

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 4th March 2025 at 6.00 pm.****PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):**

Councillor J Craig (Chair)

Aldermen A Grehan and A McIntyre

Councillors T Beckett, J Gallen, B Higginson, S Lowry, G McCleave, T Mitchell and G Thompson

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE)

Alderman S Skillen

Councillors D Bassett and C Kemp

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

Councillor G Hynds

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION

Alderman J Tinsley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Head of Communities

Head of Parks & Amenities

Head of Sports Services

Acting Head of Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning

Member Services Officers (RN & EW)

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting 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 Chair, Councillor Craig, referred to the recent passing of Mr Terry McAllister, the father of the Committee vice-chair, Alderman Hazel Legge. On his own behalf and that of the Committee, Councillor Craig extended deepest sympathy to Alderman Legge and her family circle and assured them that the thoughts and prayers of Members and Officers were with them at this sad time.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. The Chair 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

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Alderman H Legge (Vice-Chair) and Alderman P Porter.

The Member Services Officer read out the names of those persons who were attending the meeting on a remote basis.

Councillor J Gallen entered the Council Chamber during this item. (6.03 pm)

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited Members to declare any interests they might have in relation to the business of the meeting and reminded them of the requirement that they complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard which had been provided with the papers for the meeting, and which were also available in the Chamber.

The following Declarations of Interest were made:-

- Alderman A Grehan. Item 4.1.of report of Head of Communities – “VE Day Grant Funding”. (i) Member of the Board of Ballymacash Rangers Football Club and (ii) Member of the Royal British Legion. (Both are non-pecuniary interests.)
- Councillor B Higginson. Item 4.1 of report of Head of Communities – “VE Day Grant Funding”. Member of the Royal British Legion. Non-pecuniary interest.
- Councillor G Hynds. Item 4.1 of report of Head of Communities – “VE Day Grant Funding”. Committee member of Lisburn Recreation & Community Hub. Non-pecuniary interest.
- Councillor T Mitchell. Item 3.1.of report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing – “Community Investment Fund Launch 2025/2026”. Shareholder in Ballymacash Sports Academy. Pecuniary interest.
- Councillor T Mitchell. Item 4.1 of report of Head of Communities – “VE Day Grant Funding”. (i) Shareholder in Ballymacash Sports Academy and (ii) Elder in Granshaw Presbyterian Church. (Both are non-pecuniary interests.)

2. Declarations of Interest (Continued)

- Alderman S Skillen. Item 4.1 of report of Head of Communities – “VE Day Grant Funding”. Member of Ballybeen Improvement Group. Pecuniary interest.
- Alderman S Skillen. Item 4.1 of report of Head of Communities – “VE Day Grant Funding”. (i) Member of Dundonald Purple Vine Orange Lodge 1056; (ii) Member of Ballybeen Women’s Centre; (iii) Member of Davarr Community Initiative and (iv) Member of BEACHH (Ballybeen Education & Cultural Heritage Hub). (All are non-pecuniary interests.)

Councillor C Kemp and Alderman J Tinsley joined the meeting on a remote basis during this item. (6.05 pm and 6.07 pm respectively.)

3. Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

3.1 Community Investment Fund – Launch 2025/2026

Councillor T Mitchell left the Council Chamber in advance of this item of business. (6.08 pm)

The Director reported extensively on the Community Investment Fund in terms of its history and key issues. The Director responded to Members’ questions.

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that a further round of the Community Investment Fund be released in line with the previously agreed principles and criteria of the scheme.

Councillor T Mitchell returned to the Chamber after this item had concluded. (6.15 pm)

3.2 Storm Eowyn (24th January 2025)
Support for Community Voluntary Sector

The Director referred to Storm Eowyn on the 24th January 2025 and to the invaluable assistance provided by the Council along with Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector organisations to those households most impacted by the storm.

Members were provided with copy of a letter dated the 27th January 2025 from the Department for Communities referring to a “Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance” which it had activated to provide support to the Northern Ireland district councils due to the major incident declared because of Storm Eowyn.

3.2 Storm Eowyn (24th January 2025)
Support for Community Voluntary Sector (Continued)

The Minister for Communities - with the approval of the Department of Finance, had agreed to widen the scope of the scheme to reimburse costs incurred by the Council in funding community and voluntary sector partners in line with Local Government Circular 03/2025. The criteria for the reimbursement of costs was detailed in the letter. The Director outlined the criteria for a reimbursement scheme for relevant groups and how such a scheme could be administered.

The Director responded to Members' questions, with particular reference to the level of funding and the circumstances which could be considered as exceptional when applications for funding were being considered.

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that:-

- a reimbursement scheme be put in place for those community/voluntary/faith-based organisations who had assisted in the emergency response to Storm Eowyn;
- unless exceptional circumstances were identified, the upper limit for a claim be set at £300.00;
- the Head of Communities and the Acting Head of Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning be delegated authority to approve the claims, apart from those claims which exceeded £300.00.

The Director agreed to speak off-line with Alderman S Skillen in regard to queries she had on the scheme and also any assistance that might be available to a pigeon club in the Park Avenue area of Dundonald which had been adversely affected by recent flooding in that area.

4. Report of Head of Communities

4.1 VE Day Grant Funding

Alderman A Grehan and Councillors B Higginson and T Mitchell left the Council Chamber in advance of this item of business. (6.32 pm)

Alderman S Skillen left the meeting on a remote basis in advance of this item of business. (6.32 pm)

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with copy of a table of outcomes of assessment under the VE Day 80 Small Grant Fund. All applications had been deemed successful, thereby exceeding the budget set-aside by £14,525.00.

4.1 VE Day Grant Funding (Continued)

At its meeting held on the 17th February 2025, the VE Day 80 Working Group had recommended that the full amounts applied for be approved so as to enable the events by the various organisations to proceed as planned.

It was proposed by Councillor T Beckett and seconded by Councillor S Lowry that:-

- the outcome of the VE Day 80 grant programme be noted;
- the recommendation of the VE Day 80 Working Group for an uplift to the overall budget by the sum of £14,525.00 to cover the grant expenditure requested be agreed and be ringfenced from current in-year Leisure & Community Wellbeing departmental underspend.

Councillor G McCleave stated that he could not support the recommendations of the report.

A recorded vote was taken, the voting being as follows:-

For the Proposal: Councillor T Beckett, Councillor J Craig, Councillor C Kemp, Councillor S Lowry, Alderman A McIntyre, Councillor G Thompson. (6)

Against the Proposal: Councillor D Bassett, Councillor G McCleave. (2)

Abstention: Councillor J Gallen. (1)

The proposal in the name of Councillor T Beckett and seconded by Councillor S Lowry was therefore declared “carried”.

Councillor T Beckett commended the working group for the work being put into the VE Day commemorative programme.

Alderman A Grehan and Councillors B Higginson and T Mitchell returned to the Council Chamber after this item had concluded. (6.40 pm)

Alderman S Skillen returned to the meeting on a remote basis after this item had concluded. (6.40 pm)

4.2 Department for Infrastructure
Consultation – Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP)
(Extended closing date: 31st March 2025)

The Head of Communities reported extensively on a consultation by the Department for Infrastructure entitled “Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP)” which had a closing date of the 28th February 2025 extended to the end of March 2025 for the Council. The ATDP sits within the DfI Eastern Transport Plan 2035 previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP).

4.2 Department for Infrastructure
Consultation – Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP)
(Extended closing date: 31st March 2025) (Continued)

In her report, the Head of Communities outlined the key objectives of the ATDP Plan together with the ATDP response and also that of the Council. The Council's draft response in full was also provided to Members...

It was noted that the Council was drafting an Active Travel Strategy 2025-2040 which would aim to integrate local needs with the DfI's ATDP.

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

- the Head of Communities' report on the above matter be noted;
- the draft response to the Active Travel Delivery Plan be accepted as the Council's response thereto and be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure by the extended closing date for the Council's response of the end of March 2025.

The Director confirmed that whilst cognisance would be taken of the ATFP, it would have no impact on the piece of work being carried out by the Regeneration Unit in regard to the Carryduff area.

5. Report of Acting Head of Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning

5.1 Department for Communities
"Consultation on a Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy"
(Closing date: 6th March 2025)

In addition to the narrative report, the following items had been provided:-

- Department for Communities' consultation entitled "Consultation on a draft Fuel Poverty Strategy";
- draft response to the above-mentioned consultation.

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed to recommend that the draft response to the "Consultation on a Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy" be accepted as the Council's response thereto and be submitted to the Department for Communities by the stipulated closing date of the 6th March 2025.

5.2 Public Health Agency
Consultation on PHA Corporate Plan 2025-2030
(Closing date: 28th February 2025)

In addition to the narrative report, the following items had been provided:-

- Public Health Agency – Corporate Plan 2025-2030;
- draft response to the above-mentioned consultation which had already been submitted to the PHA with a proviso that there could be amendments thereto.

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor J Gallen and agreed to recommend that the draft response to the Public Health Agency's consultation on its Corporate Plan for 2025-2030 be accepted as the Council's response thereto and that the PHA be advised that the Council had no further amendments to the response already submitted.

6. Report of Head of Parks & Amenities

6.1 Requests for Use of Council parks and open spaces

In addition to the narrative report, copies of applications from the undernoted organisations in regard to the use of Council parks and open spaces had been provided, together with the Equality screening document:-

Organisation	Facility Requested	Purpose of use	Date & Time
Lisburn Baptist Church	Wallace Park (Band Stand)	Easter Morning Service	20 th April 2025 (8.30 am – 9.00 am)
Railway Street and Sloan Street Presbyterian Churches	Wallace Park (Band Stand)	Service of Christian worship	20 th April 2025 (6.30 am – 7.30 am)
Moira Community Multi Denominational Church	Moira Demesne	Easter Sunday Dawn Service	20 th April 2025 (7.00 am – 7.30 am)
Moira Presbyterian Church	Moira Demesne	Easter "story trail"	18 th – 20 th April 2025
Lisburn District Scouts	Wallace Park	Fun Day for Scouts	27 th April 2025 (2.00 pm – 5.00 pm)
Lisburn Feile	Wallace Park	Lisburn Feile Family Intergenerational Fun Day	25 th July 2025 (12 noon – 5.00 pm)

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman A McIntyre and agreed to recommend that - subject to engagement with the Safety Advisory Group and compliance with the usual booking requirements such as the provision of adequate insurance cover and the necessary risk assessments:-

6.1 Requests for Use of Council parks and open spaces (Continued)

- the requests referred to above for the use of Council parks and open spaces be acceded to;
- the Bye-Laws be set aside so as to enable the above-mentioned events to progress;
- infrastructure support be provided if so required.

7. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

7.1 Access to Billy Neill Park
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen referred to a Masterplan for the Billy Neill Park area on which there was a commitment. However in advance of a consultation on the full Masterplan, Alderman Skillen asked that a consultation take place for the provision of an access to the Billy Neill Park that would be convenient for the residents of the Coopers Mill, Millmount and Greengraves Gate housing developments.

Alderman Skillen so proposed that a consultation be undertaken on the provision of an access to the Billy Neill Park that would be convenient for the residents of the Coopers Mill, Millmount and Greengraves Gate housing developments, such a consultation being in advance of that in regard to the Masterplan for the area. This proposal was seconded by Councillor S Lowry and agreed.

The Director updated Members on the situation with regard to the Masterplan and noted the Chair's comments about the provision of an indicative timescale.

7.2 Ice Hockey Stars – Zachary & Ethan McClure
Councillor S Lowry

Councillor S Lowry referred to two teenage brothers – Zachary and Ethan McClure – from her DEA who play ice hockey and train at the Dundonald International Ice Bowl. The brothers had been selected to represent Ireland at a forthcoming tournament in the United States of America. Councillor Lowry congratulated the brothers on this achievement and wished them all the best for the USA tournament.

Sports Services had been assisting Zachary and Ethan in terms of support funding. The Head of Sports Services advised that the brothers could also apply for a community bursary, and he agreed to pass on information about this.

7.3 Parks - Repairs
Councillor D Bassett

Councillor D Bassett sought an update on repairs to a gate at Lough Moss and to a bench at Dundonald Park.

The Head of Parks & Amenities provided an update in regard to both matters.

7.4 Dog Fouling – Increased Patrol
Councillor D Bassett

Councillor D Bassett asked that the presence of Dog Wardens be increased at Lough Moss, Carryduff Park, Hydebank Playing Fields and the Cairnshill area.

The Acting Head of Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning noted these comments for appropriate action.

7.5 “Blue Bridge” at Hilden
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds appealed for pressure to be kept on the Department for Infrastructure to have remedial works carried out to the “Blue Bridge”.

The Chair advised that the Director of Regeneration & Growth would be meeting with DfI Roads Service, and it would be the intention to keep the Elected Members for the area fully informed.

7.6 “Santos Football Pitch” at Carryduff
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson sought an update as to when the above facility might be available for public hire.

The Head of Parks & Amenities provided an update and agreed to expedite any actions which were needed to allow the above pitch to be hired by the public. The Head of Service also noted comments that a timescale as to when the facility might be available would be appreciated.

7.7 Grass Cutting in Cemeteries
Councillor J Craig

The Chair, Councillor J Craig, referred to complaints he had received in regard to overgrown grass in the Council's cemeteries.

The Chair asked that the Head of Parks & Amenities accompany him on an inspection of the Council's cemeteries in terms of the need to have the grass cutting attended to. The Head of Parks & Amenities was happy to facilitate this visit with Councillor Craig.

7.7 Grass Cutting in Cemeteries (Continued)
Councillor J Craig

The Director was hopeful that there would be sufficient manpower in place to attend to the grass cutting for the duration of the grass cutting season.

The Acting Head of Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning; and the persons seated in the press and public gallery left the Council Chamber.
(7.09 pm)

8. Confidential Report from Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The reasons for confidentiality were as set out in the agenda, ie:-

8.1 Portmore and Aghalee Cemeteries and Associated Ruins – Repairs to Business Case

(Confidential for reason of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Council or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.)

Redacted report to be available in December 2025.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings, and any members of the press and public left the meeting.) (7.09 pm)

8.1 Portmore and Aghalee Graveyards and Associated Ruins – Repairs to Business Case

Presented by the Head of Parks & Amenities who responded to Members’ questions.

In addition to the narrative report, the Business Case had been provided.

It was proposed by Councillor T Beckett, seconded by Alderman A McIntyre and agreed to recommend that:-

- the report on the Portmore and Aghalee Graveyards be noted;
- the Business Case for the “Restoration and Wall Stabilisation to Church Ruins at Aghalee and Portmore Graveyards” be approved; and
- Option 2 as contained in the Business Case be accepted and be progressed to a tender process.

Alderman A McIntyre asked that the provision of information boards at Council graveyards of historical significance be explored.

9. Any Other Business – Confidential

9.1 Changing pavilions at Aghalee and Seycon Park
Councillor T Beckett

In response to comments from Councillor T Beckett, the Head of Parks & Amenities updated Members on the schedule for development of new changing pavilions at Aghalee and Seycon Park.

9.2 3G pitch at Lough Moss
Councillor J Gallen

The Head of Sports Services responded to comments from Councillor J Gallen about 3G pitch provision at Lough Moss and also the provision of additional equipment at that location. The Head of Sports Services also noted comments from Councillor Gallen about the accumulation of water adjacent to a ramp at Lough Moss.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor S Lowry and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and the audio recording were resumed.

10. Any Other Business

Dealt with under Item 7.

The meeting concluded at 7.20 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIR