRIFFIN, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, COMMUNICATIONS POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES ON THE NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

The Members welcomed Mr. Sean Griffin, Assistant Principal, Communications Policy in the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. Mr. Griffin delivered a very comprehensive presentation on the National Broadband Plan. Mr. Griffin responded to the various queries raised by the Members. The Cathaoirleach & Members extended thanks to Mr. Griffin for his very comprehensive presentation.

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

LEASE OF 0.245 HECTARES OF LAND AT CLONMINAM BUSINESS PARK IN THE TOWNLAND OF KNOCKMAY

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to the lease of 0.245 hectares of land at Clonminam Business Park in the townland of Knockmay for a period of 4 years and 11 months for a consideration of €12,000

DISPOSAL OF 0.0634 HECTARES OF LAND AT SITE NO. 2 KILN LANE, MOUNTRATH, CO. LAOIS IN THE TOWNLAND OF MOUNTRATH

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.0634 hectares of land at Site No. 2 Kiln Lane, Mountrath, Co. Laois in the townland of Mountrath for a consideration of €20,000

DISPOSAL OF 0.0624 HECTARES OF LAND AT THE REAR OF HOUSE AT NO. 8 ERKINA COURT, RATHDOWNEY, CO. LAOIS.

On the proposition of Councillor Brendan Phelan seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.0624 hectares of land at the rear of house at No. 8 Erkina Court, Rathdowney, Co. Laois in the townland of Rathdowney for a consideration of €200.00

62. CONFIRM DATE FOR MEETINGS

- (i) On the proposition of Councillor Paschal McEvoy seconded by Councillor William Aird, the Members unanimously agreed to the holding of the Annual General Meeting of Laois County Council on Monday, June 29th 2015 at 2.30 p.m.
- (ii) On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley, the Members unanimously agreed to the holding of the October monthly meeting of Laois County Council on Monday, October 19th 2015 at 11.00 a.m.
- (iii) On the proposition of Councillor Paddy Bracken seconded by Councillor James Kelly, the Members unanimously agreed to the holding of the December monthly meeting of Laois County Council on Monday, December 14th 2015 at 11.00 a.m.

63. ADOPTION OF REVISED LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

The Members were circulated with a copy of the revised Laois County Council Standing Orders. The Members were advised that the Standing Orders were revised to take account of the following:

- The reduction in the membership of Laois County Council from 25 to 19 and the consequent effect this change has on various issues such as the number necessary for a quorum (Standing Order No. 13)
- The establishment of Municipal Districts and the abolition of Area Committees
- The change in title from County Manager to Chief Executive.

In addition it was noted that Standing Order No. 9 has been amended to include the issuing of the agenda by post or electronic means. Standing Order No. 16 requires the submission of Notices at least 10 clear days before the date of a meeting. The Members were circulated with a schedule of meeting dates together with the dates by which notices should be submitted.

Standing Order No. 23 – attendance of public and media has been amended to prohibit the use, during meetings, of social media to report on the business being transacted.

The Bereavement protocol has also been amended to provide that in the event of the death of an immediate family member of a Member of Laois County Council, the

meeting will be adjourned for a period of 15 minutes and a minutes silence will be observed. Other minor amendments have been made to include references to the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

The following amendments were made to Standing Order No. 23 on the proposal of Councillor Jerry Lodge seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan and agreed by the Members.

Replace the following paragraph:

- ***“Use of mobile phones shall not be permitted at meetings of Laois County Council”***

with

- ***“Mobile phones shall remain on silent for the duration of the meeting”***

Remove the following paragraph:

“The use of social media to report on business of meetings of Laois County Council is prohibited”

64. PRESENTATION BY MR. IAN MCCORMACK, S.E.O., COMMUNITY SECTION ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Ian McCormack, Senior Executive Officer, Community & Enterprise delivered a very informative presentation on the Local Community Development Committee and responded to the various queries raised by the Members.

64. RATIFICATION OF CONFERENCES & ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING

On the proposition of Councillor John Moran seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to the ratification of conferences/attendance at training as circulated.

65. CORRESPONDENCE

The Members were circulated with the following correspondence which had been received since the last meeting:-

- (i) Correspondence dated the 30th of April 2015 from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection in relation to Notice of Motion No: 41/2015
- (ii) Correspondence dated the 8th of May 2015 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to Notice of Motion No: 30/2015
- (iii) Correspondence dated the 15th of May 2015 from Coillte in relation to Notice of Motion No: 42/2015
- (iv) Correspondence dated the 28th of April 2015 from the Child and Family Agency in relation to Notice of Motion No: 26/2015. Councillor Mary

Sweeney requested that the budget for this service be increased to reflect the increase in population and the increased demand for these services.

- (v) Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald raised the issue of the dividing nets at the Portlaoise Leisure and the re-installation of the nets. It was agreed that the matter be further considered. The Members requested a report at the June meeting of the Council.

66. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 43/2015

Councillor James Kelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council calls on the Minister for Health, Mr. Leo Varadkar, T.D., to ensure that the H.S.E. provides funding, resources and training immediately so that all services are maintained at Midlands Regional Hospital, Portlaoise”

Notice of Motion No: 47/2015

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council call on the HSE to adequately resource the Midlands Regional Hospital, Portlaoise”

Notice of Motion No: 48/2015

Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council write to the Minister for Health calling on him to ensure that core services are secured and provided for at a safe level at Portlaoise hospital and that the recommendations of the HIQA report be implemented as soon as possible”

The above three Notices of Motions were discussed and were seconded by Councillor Brendan Phelan. The Members expressed concern regarding the situation at the hospital and it was agreed that the matter be referred to Minister Varadkar as a matter of urgency and that the Community Hospital in Abbeyleix also be included. It was agreed that a meeting also be requested with the Minister.

On the proposition of Councillor William Aird seconded by Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald, the Members unanimously extended sympathies to the families whose babies passed away in Portlaoise Hospital

Notice of Motion No: 44/2015

Councillor Tom Mulhall proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council write to the Minister for Social Protection, Ms. Joan Burton, T.D., asking her to clarify her decision on taking social welfare payments from the Post Offices to the Banks”

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

Notice of Motion No: 45/2015

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council supports the EU Habitats Directive in the County with particular reference to the protection of the endangered Nore Fresh Water Pearl Mussel species”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming. The Members were advised that the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017 details the overall strategy of the Council for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County. The policies contained within this Plan are designed to encourage development whilst also protecting environmentally sensitive and designated areas such as Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas).

Chapter 13 of the Laois County Development Plan deals with Natural Heritage. The aim of this chapter is ***“to re-inforce the distinctive character of County Laois through ensuring that sites and species of ecological importance are identified, conserved and managed appropriately and by promoting awareness and enjoyment of the natural heritage of the County”***.

Chapter 13 also, contains a specific policy (NH 13/P25) in relation to the Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel ***“It is the policy of the Council to protect the Nore Pearl Mussel through the measures set out in the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Nore Sub-Basin Management Plan (2009)”***

The Laois Heritage Plan 2014-2019 includes an objective (1.10) of ***“increasing the understanding of the heritage of Laois by working to promote awareness of the Nore Pearl Mussel, a species known only from a short stretch of the River Nore, mostly within County Laois, which is threatened with extinction. Supporting the stakeholders in implementing the River Nore sub-basin management plan, which aims to develop measures to improve water quality within the River Nore and prevent the imminent extinction of the Nore Pearl Mussel”***

Notice of Motion No. 46/2015

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council engage with the local youth in the County in a meaningful way and support the skateboard park project at the plaza”

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Caroline Dwane Stanley. The Members were advised that the plaza is a multi-functional area for community use and events. The siting of a skateboard park on the plaza would not be complimentary to the current use of this area. The Council will continue to examine options and will consult with all the stakeholders.

However, Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed that the skateboard park be located at the plaza and this proposal was seconded by Councillor William Aird,

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Certified: _____
**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE
AFFAIRS**