

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Communities & Wellbeing Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Tuesday 7 October 2025 at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER
(COMMITTEE):**

Councillor T Mitchell (Chairperson)

Councillor A Givan (Vice-Chairperson)

Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

Alderman A McIntyre

Councillors R T Beckett, J Craig, K Dickson, J Gallen,
B Higginson, C Kemp, S Lowry, G McCleave and G Thompson

**PRESENT IN A
REMOTE LOCATION
(COMMITTEE)**

Alderman S Skillen and Councillor R Carlin

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Councillors A P Ewing and G Hynds

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT IN A
REMOTE LOCATION**

Alderman J Tinsley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing
Head of Sports Services
Acting Head of Communities
Member Services Officers (BS, EW & FA)
IT Officer (RR)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairperson welcomed all present to the October meeting of the Committee and reminded Members that the meeting would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was to be considered under confidential business. Unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. Mobile phones were to be turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. The Chairperson asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillor Hon N Trimble.

2. Declarations of Interest

The following Declarations of Interest were made in regard to Item 4.1 of the Report of the Head of Sports Services: Sports Accelerator Fund – DEA Sports Funding 2025-26

- The Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell – in view of a) being a shareholder of Ballymacash Sports Academy and b) a family member being Club Chaplain of Lisburn Ladies Football Club
- The Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, - in view of family members being a) a member of Phoenix Basketball Club under 12s Team, and (b) manager of Phoenix Basketball Club
- Councillor C Kemp - in view of her membership of the Committee of St Joseph's GAC
- Councillor G McCleave - in view of family members involvement with Glenavy GAC/Glenavy FC Academy

The Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell also declared a pecuniary interest in item 5.1 Community Bursary Scheme 2025/26 – Updated Outcomes to Date in view of being a shareholder of Ballymacash Sports Academy.

3. Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

3.1 Notice of Motion – To Include Dogs at LCCC Events

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing's report highlighted the background and key issues in connection with the Notice of Motion on the subject of the inclusion of dogs at LCCC events that had been considered by the Committee in April 2025. The report also outlined proposals for two additional dog-friendly events, on a pilot basis which would be added to the events calendar along with supplementary programmes. The Director's report also detailed approximate costings and draft details of these events.

Councillor S Lowry entered the meeting at 6.08 pm.

Councillor A P Ewing, being the original proposer of this Notice of Motion, addressed the Committee during which he welcomed the proposed addition of two bespoke dog friendly events on a pilot basis. Councillor Ewing also was hopeful that these types of events would provide an opportunity for the local

3.1 Notice of Motion – To Include Dogs at LCCC Events (Cont'd)

business community to become involved; for example, the pet industry may wish to avail of the opportunity to provide sponsorship for such events.

Alderman S Skillen, having seconded the Notice of Motion, thanked Officers for their efforts in bringing forward the proposed addition of two bespoke dog friendly events, on a pilot basis. Alderman Skillen welcomed the inclusion of a bespoke dog-friendly event in Moat Park, Dundonald.

In responding to question from a Member in regard to the dog restriction at the Family Fun Day as part of the Mayor's Parade event, the Director advised that a number of pieces of information were considered to ensure the protection of patrons and dogs including advice from the Health & Safety Executive and other risk assessments.

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor C Kemp, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the proposed additional dog-friendly events on a pilot basis, as outlined in the Director's report be agreed, and in addition
- b) the Communities & Wellbeing Committee work alongside the Regeneration & Growth Committee in regard to the promotion of the Council's dog-friendly sticker initiative being promoted on the Visit Lisburn Castlereagh website.

Councillor B Higginson requested that a timetable for the Dog Exercise Meet Ups and the Paws & Purpose events be provided to Members, and also that the dog park at Lough Moss be included as a venue for these events.

3.2 Funding (i) Dispersal Funding & (ii) Additional District Council Good Relations Programme Funding

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing outlining the background and key issues in connection with (i) the Dispersal Funding Programme which was funded by The Executive Office in partnership with the Home Office, and (ii) the additional funding for the District Council Good Relations Programme.

(i) Dispersal Funding

It was noted that the aim of the Dispersal Funding programme was to develop the capacity and infrastructure to support the arrival of newcomers into local communities, and in particular those with refugee and asylum status.

The Director's report highlighted that the Council had received an additional allocation of £27,573 under the same terms of the original Memorandum of Understanding issued by The Executive Office in 2022.

(i) Dispersal Funding (Cont'd)

The Committee had been furnished with copy correspondence from The Executive Office dated August 2025 outlining the amendments to the original Letter of Offer, together with the most recent copy of the MOU.

(ii) Additional District Council Good Relations Programme Funding

The Director highlighted that in addition to the dispersal funding, The Executive Office (TEO) had offered council an additional £20,000 under the District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP) to develop new or enhance existing programmes that particularly addressed social and racial cohesion. It was also noted that TEO had articulated that in addition to the £20,000 a further £27,000 could be made available in year. Unlike the dispersal funding all awarded funds for this workstream must be spent within the 2025/26 financial year and therefore the funds cannot be merged into one funding stream.

The Director requested that in addition to the recommendation in the report regarding the approval of the release of a Good Relations Strategic Fund, the Committee considers the granting of delegated authority to the Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, and the Vice-Chairperson, Councillor A Givan, in consultation with the Acting Head of Communities, which would allow the process of the award of grants to be accelerated and also ensure that the funding is spent by the deadline of March 2026.

The Director responded to questions from the Committee on a number of the key issues contained within the report and undertook to bring an update report to the Committee outlining the breakdown of the Dispersal Funding awards, along with sending information to Members regarding the Council initiatives

It was proposed by Councillor G Thompson, seconded by Councillor G McCleave, and agreed to recommend that:

a) Dispersal Fund:

- (i) the release of a further round of the Support Fund, as outlined in the report, with a maximum budget of £80,000, be approved, and;
- (ii) £25,000 be ringfenced for Council delivered local events and programmes

b) District Good Relations Fund:

- (i) the release of a Good Relations Strategic Fund as outlined, with a maximum budget of £47,000, subject to TEO confirmation of budget, be approved, and

b) District Good Relations Fund (Cont'd)

- (ii) delegated authority be granted to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Committee, in consultation with the Acting Head of Communities, in regard to the award of funding to the successful groups, in view of the deadline for funding to be spent by March 2026.

The Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, left the meeting for the following two item of business, Sports Accelerator Fund – DEA Sports Funding 2025/2026 and Community Bursary Scheme 2025/2026 – Updated Outcomes to Date, having declared an interest in those matters.

The Vice Chairperson, Councillor A Givan, took the Chair and conducted the following two items of business (6.17 pm).

4. Report of Head of Sports Services

Councillors A P Ewing, C Kemp and G McCleave also left the meeting having also declared an interest in item 4.1. (6.17 pm)

4.1 Sports Accelerator Fund – DEA Sports Funding 2025/2026

The Head of Sports Services' report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Sports Accelerator Fund which aimed to support local constituted and affiliated to Sports Lisburn and Castlereagh Clubs through a maximum allocation of £3,000.

It was noted that there was a shortfall of £2,638.99 in this funding programme due to all successful applications having been accommodated at their respective score amount, but this additional contribution could be accessed through the DEA Investment Programme.

Members welcomed these funding awards and expressed appreciation in regard to groups in their respective DEAs having secured grant funding under this programme.

The Head of Sports Services noted comments by a Member in relation to one of the DEAs being recorded incorrectly as Lisburn South DEA.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Councillor S Lowry, and agreed to recommend that the award of grant to all 48 successful applicants, as presented, be noted.

5. Report of Acting Head of Communities

Councillors C Kemp and G McCleave returned to the meeting at 6.21 pm.

5.1 Community Bursary Scheme 2025/2026 – Updated Outcomes to Date

The Acting Head of Communities' report outlined the background and key issues in relation to the Community Bursary Scheme which formed part of the Council's DEA Local Investment Programme aimed at supporting individuals and organisations with access to progression routes for sport, music, language and/or cultural activities. For the 2025/26 programme Members had approved a budget of £25,000.

The Acting Head of Communities reminded Members that they had agreed the criteria for the Community Bursary Scheme in April 2024. Applications were assessed on an ongoing basis, as they were received, within the cycle of the fund; and then agreed under delegated authority by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, in consultation with the Head of Communities. As part of the ongoing arrangements, the outcome of applications was brought to the Committee for noting.

A copy of the outcome of applications had been appended to the Officer's report.

It was noted that in 2024/25 there had been an underspend in the fund of £3,364, which has been rolled into 2025/26, giving a total fund allocation of £28,364.

The Acting Head of Communities responded to a question from a Member in regard to the timeline regarding a review of criteria for grant schemes. It was noted that this was likely to be presented some time in the new year following the appointment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in November.

A Member put on record congratulations to Derriaghy Football Club for their success in winning the Foyle Cup this year, it being noted that the grant award to the Club had been valuable.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Alderman A McIntyre , and agreed to recommend that the outcomes of the Community Bursary Scheme be noted.

The Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, returned to the meeting and took the chair for the remaining items of business on the agenda.

6. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

6.1 Communication Boards in Parks
Councillor C Kemp

Councillor C Kemp put on record her thanks to Council Officers and also Solas for their efforts in progressing the pilot initiative on communication boards in parks, the feedback on which had been very positive. Councillor Kemp stated that this initiative was sending out the message that this Council was an inclusive city and was hopeful that the communication boards would be rolled out across all the parks in the Council area. Councillor Kemp acknowledged that the Estimates

6.1 Communication Boards in Parks (Cont'd)
Councillor C Kemp

process was now commencing and requested that this initiative be borne in mind during this time.

6.2 Hilden Play Park, Lisburn & Play Park at Huguenot Drive, Lisburn
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to the thanks he had expressed at the September meeting of Council in regard to the repairs and maintenance that had taken place at the above play parks and requested an update thereon.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing confirmed that Officers had been out and about in the parks for the purpose of conducting an audit on anything that needs repaired or replaced and undertook to provide Councillor Hynds with an update on the parks he had mentioned.

6.3 Lisburn Marching Bands Tattoo
Councillor G Hynds & Councillor B Higginson

Councillor G Hynds referred to the issue of lack of provision of toilet facilities and barriers at the Lisburn Marching Bands Tattoo event in Lisburn City Centre the previous weekend. Councillor Hynds emphasised the importance of the toilet facilities being made available on the evening of this event due to the large numbers of people attending this event.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing advised that she was looking into this matter.

At a later point in the meeting Councillor B Higginson congratulated the organisers of the Lisburn Marching Bands Tattoo. The event had attracted a huge crowd on the evening. Councillor Higginson requested that the Director share information on the breakdown in communication in regard to the lack of toilet facilities on the evening with the organisers.

6.4 Consultation Response – DOJ Consultation on the proposed expansion of Out of Court Disposals including Penalty Notices in the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to the above consultation by the Department of Justice which had been responded to, on behalf of the Council, by the PCSP. A copy of the Council's response had been circulated on the Committee's October Information & Correspondence schedule. Councillor Hynds put on record his deep concern in relation to this consultation, in particular in regard to certain crimes being dealt with by penalty notices rather than custodial sentences, such as assaults on police officers. Councillor Hynds was of the opinion that such criminal activity should be dealt with by a custodial sentence. Councillor Hynds stated that this would also be a great concern for the general public.

6.4 Consultation Response – DOJ Consultation on the proposed expansion of Out of Court Disposals including Penalty Notices in the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (Cont'd)
Councillor G Hynds

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing advised that the Acting Head of Communities would convey Councillor Hynds' concerns to the PCSP.

Alderman A McIntyre highlighted that this consultation had been initiated by the PSNI in conjunction with the Department for Justice, and that individual parties and also individual Elected Members had been encouraged to respond to this consultation.

6.5 European Heritage Open Days Thanks to Council Officers and Museum Staff
Alderman A McIntyre

Alderman A McIntyre conveyed thanks and appreciation to the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing and Council Officers for their support and efforts in connection with the European Heritage Open Days that had taken place during 13th and 14th September 2025. Alderman McIntyre in particular commended the efforts of the Museum staff whom, he stated, had arranged a number of additional tours due to the volume of visitors attending these open days.

6.6 Wet Condition of Dog Exercise Area in Ballybeen
Alderman S Skillen & Councillor S Lowry

Councillor R Carlin joined the meeting remotely at 6.35 pm.

Alderman S Skillen referred to the problem of the dog exercise area in Ballybeen being constantly swamped due to being on a flood plan and enquired if there was anything that Council Officers could do to address this issue. Alderman Skillen suggested that the Parks and Amenities team work with NI Water to consider how this matter could be addressed.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing undertook to have this matter investigated.

Councillor S Lowry put on record her thanks to the staff in the Parks & Amenities Team for the quick response to the recent issues of flooding and maintenance. Councillor Lowry also requested that the Parks & Amenities team carry out more than a weekly inspection of the park as these issues seemed to be a recurring issue.

6.7 Accessibility of Pitches
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen reported having received a telephone call the previous weekend from a constituent in connection with a sports pitch not being open. The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing undertook to have this matter investigated.

6.8 Soft Play area at DIIB
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen requested that a meeting with the Members of Castlereagh East DEA be convened in order to explore the options around developing the Soft Play area at DIIB

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing undertook to pick up on this matter with Alderman Skillen offline.

6.9 Seniors Summer Scheme
Councillor G Thompson

Councillor G Thompson welcomed the update on the Age Friendly Programme, details of which had been included in the Committee's October Information & Correspondence Schedule (ICS). Councillor Thompson also highlighted that October was 'positive ageing month and wished to thank Officers for their efforts in regard to the various activities that had been organised as part of the Age Friendly Programme over recent months. Councillor Thompson also requested that these activities were promoted as much as possible.

Councillor Thompson having also welcomed the update on the Seniors Summer Scheme which had also been circulated in this month's ICS, highlighted the involvement of the PHA who were organising a conference in November on the subject of older people and had asked the Council to do a presentation on its Seniors Summer Scheme.

Councillor Thompson also drew the Committee's attention to the work of the South Eastern Regional College who were interested in doing an intergeneration programme next summer.

7. Confidential Report from Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, advised that the reason for confidentiality for each of the confidential reports was due to 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 B Higginson, seconded by Councillor C Kemp, and agreed that the Confidential Reports of the Director be considered "in Committee". The recording was paused at this stage in proceedings, and any members of the press and public left the meeting (6.40 pm).

7.1 Business Case – Litter Management in Parks & Open Spaces
(Redacted report to be published May 2026)

A copy of business case had been appended to the Officer's report which outlined options for consideration on the management of the litter service required, over a three-year period.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing responded to comments and questions from the Committee in connection with some of the key issues contained within the report circulated.

Councillor K Dickson left the meeting and returned at 6.45 pm and 6.48 pm respectively.

It was proposed by Councillor G McCleave, seconded by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor A Givan, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the report and business case in regard to litter management in parks and open spaces be noted, and
- b) option 2 of the Business Case be approved and progressed through a tender process.

7.2 Community Investment Fund
(Redacted Report to be published November 2025)

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing's report outlined the background and key issues in relation to a project that had secured funding through the Community Investment Fund, namely; Canal Boxing Club

At this point in the meeting the Committee was circulated with a copy of the formal Letter of Offer to Canal Boxing Club in connection with the Community Investment Fund – Funding Agreement (a draft Letter of Offer having been appended to the Director's report at the time of the meeting papers being issued).

It was proposed by Councillor G Thompson, seconded by Councillor C Kemp, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the content of the Director's report be noted, including the verbal update provided by the Director, and
- b) the formal Letter of Offer, as circulated at the meeting, be issued to Canal Boxing Club.

It was further agreed to recommend on a proposal by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, that the Council explores opportunities to fund the additional amount required by Holy Trinity Parish Church, from the budget identified during the discussion. It was agreed a further report would be brought back to Committee for consideration.

7.3 Satellite Centre - Extension of Satellite Centre Funding Programme
(Redacted Report to be published once the Estimates process has been finalised)

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing's report outlined the background and key issues in relation to Satellite Centre Funding Programme which delivered against the Corporate Plan through improving physical, mental and social wellbeing whilst fostering pride and promoting social cohesion within communities.

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) annual funding be awarded to both facilities, as outlined in the Director's report, with ongoing evaluation to consider future funding support,
- b) this expenditure be included as part of the 2026/27 estimates process, and
- c) monthly pro rata funding be awarded to both organisations from commencement of project delivery until the end of this financial year.

8. Any Other Business – Confidential

8.1 Book on Hilden School
Councillor G Hynds

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing responded to comments from Councillor G Hynds in connection with a previous decision by the Committee to look into the possibility of the Council funding two further chapters of a book that had been published a number of years ago on the subject of Hilden School.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was agreed to come "out of Committee" and normal business was resumed.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.04 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIR