

Blow for FG as politician quits party 'that needs to listen'

Councillor 'had rows with leaders'

Senan Molony

A FINE Gael councillor says she is leaving the party because "it is not the same party I joined".

The move is seen as a further blow to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and his party's central leadership.

Aisling Moran (49) represents Graiguecullen-Portllington on Laois County Council.

"Fine Gael is a changed party," she said. "We are not looking after the people we are supposed to be looking after." And she warned: "There are other councillors at the same stage that I am at. They are frustrated."

"My memory is of the Garrett Fitzgerald Fine Gael. The leadership under Leo has lost touch with the ordinary people. I feel - although the party is still full of brilliant politicians and workers who are trying very hard.

"But they need to listen to the people, and they don't. I was whipped not to ask questions about public spending by the Laois party group," she said, adding "I've had a number of rows with the local leadership."

She said she could "totally understand" why a number of senior Fine Gael figures were planning to call time on their careers at the next general election.

"I have been in politics all my life. I canvassed with Alan Dukes when I was eight or nine years of age," she said.

"I got elected five years ago and my whole thing was about transparency. But if I ever asked to see a valuation or a cost breakdown, I was refused by my own party. It just got too much.

"I just thought, 'I have to get away from this.' And I have been steeped in Fine Gael."

"I was born with a blue shirt on my back," she said.

"By leaving the party it might help a little bit. I felt completely bullied."

It is, however, understood that any suggestion of bullying is strongly rejected by Fine Gael.

Ms Moran said: "Every time



Laois councillor Aisling Moran

I opened my mouth I was told I was being rude, or that I was against jobs or investment.

"But our job is to make sure there is proper scrutiny and value for every penny."

She said she felt millions of euro were being wasted.

Ms Moran says she will "probably" stand as an independent in next year's local elections.

"I have got phone calls, texts and emails all morning from party members saying how they were sorry to see me going.

"The response has been huge, including locals who aren't members of Fine Gael, or any organisation.

"I think the party at the moment is all about Dublin, and rural Ireland is completely forgotten about.

"Really, the civil servants are running the country, and we as public representatives are meant to be holding them to account.

"There is no support for members from headquarters."

A Fine Gael spokesman said: "Councillor Aisling Moran informed Fine Gael HQ of her resignation late Monday night.

"Fine Gael notes Councillor Moran's comments today. She is aware of the party's complaints procedures for accusations such as bullying, but she never engaged with it.

"No complaint was ever received by the party."

He added: "It is obviously disappointing to voters that Councillor Moran, who was elected as a Fine Gael councillor, has left the party and is no longer a member.

"The Fine Gael group of Laois councillors will continue their hard work on behalf of the people who elected them."



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

NOTICE PURSUANT TO: SECTION 177AE AND SECTION 175 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (As amended) AND THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (As amended)

BALLYHALE FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME, IN THE TOWNLANDS OF BALLYHALE, AND KILTORGAN, COUNTY KILKENNY.

Notice of Planning Application to An Bord Pleanála for Approval

Notice is hereby given that Kilkenny County Council intends to seek approval of An Bord Pleanála under Section 177AE and Section 175 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) to carry out proposed works in the townlands of Ballyhale and Kiltorgan in County Kilkenny.

The proposed scheme involves:

- Embankments located upstream of the village to prevent overland flooding.
- Flood wall to western perimeter of "Arrigle View".
- A section of new river channel re-connecting all outlets from the Chapel Lane bridge into the western river channel and removing the flow split. This will require excavation of the existing church pedestrian access and replacement via a new pedestrian connection which also serves to form a new bank to the redirected stream.
- Landscaping of eastern river channel to allow for a low flow channel to reflect reduced flow conditions.
- Flood Defences (wall and embankments) between the western channel and the properties at risk on Main Street. Lands acquired for these flood defences will be landscaped to provide a riverside walkway/park.
- Removal of one of two existing minor private bridges providing access across the river to a private land parcel. Access to the parcel will be maintained by retrofitting the second bridge to flood defence level.
- Removal of a boundary wall spanning the watercourse.
- Removal of the existing weir and bridge at the Ballyhale Business Park access and replacement of bridge with clear span access with regrading of channel to improve channel capacity.
- Low flood wall alongside the road opposite Brookfield to prevent out of bank flows emerging onto the road surface.
- Provision of rock ramp to existing weir at Ballyhale Shamrocks access to improve fish pass conditions.
- Channel reprofiling at the existing Main street bridge to improve bridge inlet conditions.
- Provision of additional conveyance capacity to the Main street Bridge. The additional conveyance will be provided by an additional bridge opening (box culvert) set at high level to provide capacity for extreme flood events.
- Provision of rock ramp to downstream face of the Main Street Bridge to improve fish pass conditions.
- Provision of a temporary construction compound.
- Fencing, accommodation works and all site development and landscaping works.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared as part of the application for approval in respect of the proposed development.

An Bord Pleanála may give approval to the application for development with or without conditions or may refuse the application for development.

A copy of the plans and particulars of the proposed development, the Natura Impact Statement and the Environmental Impact Assessment will be available for inspection free of charge between Tuesday 16/05/2023 and 27/06/2023 (inclusive of both dates) at the following locations:

- The website of Kilkenny County Council at <https://www.kilkennyccoco.ie/eng/services/roads/flood-relief/ballyhale-flood-relief-scheme/>
- The Planning Section of Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny City. R95 A39T between the hours 9am to 1pm & 2pm to 4pm Monday to Friday (Excluding Public Holidays).
- Thomastown Municipal District Office, Ladyswell, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny R95 TX68, and Callan Municipal District Office, Clonmel Road, Callan, Co. Kilkenny, R95 RK06; from 9am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm Monday to Friday (Except Public Holidays).
- The offices of An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 between the hours 9:15am and 5:30pm Monday to Friday (Excluding Public Holidays).

The Natura Impact Statement, Environmental Impact Assessment and the Plans and Particulars of the proposed development may be inspected free of charge at the locations identified or purchased for a specified fee (which shall not exceed the reasonable cost of making a copy).

Any submissions and observations on the proposed development in relation to -

- i. the implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development in the area concerned,
 - ii. the likely effects on the environment of the proposed development, and
 - iii. the likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European Site, if carried out, may be made in writing to **An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 V902.**
- Any submission/observation must be accompanied by a fee of €50 (except for prescribed bodies) and must be received in writing or online at www.pleanala.ie by **An Bord Pleanála not later than on or before 5.00pm on 27/06/2023.** Such submissions or observations must include the following information:
- a) You must clearly state your own name and address. If a planning agent is acting for you, the agent must clearly state their own name and address as well as your name and address.
 - b) You must give us enough details to allow us to easily identify the application or appeal you are making the observation on.
 - c) The subject matter of the submission or observation.
 - d) The planning grounds of observation (reasons and arguments), and any items you wish to support your grounds of observation.

A person may question the validity of any such decision by An Bord Pleanála by way of an application for judicial review under Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 15 of 1986) in accordance with section 50 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 (As Amended).

Practical information on the review mechanism can be accessed under the heading Publications - Judicial Review Notice on the Board's website www.pleanala.ie or on the Citizens Information website www.citizensinformation.ie

Dated this 3rd May 2023.

Tim Butler, Director of Services.