

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Hybrid Monthly Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 28 March, 2023
at 7:00 pm**

**PRESENT IN
CHAMBER:**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor S Carson

Deputy Mayor
Councillor M Guy

Aldermen J Baird, W J Dillon MBE, D Drysdale,
A G Ewart MBE, M Henderson MBE, S Martin, S P Porter
and J Tinsley

Councillors R T Beckett, F Cole, D J Craig, A P Ewing,
A Givan, A Gowan, M Gregg, S Hughes, J Lavery BEM,
S Lee, H Legge, J McCarthy, G McCleave, C McCready,
A McIntyre, R McLernon, U Mackin, T Mitchell, Jenny Palmer,
S Skillen and A Swan

**PRESENT IN REMOTE
LOCATION:**

Alderman O Gawith

Councillors R Carlin, S Lowry and S Mulholland

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive
Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Director of Service Transformation
Acting Director of Environmental Services
Head of Corporate Communications and Administration
Member Services Officers
Technician
IT Officer

Reverend R Higginson, Mayor's Chaplain

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, welcomed those present to the remote meeting of Council which, in line with Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020, was being live streamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings. He pointed out that, unless the item on the agenda was considered under confidential business, the meeting would be broadcast online and members of the public could be captured on the livestream. Data captured on the livestream was processed in the exercise of official authority which covered public functions and powers which were set out in law and to perform a specific task in the public interest.

The Chief Executive outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

The Member Services Officer read out the names of the Elected Members and Officers in attendance at the meeting.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor requested that all mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting and pointed out that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, whilst the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted.

Prayers

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, expressed condolences in relation to the following bereavements:

- Mark Hanley, husband of Alma Hanley, Waste & Operational Services Unit; and
- Louise, mother of James Rodgers, Parks & Amenities.

Councillor Carson also conveyed best wishes for a speedy recovery to Councillor John Palmer who had undergone recent surgery.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, welcomed his Chaplain, Reverend Roger Higginson, Lisburn Free Presbyterian Church, to the meeting. Reverend Higginson gave an address and said a prayer during which he too remembered the bereaved families referred to by the Mayor, as well as Councillor Palmer.

At this point, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, thanked Reverend Higginson for his attendance and he left the meeting (7.17 pm).

1. Business of The Right Worshipful the Mayor

1.1 Mayor's Engagements (00:14:00)

The Council noted a number of engagements attended by The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Guy, since the last meeting of Council.

2. Apologies (00:14:16)

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Alderman A Grehan, Councillors N Anderson, J Gallen, John Palmer and N Trimble and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

3. Declarations of Interest (00:14:50)

There were no declarations of interest made at this point.

3. Declarations of Interest (Contd)

During the course of the meeting, Councillor D J Craig declared an interest in item 14.7, 'Crossing Patrol Person at St Aloysius Primary School and St Patrick's Academy, Ballinderry Road, Lisburn', given that he was a member of the Education Authority.

4. Council Minutes (00:15:32)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, drew attention to a point of accuracy. At the last meeting of Council, Councillor S Lowry had proposed the minutes of the special meeting of Council held on 31 January, 2023; however, she had not been in attendance at that meeting and, therefore, a new proposer was required. The minutes of the special meeting of Council were proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Guy.

It was proposed by Councillor Gregg, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 28 February, 2023 be confirmed and signed, subject to:

Page 111, Item 13.3

National Association of Councillors (NAC) Leadership Workshop

At the request of Alderman M Henderson, the word 'Chairman' in the first sentence be amended to 'Member'.

5. Matters Arising (00:18:11)

Page 106, Item 4, Council Minutes (Matters Arising – Page 43 Item 13.1)

Kerbside Collection Full Business Case

Alderman S P Porter welcomed an announcement on the Council's Facebook page that a consultation process would be carried out in relation to Kerbside Collections. Having been contacted by a number of residents who were keen to participate in this, he sought an indication of when the consultation would commence. The Chief Executive stated that the Council was currently engaging with a number of groups that had made representation. That would require to be completed in the first instance and a timetable would be set out thereafter. In response to a query from Councillor Gregg as to why the engagement with groups could not form part of the consultation, the Chief Executive explained that the consultation period would last for 12 weeks. If commenced now, it would infringe on the 'Purdah' period and, therefore, could not start until after the forthcoming Local Government Elections. The groups currently being engaged with had approached the Council with specific issues that had to be addressed to ensure that the wider consultation then dealt with those issues.

At the request of Alderman S P Porter, the Chairman of the Environmental Services Committee, Councillor M Gregg, agreed that this matter would be included on the agenda for next week's Environmental Services Committee meeting when it could be further debated.

6. Deputations (00:25:10)

There were no deputations.

7. Business Required by Statute

(i) Signing of Legal Documents (00:25:16)

It was proposed by Alderman M Henderson, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that the following legal document be signed at the meeting:

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL – Deed of Covenant in respect of Tree Planting and Woodland Maintenance and Carbon Sequestration relating to land at Billy Neill MBE Country Park, Comber Road, Belfast BT16 1RQ.

8. Adoption of Minutes of Committees

Environmental Services Committee

1 March, 2023

(00:25:45)

Proposed by Councillor M Gregg

Seconded by Councillor C McCready

Development Committee

2 March, 2023

(00:26:15)

Proposed by Alderman A G Ewart

Seconded by Alderman W J Dillon

Leisure and Community Development Committee

7 March, 2023

(00:26:49)

Proposed by Councillor A McIntyre

Seconded by Councillor A Gowan

Page 147, Item 4.6

King's Coronation Grant Aid Programme

Councillor S Skillen expressed disappointment with comments made towards her at the Leisure and Community Development Committee meeting following her proposal that groups be awarded grants of £500, rather than £455, to mark the King's Coronation. In making the proposal she was endeavouring to represent all those people who wished to celebrate that event. In response to a query by Councillor Skillen, the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing confirmed that the additional funds required to provide the increased grants would not be taken from the hardship fund; rather it would be identified from within the year underspend.

Verbal Matter – Lough Moss Improvements
Alderman M Henderson

Alderman M Henderson expressed thanks to the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing and those staff involved in work at Lough Moss that saw the provision of raised gardens and a polytunnel. This had been well-received by local residents.

Page 149, Item 5.5
Use of Wallace Park – Lisburn Féile

Councillor D J Craig enquired if assurances had been sought from the organisers of the above event that there would be no sectarian chants as had been the case at similar recent events in other areas. The Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing confirmed that, since the Committee meeting, there had been continued engagement with the organisers to ascertain the scope and scale of the event, as well as its operating model, and to discuss policy and Safety Advisory Group requirements.

Councillor Craig having referred to social media comments regarding this matter following the Committee meeting, and Alderman S P Porter having also referred to the comments aimed at Councillor Skillen as outlined earlier, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, reminded Members that, whilst they had differing political views, it was important to be respectful of each other.

Corporate Services Committee

8 March, 2023

(00:35:55)

Proposed by Councillor S Hughes

Seconded by Councillor U Mackin

Governance and Audit Committee

13 March, 2023

(00:36:25)

Proposed by Alderman D Drysdale

Seconded by Councillor Jenny Palmer

Planning Committee

6 February, 2023

(00:37:06)

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 6 February, 2023 had been circulated for noting only as these minutes had been agreed at the subsequent meeting of the Planning Committee on 6 March, 2023. It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Swan and agreed that their contents be noted.

9. Report from Chief Executive (00:37:41)

9.1 Delegated Authority – Operational/Strategic Decisions up to Annual Meeting (00:37:46)

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor M Gregg and agreed that:

9.1 Delegated Authority – Operational/Strategic Decisions up to Annual Meeting (Contd)

- (a) from the day after the April Council meeting (26 April) until the day before the Local Government Elections (17 May), authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, as well as the Mayor, to take urgent operational or strategic decisions; and
- (b) from the day of the Local Government Elections (18 May) until the day before the Annual Meeting (7 June), authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, to take urgent operational or strategic decisions.

9.2 Request to Set Aside Byelaws – Wallace Park (00:39:10)

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor A McIntyre and agreed that:

- (a) approval be given to a request to hold a religious service in Wallace Park on Sunday, 9 April to celebrate Easter; and
- (b) approval be given to the setting aside of the Byelaws to enable the request to proceed.

Councillor Mitchell pointed out that, whilst the request had been received from Railway Street Presbyterian Church, the request was on behalf of city centre churches.

10. Reports from Members on Boards (00:40:30)

There were no reports from Members on Boards.

11. Reports on Decisions Subject to the Reconsideration Procedure (00:40:34)

There were no reports on decisions subject to the reconsideration procedure.

12. Notice of Motion (00:30:40)

12.1 “Postbox to Heaven” (00:40:45)

A copy of the following Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor H Legge had been circulated to Members with the notice convening the meeting:

“Following a recent initiative in Antrim & Newtownabbey Council, I am proposing that we grant Agreement in Principle for LCCC to consider the installation of a “Postbox to Heaven” in all Council owned cemeteries within our Council area to provide a potential outlet for those grieving the loss of a loved one”.

12.1 “Postbox to Heaven” (Contd)

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor H Legge and seconded by Councillor Jenny Palmer.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, advised that, in accordance with Standing Order 16.1 (6), as the above Notice of Motion fell within the remit of the Environmental Services Committee, it would be referred to that Committee for consideration.

13. Confidential Business (00:42:14)

The matter contained in the confidential report would be dealt with “In Committee” due to containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Councillor A P Ewing, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that the following item be considered “in committee”, in the absence of members of the press and public being present. The livestream was paused at 7.46 pm.

13.1 Standing Committees

(Report would be available following confirmation from DfC)

It was proposed by Alderman M Henderson, seconded by Councillor J McCarthy and agreed that:

- (a) approval be given to the new Standing Committees, as outlined in the report, together with their related Terms of Reference. It was noted that there would be time needed to ensure the Constitution, Standing Orders, Accounting Manual and other specific policies/processes were updated to reflect the changes arising from the Terms of Reference;
- (b) approval be given to using the D’Hondt method, which was the default method, for the allocation of positions for the next Council term. It was noted that management’s intention was to provide a listing of all positions to be filled through D’Hondt, in addition to other positions, to Party Nominating Officers as soon as this was available;
- (c) that the Quota Greatest Remainder method be used for the appointment of Councillors to Committees; and
- (d) subject to approval by DfC, the proposed approach in respect of Special Responsibility Allowances, as set out in the report, be approved.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed. The live stream of the meeting was recommenced at this stage (7.50 pm).

14. Any Other Business (00:42:57)14.1 Presence of Dogs at Council Events (00:43:15)
Councillor A P Ewing

Councillor A P Ewing stated that many dog owners were excluded from attending Council events due to dogs not being permitted entry to these. In the interests of being more inclusive, he proposed that the Council undertake a review of the approach taken to this matter and that a report be brought to Committee at an early date. This proposal was seconded by Alderman A G Ewart and agreed.

Discussion took place during which a number of Members expressed concern at the Council's current position regarding dogs not being permitted entry to Council events. In response, the Chief Executive explained that every Council event was considered on its own merit, in line with Health and Safety Executive 'Guidance on Running Events Safely', by the Safety Advisory Group that also comprised representatives from agencies such as the PSNI and the NIFRS.

The Chief Executive advised that a recent report to the Environmental Services Committee had indicated that, over a 9 month period, 87 dog attack incidents had been reported to Enforcement Officers. Councillor Jenny Palmer requested a full breakdown of those incidents – whether they had taken place in parks or other areas, whether they involved humans or were dog-on-dog attacks, etc. The Chief Executive agreed that such information would be collated as part of the review. Alderman S Martin also asked that, front and centre of the review, should be events being an inclusive and safe space for children and young people with additional needs.

14.2 Resurfacing of Old Derriaghy Road (01:18:52)
Councillor D J Craig

Councillor D J Craig commented on the poor condition of Old Derriaghy Road, due to lack of maintenance over the past 17/18 years since the North Feeder Road came into existence. It was agreed, at the request of Councillor Craig, that a letter be sent to DfI Roads seeking the implementation of a resurfacing scheme along this entire road.

14.3 Review of Maternity Leave Provision (01:21:38)
Councillor S Skillen

It was proposed by Councillor S Skillen, seconded by Alderman S P Porter and agreed that a review be carried out in relation to the Council's maternity leave provision for mothers of premature babies. Councillor Skillen stated her opinion that maternity leave should not commence until the certified due date of the child, with leave required between the delivery date and the certified due date being given as compassionate leave, thus not reducing maternity leave.

During discussion:

- (a) Councillor Jenny Palmer asked that the review take account of situations where, following giving birth, the mother was ill in hospital for a prolonged period of time, which impacted on mother/baby bonding time;

14.3 Review of Maternity Leave Provision (Contd)
Councillor S Skillen

- (b) Councillor F Cole requested that the review be extended to Elected Members on maternity allowances.

14.4 Head of Parks & Amenities – Retirement (01:28:06)
Councillor S Lee

Councillor S Lee put on record his personal thanks to Mr Ross Gillanders, Head of Parks & Amenities, who had recently retired from the Council's employment. Mr Gillanders had been a longstanding member of staff who had served the Council with incredible professionalism.

14.5 Previous Notice of Motion – 50th Anniversary of Greenfinches in NI
Alderman D Drysdale (01:29:20)

Alderman D Drysdale referred to the last meeting of Council when the above Notice of Motion had been considered and when comments had been made about a discredited organisation. Alderman Drysdale had since been contacted by a number of people in relation to those comments. He stated that no analysis had ever been carried out or statistics provided on the term 'collusion'. He further stated that collusion worked both ways. He wished to correct information stated at the last meeting and stated that the UDR was not a discredited organisation.

14.6 Flooding at Megarrystown Road (01:32:32)
Alderman W J Dillon

Alderman W J Dillon spoke about the history of flooding at Megarrystown Road and, at his request, it was agreed that a letter be sent to DfI Roads asking when the repair to the leaking drain would be carried out.

14.7 Crossing Patrol Person at St Aloysius Primary School and St Patrick's Academy, Ballinderry Road, Lisburn (01:35:53)
Councillor A P Ewing

Councillor A P Ewing referred to the lack of a crossing patrol person in the vicinity of St Aloysius Primary School and St Patrick's Academy at Ballinderry Road, Lisburn, which he stated was a busy arterial route. There was no longer any crossing patrol at that location, following the retirement of the last person undertaking that role and that posed a very dangerous situation. It was agreed, at the request of Councillor Ewing, that (a) a letter be sent to the Education Authority asking when crossing patrol would be reinstated; and (b) a letter be sent to DfI Roads asking what permanent measures could be put in place to ensure the safety of school children at this location.

14.8 Improvements to Ballyoran Centre, Ballybeen (01:39:40)
Alderman D Drysdale

It was proposed by Alderman D Drysdale, seconded by Councillor S Skillen and agreed that Officers investigate the possibility of investment at the Ballyoran Centre, Ballybeen, to carry out improvements such as painting, kitchen update,

14.8 Improvements to Ballyoran Centre, Ballybeen
Alderman D Drysdale

white lines in the car park, yellow demarcation lines at doors, directional signs. The Chief Executive agreed to liaise with the Assets Team and report back on this matter.

14.9 New Eurospar in Carryduff (01:41:40)
Alderman M Henderson

At the request of Alderman M Henderson, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, agreed to write a letter to the new Eurospar in Carryduff, welcoming the business to the area.

14.10 Funding Issues (01:42:37)
Alderman S Martin

Alderman S Martin referred to recent statistics in relation to child poverty, with the likely forecast that this would increase over coming years. He also referred to the forthcoming 6.4% real terms cut in the NI Budget for next year, which was not helped by the fact that there was currently no functioning Northern Ireland Executive. A number of community groups and organisations had been in contact with Members over recent weeks regarding funding concerns. Alderman Martin stated that the Council required to give consideration to how it was exposed in terms of its relationships with Central Government. He asked that, possibly through Community Planning, work be carried out over coming months in relation to how the Council interacted with Government Departments, where it partnered up, where it had funding streams and where it was likely to encounter real pinch points and challenges. The Chief Executive stated that he had raised similar concerns with Officers and gave an assurance that such an exercise had already commenced.

Councillors D J Craig and Jenny Palmer concurred with concerns raised by Alderman Martin around funding, citing examples of the impact of this such as the removal of Sure Start from Hilden and the potential loss of jobs at Stepping Stones.

14.11 Thanks to the Head of Communities (01:52:32)
Councillor C McCready

Councillor C McCready put on record his thanks to the Head of Communities for having arranged a recent meeting with the Education Authority.

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, thanked those present for their attendance.

MM 28.03.2023

There being no further business for consideration, the meeting was terminated at 9.01 pm.

Mayor