

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Lagan Valley Island and Remote Locations on Tuesday 27 January, 2026 at 7:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Alderman A Grehan

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, O Gawith, M Gregg,
A McIntyre and J Tinsley

Councillors J Bamford, R T Beckett, S Burns, P Catney,
D J Craig, A P Ewing, A Givan, A Gowan, J Harpur,
B Higginson, G Hynds, D Lynch, U Mackin, B Magee,
T Mitchell, C McCready, M McKeever and G Thompson

PRESENT REMOTELY:

Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

Alderman S Skillen

Councillors D Bassett, R Carlin, K Dickson, J Gallen,
C Kemp, G McCleave, R McLernon and N Parker

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive
Director of Organisation Development and Innovation
Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Director of Environmental Services
Director of Regeneration and Growth
Head of Governance & Communications (remote attendance)
Member Services Officers (FA & EW)
Technician
IT Officer

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, welcomed those present to the meeting of Council which was being livestreamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings. The Mayor pointed out that, should the meeting go into committee to consider confidential business, any members of the press and the public in attendance would be required to leave the Council Chamber for the duration of those matters.

The Chief Executive outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. 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 welcomed the Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Andrew Thompson, to the meeting of Council. Rev Thompson addressed the meeting and said a prayer, during which he offered condolences to Colin McKenna, Portfolio Office, and Susannah McKenna-Strathern, Island Arts Centre, on the passing of their father and grandfather, Mr Bernard McKenna.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Following the prayer the Right Worshipful the Mayor asked everyone present to observe a minute's silence to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, to remember the victims of the Holocaust and honour all those whose lives had been devastated by genocide, and to reaffirm a shared commitment to uphold dignity, humanity and respect, and to challenge hatred and intolerance in all its forms. The Mayor advised that the theme for the year was Bridging Generations which aimed to highlight the crucial role of the next generation in preserving the memory of the Holocaust.

The Council stood and observed a minute's silence at 7.10 pm.

Statement by The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, on Comments Made by the President of the United States of America

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, addressed the recent comments of the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, on the role of NATO soldiers during the war in Afghanistan. The Mayor spoke of the hurt these comments had caused to service personnel and their families across Northern Ireland, in particular Mr Andrew Allen MLA MBE. The Mayor paid respect to the 9 service personnel from Northern Ireland, and 457 from the United Kingdom as a whole, who lost their lives during the war in Afghanistan and stated that their sacrifice should be recognised truthfully and with respect. The Mayor continued that subsequent comments had acknowledged the bravery of UK and NATO front line soldiers.

Bondi Beach Atrocity – Reply from Lord Mayor of Sydney

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, advised that having written to the Lord Mayor of Sydney on behalf of the Council and people of the Lisburn and Castlereagh area, that a letter of reply had been received. The Mayor read the reply to the Chamber which thanked the Mayor for sending her condolences and advised of a minute titled "Solidarity With Our Jewish Community" which had been unanimously endorsed by City of Sydney Council. A copy of the minute was enclosed. The letter from the Lord Mayor of Sydney also advised that Waverley Council manages Bondi Beach and the surrounding suburbs. The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, advised that she had written to the Mayor of Waverly Council to offer condolences to them.

Rev A Thompson left the meeting at this point (7.15 pm).

1. Business of The Right Worshipful the Mayor

1.1 Mayor's Engagements

The Council noted a number of engagements attended by The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, and the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, since the last meeting of Council.

2. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Alderman S P Porter and Councillors J Laverty, S Lowry and A Martin.

3. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest were declared by Alderman J Baird and Councillors A P Ewing, A Gowan and G Thompson, each due to being a private landlord, in respect of item 3.3 of the minutes of the Environment & Sustainability Committee held on 7 January, 2026 'Update on the Landlord Registration Scheme NI Transfer to LCCC'.

4. Council Minutes

4.1 Council Meeting – 16 December, 2025

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 16 December, 2025 be confirmed and signed.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Deputations

There were no deputations.

7. Business Required by Statute

(i) Signing of Legal Documents

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed that the following legal documents be signed at the meeting:

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and McKinstry Skip Hire Ltd (McKinstry Biomass), 81-83 Belfast Road, Crumlin BT29 4TL – Contract

(i) Signing of Legal Documents (Cont'd)

for the Collection, Transportation and Recovery of Waste Wood from Council Household Recycling Centres (Ref: STA 25/26-023)

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Tourist Wise Ltd (t/a Brilliant Trails), 4 The Courtyard Galgorm Castle, 114 Galgorm Road, Ballymena BT42 1HL – Contract for T24/25-046 Tender for Maintenance/Repair of Display Features
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Bennett Freehill Ltd, 380c Belmont Road, Belfast BT4 2NF; and Knox Clayton Architects, 2A Wallace Avenue, Lisburn BT27 4AA; and FCM Partnership, 216-218 Holywood Road, Belfast BT4 1PD; and ADD Consulting Engineers Ltd, 21 High Street, Lurgan BT66 8AH – Contract for T25/26-004 Tender for Design Team for Proposed Changing Rooms at Aghalee Playing Fields and Seycon Park
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Norspace, 2 Glenavy Road, Upper Ballinderry, Lisburn BT28 2EU; and Balloo Hire Centre Ltd, 31 Sydenham Road, Belfast BT3 9DH; and KDM Hire Ltd, Alexander Road, Castlereagh, Co Down BT6 9HP – Contract for T25/26-057 Tender for Hire of Chemical Toilets

8. Adoption of Minutes of Committees**Communities and Wellbeing Committee****6 January, 2026**

Proposed by Councillor T Mitchell

Seconded by Councillor A Givan

Environment and Sustainability Committee**7 January, 2026**

Proposed by Alderman O Gawith

Seconded by Councillor S Burns

Regeneration and Growth Committee**8 January, 2026**

Proposed by Councillor C Kemp

Seconded by Councillor J Harpur

Corporate Services Committee**14 January, 2026**

Proposed by Councillor B Higginson

Seconded by Councillor J Bamford

Planning Committee**1 December, 2025**

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 1 December, 2025 had been circulated for noting only as these minutes had been agreed at the subsequent meeting of the Planning Committee on 12 January, 2026. It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed that their contents be noted.

9. Report from Chief Executive

There were no reports from the Chief Executive.

10. Reports from Members on Boards

There were no reports from Members on Boards.

11. Reports on Decisions Subject to the Reconsideration Procedure

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

12. Notice of Motion

12.1 Freedom of the City of Lisburn & Castlereagh for Mr Tommy Doherty

A copy of the following Notice of Motion in the name of Alderman A McIntyre, had been circulated to Members with the notice convening the meeting:

“That Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council resolves to confer the Freedom of the City upon Mr Tommy Doherty, in recognition of his distinguished wartime service, lifelong connection to the Lisburn area, and his contribution to the collective memory and heritage of our community.”

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre and seconded by Councillor U Mackin.

Alderman A McIntyre opened by informing those present that Mr Tommy Doherty was a native of the Lisburn area and had served, with distinction, in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War, and gave a brief overview of his service as a driver, which started with training at Long Kesh and continued through to the surrender of Japan in August 1945. Alderman McIntyre spoke of the risks and difficulties Mr Doherty faced during his service, navigating jungle terrain in Malaysia and Singapore through challenging and often dangerous environments with significant risk. Alderman McIntyre advised that Mr Doherty, who had celebrated his 99th birthday in recent weeks, was ever-present at civic commemorations including services at Lisburn cenotaph in 2025, marking the 80th anniversaries of Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan. Alderman McIntyre advised of the links between Lisburn and the military, as a garrison town, and that he felt it would be fitting for the Council to recognise one of the City’s own citizens in this manner. Alderman McIntyre spoke of the charitable work Mr Doherty has undertaken since leaving the military, raising thousands of pounds to support veterans and their families over many years. In closing Alderman McIntyre stated he felt that conferring Freedom of the City on Mr Doherty would not only honour Mr Doherty’s personal contribution but also that of the wider generation that had served during the Second World War.

Councillor U Mackin, having seconded the notice of motion, recalled his first meeting with Mr T Doherty, while out canvassing, during which he learned of Mr

12.1 Freedom of the City of Lisburn & Castlereagh for Mr Tommy Doherty
(Cont'd)

Doherty's service in the Royal Air Force and was able to look at Mr Doherty's collection of memorabilia. Councillor Mackin advised that Mr Doherty was in the rare position of being able to say neither he or any of his close comrades in his unit, lost their lives or were injured during the Second World War, and the pride Mr Doherty took in being able to say this. Councillor Mackin recalled commemorative military events, such as Centenary celebrations for the Royal Air Force in 2018, and advised that Mr Doherty was present at them all. Councillor Mackin stated that while Mr Doherty was immensely proud of his service, he remained incredibly humble and concluded by saying that he felt there were few other people in the Council area who were as worthy of the honour of Freedom of the City as Mr Doherty.

Alderman J Baird and the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Veterans Champion, Alderman J Tinsley, both spoke in support of the Notice of Motion.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, advised of charitable work she had undertaken alongside Mr T Doherty, including Mr Doherty lighting up his house with Christmas lights to raise money for her Mayoral charity, and selling poppies for the Royal British Legion in Tesco Supermarket.

The Notice of Motion as proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, was put to the meeting and agreed unanimously.

12.2 Winter Services

Alderman M Gregg left the meeting and returned during this item (7.47 pm and 7.50pm)

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

"Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council notes the recent period of snow and ice and the understandable public concern about the condition of roads and footpaths across the borough during severe winter weather.

The Council recognises the vital importance of a safe and reliable road network in ensuring people can access schools, healthcare, workplaces and other essential services, particularly during challenging weather conditions.

The Council also wishes to commend the Department for Infrastructure's frontline staff and others, including farmers, who work in difficult and often hazardous conditions to keep roads open and safe, and to acknowledge their efforts during the recent cold weather.

At the same time, the Council believes it is important that the public has confidence in winter service arrangements on the grounds of public safety, reputation and supporting our thriving economy. The Council therefore

12.2 Winter Services (Cont'd)

seeks reassurance from the Department for Infrastructure regarding road gritting schedules, response arrangements, and the continued availability of salt boxes and grit piles in local communities, including confirmation that provision has not been reduced.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agrees to write to the Minister for Infrastructure requesting these assurances, and to reaffirm the Council's commitment to work constructively with the Department for Infrastructure to help ensure the best possible winter service for the people of Lisburn and Castlereagh."

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor A Gowan and seconded by Alderman J Baird.

Councillor A Gowan elaborated on his Notice of Motion by stating that it was in relation to icy conditions experienced across the Lisburn Castlereagh area some weeks prior, particularly in rural locations. Councillor Gowan spoke of the importance of safe roads and footpaths to public safety and the access to places of work, schools, healthcare facilities and for key services to take place including carers being able to get to the homes of those that rely on them, and collections of produce being able to take place at farms. Councillor Gowan advised of the problems he had seen first hand in his own DEA of Downshire East. Councillor Gowan stated that the intention of his Notice of Motion was not to criticise the front-line Department for Infrastructure staff who have done their best to ensure roads are safe, but rather to ensure winter service arrangements are robust, responsive and fair in areas such as:

- Clarity surrounding gritting schedules;
- Clarity on response arrangements;
- Availability and replenishment of gritting boxes; and
- Clarity on grit piles for rural roads.

Councillor Gowan continued that he was aware of a number of locations where residents had gone to locations of grit piles only find there was none, which left them exasperated with the situation. Councillor Gowan highlighted the fact that the route to the Dromara GP surgery was not included in the gritting schedule. In closing Councillor Gowan stated that he would like clarity from the Department of Infrastructure, that constituents receive the service they expect, and that there is preparedness for future inclement weather events caused by snow and ice.

Alderman J Baird, having seconded the notice of motion, agreed with the points raised by Councillor A Gowan. Alderman Baird raised concerns with the gritting process and advised of roads that been gritted in some sections, such as corners, but not others, and advised this needed to be addressed for main thoroughfares. Alderman Baird spoke on the replenishment of grit supplies and concluded with a suggestion that a collaborative approach between the Department of Infrastructure and Council could be used in the future, but clarity would be required.

12.2 Winter Services (Cont'd)

Councillor B Magee thanked the Council Officers for their response to flooding incidents earlier in the day. Councillor Magee spoke in favour of the Notice of Motion, during which she acknowledged and thanked the Department for Infrastructure for their response to the ice and snow earlier in the month, thanked members of the public who used grit boxes to treat footpaths and roads, and raised concerns with the current gritting schedule.

Councillor D Lynch thanked the front-line staff of the Department of Infrastructure who have worked long hours in difficult conditions to keep roads open, and commended the Minister for Infrastructure for her leadership with a focus on public safety. Councillor Lynch acknowledged that ongoing issues with roads existed.

The Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge spoke in favour of the notice of motion, and on behalf of Councillor A Martin, thanked Council Officers for their role in responding to flooding incidents earlier in the day.

Councillor D J Craig reiterated the thanks already given to Officers for their work earlier in the day and paid tribute to the front-line staff of the Department of Infrastructure. Councillor Craig raised concerns with failures in grit supply replenishment and spoke of a rumour he had heard that a stock of grit had been taken from the Department of Infrastructure depot at Sprucefield by a private vehicle.

The Notice of Motion as proposed by Councillor A Gowan, seconded by Alderman J Baird, was put to the meeting and agreed unanimously.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Road Surface Issue in Royal Hillsborough
Councillor A Gowan

Councillor A Gowan raised concerns with the condition of the surface of Main Street in Royal Hillsborough, in particular the area at the junction with Ballynahinch Street. Councillor Gowan advised that he had been informed works were planned by Department of Infrastructure to rectify this, but that they have subsequently been cancelled due to the upcoming Public Realm Scheme approved earlier in the month at the Planning Committee meeting on 12th January 2026. The Director of Regeneration and Growth confirmed that the Council had received confirmation from the Department of Infrastructure that the planned resurfacing works had been cancelled in light of the upcoming Public Realm Scheme.

Councillor A Gowan proposed that given the Public Realm Scheme may not commence for a further 18 months, the Council engage with the Department for Infrastructure to address the condition of the road surface in the interim period. Alderman A G Ewart seconded this proposal. The Director of Regeneration and Growth advised he was content to raise the issue with the Department of Infrastructure.

13.2 Storm Chandra Flooding
Councillor A Gowan

Councillor A Gowan thanked Council staff for their response to flooding cause by storm Chandra. Councillor Gowan requested:

1. an update on sandbags that it had previously been agreed would be provided for residents in the Magheraconluce area on a permanent basis; and
2. that the Council engage with the Housing Executive and Department for Infrastructure Rivers Agency on recurring flooding issues in Dromara.

The Chief Executive advised that work was ongoing with Anahilt and Magheraconluce residents groups with regards to community resilience and that officers would follow up with them, and accelerate conversations with the Housing Executive and Department for Infrastructure Rivers Agency regarding the flooding in Dromara.

13.3 Flooding at Ballybog Road, Derriaghy
Councillor D J Craig

Councillor D J Craig advised that as the result of water run off from Aberdelghy Golf Course, flooding had occurred at neighbouring properties. Councillor Craig advised that works had been completed to resolve this in the past year but that following Storm Chandra, the flooding had occurred again. Councillor Craig requested an urgent meeting to discuss options the Council can take to implement an engineering solution to resolve this issue. The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, advised that any Members with issues regarding flooding should address them directly with the appropriate Director.

13.4 Live Life Wellbeing Reception
Councillor J Bamford

Councillor J Bamford expressed her thanks to the staff responsible for organising the reception for Live Life Wellbeing to celebrate their success in the Kings Awards for Volunteering which she had attended the evening prior. Councillor Bamford praised the catering company and spoke of how meaningful it was to the volunteers of Live Life Wellbeing and their families.

13.5 Public Conveniences in Bow Street, Lisburn
Alderman A G Ewart

Alderman A G Ewart noted the lack of public conveniences in the Bow Street area of Lisburn City Centre, an issue which he had raised over a number of years. Alderman Ewart requested that the Council look for available properties that could be converted for this use and that a report is brought to Members detailing associated costs with such a proposal. The Chief Executive advised that feasibility work on this subject was in process alongside other projects and Officers would explore if another project could be de-prioritised.

13.6 New Year's Day Fire in Crans-Montana, Switzerland
Councillor C Kemp

Councillor C Kemp requested that the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, write to the Mayor of Crans-Montana to express sympathy and support on behalf of the people of the Lisburn & Castlereagh area, with the people of Crans-Montana. The Mayor advised she was happy to accommodate this request.

13.7 Cairnshill Integrated Primary School and Pitches at Cairnshill Drive, Belfast
Councillor J Harpur

Councillor J Harpur raised concerns with the standards of the football pitches at Cairnshill Drive in Belfast and proposed the Council write to the Minister of Education on the subject of the site configuration and decision making on the site as a whole. Councillor M McKeever seconded this proposal.

13.8 Damage at the Garden of Reflection, Lagan Valley Island
Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin spoke of significant damage that had been caused at the Garden of Reflection. Councillor Mackin advised that the annual service was due to take place in May and requested that repairs are expedited. The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan expressed her sadness at hearing of the damage to the Garden of Reflection. The Chief Executive advised that officers were investigating long term solutions but assured Councillor Mackin that the repairs would take place in a timely manner so the annual service could take place in May as planned.

13.9 Microsoft Copilot
Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin queried the availability of Microsoft Copilot on Council I.T. devices and acknowledged that whilst it could be very useful, raised concerns that misuse could be dangerous. Councillor Mackin enquired what policies were in place on the use of this and what training was being provided to staff and Elected Members. The Chief Executive requested that Members ensure they have completed their most recent I.T. security training which would assist in the Council's resilience against cyber-attacks. The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation advised that there was a small pilot scheme ongoing for Microsoft Copilot to assess the suitability of the software for wider use by Council staff and Elected Members. The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation continued that in addition to the I.T. Policy and Digital Policy an A.I. Policy was being developed. Later in the meeting the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, advised that NILGA had run a webinar on Microsoft Copilot and that it is recorded and available for the Members to watch. The Deputy Mayor advised that perhaps the information contained in the webinar could be used in conjunction with the information and policy being compiled by the Council. The Chief Executive advised that officers would engage with the Deputy Mayor on this webinar.

13.10 Death of Mrs Rosa Parkes
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson spoke of the tragic death of Mrs Rosa Parkes, a resident from the Castlereagh South DEA, in an accident at Helen's Bay. Councillor Higginson requested that the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan write to Mrs Parkes' family to express condolences on behalf of the Council. The Mayor advised she was happy to accommodate this request.

13.11 Congratulations to Mr Christian Ennis
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen offered congratulations to Mr Christian Ennis on becoming the first player on the Darts Advanced Tour from Northern Ireland and requested that the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan send a letter of congratulations. The Mayor advised she was happy to accommodate this request.

13.12 Deaths of Mrs Renée Good and Mr Alex Pretti
Alderman M Gregg

Alderman M Gregg spoke of the deaths of Mrs Renée Good and Mr Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA and paid tribute to both. Alderman Gregg requested that the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan write letters of condolence on behalf of the people of Lisburn & Castlereagh to:

1. Mrs Good's widow;
2. Mr Pretti's parents;
3. The Mayor of Minneapolis; and
4. The Governor of Minnesota

The Mayor advised she was happy to accommodate this request.

13.13 Introduction of Graduated Driver Licensing
Councillor P Catney

Councillor P Catney advised that he had attended his first meeting as a member of the PCSP Committee the previous week and that he found it extremely informative especially in regard to the ongoing work on road safety. Councillor Catney recalled the tragic death of his brother, aged just 19, in a road traffic accident and welcomed the news that the Minister for Infrastructure had announced plans to introduce Graduated Driver Licensing to reduce the disproportionate involvement of new, primarily young, drivers in fatal and serious road traffic collisions. Councillor Catney commended the Department of Infrastructure for their work on this and stated that he welcomed any measures that improved road safety, especially for young drivers.

13.14 Members Confidentiality
Alderman M Gregg

Alderman M Gregg spoke of his disappointment of a recent story in the press, in which information that had been discussed as part of confidential business in the

13.14 Members Confidentiality (Cont'd)

Council Chamber, had been included. Alderman Gregg advised that the Alliance Party have always championed transparency, but that some business should be discussed confidentially and remain so until published by the Council. Alderman Gregg stated that Councillors need to take confidentiality seriously and requested Members to be mindful that those that are leaking information to the press are in breach of the Council's Standing Orders, breaking their Elected Members Code of Conduct and their duty as a Councillor. Alderman Gregg requested that breaches of confidential information stop.

14. Confidential Business

There were no confidential reports for consideration.

Conclusion of Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan thanked those present for their attendance.

There being no further business for consideration, the meeting was terminated at 8.22 pm.

Mayor