

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE ON THE 3RD OF SEPTEMBER 2007 AT 11.00 A.M.

PRESENT: Councillor John Moran In The Chair

Councillors William Aird John Bonham
Patrick Bracken Ray Cribbin
James Daly James Deegan
John Joe Fennelly David Goodwin
Thomas Jacob Seamus McDonald
Michael Lalor Paul Mitchell
Dick Miller Brendan Phelan
Martin Phelan Brian Stanley
John D. Turley Catherine Fitzgerald
Paul Mitchell

APOLOGIES: Councillors Jerry Lodge Laurence Kavanagh
Michael Moloney Michael Rice
Mary Sweeney

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, Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services, Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Senior Executive Officer & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary.

89. VOTE OF SYMPATHY

Councillor John Moran, Cathaoirleach proposed a vote of sympathy to the Sutton family on the recent death of Ms. Edel Sutton, Staff Officer, Library Service.

The County Manager extended his sympathy to the family on behalf of all the staff of Laois County Council and joined in paying tribute to the late Edel Sutton. The County Manager informed the Members that a service for Edel would be held in the near future.

The Cathaoirleach expressed thanks to everyone for their kind words. A minutes silence was then held.

Councillor William Aird proposed a vote of sympathy to the family and husband of the late Lulu Carroll who recently passed away also.

90. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

On the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor, it was unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the June Monthly Meeting & the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 25th of June 2007, as circulated be adopted and signed.

91. REPORT ON S.P.C. MEETINGS HELD IN JUNE 2007

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly seconded by Councillor Ray Cribbin, the reports on the S.P.C. meetings were noted.

92. PART VIII OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT) REGULATIONS, 2001

(a) SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION TO SIDE ELEVATION OF THE PORTLAOISE LEISURE CENTRE AND 8 NO. ADDITIONAL 16m HIGH FLOODLIGHTS TO THE OUTDOOR PLAYING PITCHES AT MONEYBALLYTYRELL, PORTLAOISE

It was noted that this Part VIII proposes to provide a single storey extension to the north east of the Portlaoise Leisure Centre and eight number additional 16m high floodlights to the outdoor playing pitches at Moneyballytyrell, Portlaoise. On the proposition of Councilor William Aird seconded by Councillor James Deegan, the Members unanimously agreed to proceed with the proposed development.

(b) MOUNTRATH ORBITAL ROUTE

On the proposition of Councillor John Joe Fennelly, seconded by Councillor Michael Lalor, the Members unanimously agreed that the consideration of this Part VIII proposal be deferred to the next meeting of Laois County Council.

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

(a) DISPOSAL OF 0.543 ACRES AT BALLYCARROLL

On the proposition of Councillor James Deegan seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of 0.543 acres at Ballycarroll DED in the townland of Great Heath to Mr. William Treacy, for a consideration of €13,500

(b) DISPOSAL OF EQUITY PART OF SHARED OWNERSHIP LOANS

On the proposition of Councillor Brian Stanley seconded by Councillor Tom Jacob, the Members unanimously agreed to the disposal of equity part of shared ownership loans as follows:-

LOAN NO.	ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNT ADDRESS
610133/F	Eavan Aldritt	64 The Hermitage, Portlaoise
610185/F	Darren Bennett & Carol Coss	15 Towmey Park, Mountmellick
610187/F	Hector & Emma Bermeo	20 The Poplars, Forest Park, Portlaoise
610184/F	Brenda Gannon	64 Clarmaline Crescent, Portarlinton
610194/F	Noel Carroll	Coolrain, Portlaoise
610139/F	Louise Gillen & Thomas Kerry	1 The Poplars, Forest Park, Portlaoise
610057/F	John Gillmartin	48 Quigley Park, Rathdowney
6101211	Ann Heavin	22 Rossvale Court, Portlaoise
610048/F	Christopher & Valerie Kirby	16 Clanmalire Crescent, Portarlinton
610152/F	Raymond & Mary Lennon	Cuffsboro, Clough, Ballacolla
610111/F	Thomas McCormack	90 The Hermitage, Portlaoise
610234/F	Desmond Molloy & Lisa Foster	37 Borris Little, Portlaoise
610068/F	Martina Morrisey	54 St. Brigids Place, Portlaoise
610142/F	Karen Houlihan & Alan McEvoy	59 The Hermitage, Portlaoise
610154/F	Lorraine McEvoy	16 Grove Park, Mountmellick
610083/F	Brendan & Karen O'Brien	66 Borris Little, Portlaoise
610178/F	Yvonne O'Hanlon	34 Mooreville, Rathdowney
6101461/F	Maurice Delaney & Sandra O'Neill	23 Woodgrove, Portlaoise
610062/F	John O'Shea	90 St. Brigids Place, Portlaoise
610044/F	Paul & Margaret O'Sullivan	Ballinakill, Ballickmoyler
610049/F	Noel Philips & Ann Rowan	22 Leylandii Drive, Ballylinan
610218/F	Olga Ryan	Roseview House, Erril

**94. EXTINGUISHMENT OF PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AT LEVEL CROSSING
NO: XC062 AT CLONKEEN, PORTLAOISE**

Mr. Gerry Gibson, Director of Services outlined to the Members that a request had been received from Iarnród Éireann to extinguish public right of way at level crossing no. XC062 at Clonkeen, Portlaoise. No objections/submissions were received and replies have been issued to the parties involved. The principal reason for the closure of this right of way is to reduce the risk of fatality at this junction due to the increased number of trains travelling the line each day and the increased speed of these trains. Access will not be affected as the re-alignment of Local Road L-6695 as part of the M7/M8 Scheme will further mitigate any adverse impact this closure will have on people using this crossing.

On the proposition of Councillor John Bonham seconded by Councillor James Deegan, the Members unanimously agreed to the extinguishment of public right of way at level crossing no: XC062 at Clonkeen, Portlaoise.

95. HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT SCHEME 2007

Members were circulated with the details in relation to the 2007 Higher Education Grant Scheme. On the proposition of Councillor John Bonham seconded by Councillor Paul Mitchell, the Higher Education Grant Scheme for 2007 was unanimously agreed.

Councillor Brian Stanley raised a query as to why Farm Income Supplement payments are not excluded in the calculation of reckonable income. It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Department of Education & Science in this regard.

96. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT CEMETERY BYE-LAWS

It was unanimously agreed that the consideration of this item be deferred to the September monthly meeting of Laois County Council.

97. LANDFILL OPENING HOURS

Councillor William Aird expressed concern in relation to the revised opening hours at the landfill. Mr. John Daly, Director of Services indicated that it has been working well to date. It was agreed that the matter would be on the agenda for the September monthly meeting of the Council.

98. TAKING IN CHARGE OF PHASE 1 FAIRGREEN, MOUNTMELICK

It was unanimously agreed that the consideration of this item be deferred to the September monthly meeting of Laois County Council.

99. BRIEFING BY MR. KEVIN MCCARTHY, AREA DIRECTOR & MS. BRID SOMERS, MIDLANDS REGIONAL MANAGER, I.D.A. IRELAND

The I.D.A. representatives provided an update on the activities of the I.D.A. within the region, with an emphasis on the endeavours of the organisation in relation to County Laois. There followed a question and answer session where both the Members and County Manager expressed their concern and disappointment that more successful outcomes have not been delivered. The I.D.A. gave a commitment to re-double their efforts in this regard.

100. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Notice of Motion No: 32/07

Councillor Brian Stanley proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That Laois County Council install card meters for gas supplies to all new rented Council dwellings and where gas central heating is being installed in the existing housing stock. Every effort should be made to accommodate those who wish to have the ordinary gas meter replaced with a card meter”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Tom Jacob. Members were advised that where tenants wish to change from a standard gas meter to a card gas meter, Laois County Council will accommodate this change. In new rented dwellings, Laois County Council will provide card meters.

Notice of Motion No: 33/07

Councillor Tom Jacob proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council call on the new Minister for Justice to immediately order Management Companies in private housing estates to scrap their rip off practices as was promised by Minister McDowell and immediately set up a new property services regulatory authority”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley. It was agreed that a letter would issue to the Department in this regard.

Notice of Motion No: 34/07

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That all fire service personnel with Laois County Council automatically receive counselling services where they have been involved in traumatic incidents such as fatal road or other accidents”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Marin Phelan. Laois County Council Fire & Rescue Service has a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) system in place, which has been operative since 2002.

As part of this system visits are made to all fire stations twice yearly to update all personnel on the CISM system. This serves two purposes, one to remind

personnel of the service available and secondly to familiarise personnel with the service provider in a relaxed environment.

In addition to this twice yearly visit, all Station Officers & Sub Officers have contact numbers for the service which are posted up in all fire stations. All personnel are reminded on a regular basis of the availability of the service, can make contact with the service provider and on occasions have availed of the services.

At serious or traumatic incidents the Rostered Senior Fire Officer reminds the Station Officer or Sub Officer of the CISM facility available and asks them to inform the crew likewise and to monitor the personnel under their control for abnormal behaviour following the traumatic incident. As a matter of routine the CISM system is offered to the crews after serious or traumatic incidents and on occasions this offer has been taken up.

Counselling is available to all fire and rescue service personnel at any stage should they feel the need for it. In addition, Laois County Council's Employee Support Scheme is also available to all personnel through a dedicated confidential telephone number.

It was requested that the response be circulated to the Members for their information.

Notice of Motion No: 35/07

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

"That the Council reconsider it's policy and erect mirrors at dangerous junctions in the interests of road safety"

This motion was seconded by Councillor William Aird

Laois County Council will not erect mirrors on public roads in the County due to insurance and liability concerns. IPBMI will not provide insurance cover to Local Authorities in this instance.

Should a private individual wish to erect a mirror at their private entrance or obtain permission from a landowner to do so, then they do so at their own risk.

Notice of Motion No: 36/07

Councillor John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Notice of Motion:-

“That this Council give a report on both Essential Repair Grants and Disabled Persons Grants outlining the number of applications currently on hand, the number of approvals expected to be granted this year and approximately how long it will take to clear the number of applications currently on hand”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Brian Stanley

Members were advised of the following position with regard to applications received in respect of Disabled Persons Grants and Essential Repairs Grants:

No. & value of applications on hands which are being processed

304 No. Disabled Persons Grants	€4,030,796
203 No. Essential Repairs Grants	€1,533,581

No. & value of approved applications on hands

113 No. Disabled Persons Grants	€1,689,978
58 No. Essential Repairs Grants	€384,264

The allocation in respect of 2007 is €1,608,000 and the following expenditure has been incurred to date

Disabled Persons Grants	€811,658
Essential Repairs Grants	€162,041

It is not possible to accurately estimate the length of time it will take to clear all the applications currently on hands as they are at various stages in the process. It is the policy of Laois County Council to process the applications as quickly as possible in order to alleviate any hardship.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DIRECTOR OF SERVICES

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