

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber and virtually on Saturday, 10th September, 2022 at 11:08 am

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor S Carson

Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy

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

Councillors N Anderson, R T Beckett, A P Ewing,
J Gallen, A Givan, A Gowan, M Gregg, S Hughes,
J Laverty BEM, S Lee, H Legge, S Lowry,
C McCready, A McIntyre, U Mackin, T Mitchell,
S Mulholland, Jenny Palmer, John Palmer, S Skillen
and A Swan

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman O Gawith

Councillors R Carlin, F Cole, R McLernon and N Trimble.

IN ATTENDANCE IN CHAMBER:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Chief Executive
Director of Environmental Services
Director of Service Transformation
Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Head of Corporate Communications and Administration
Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager
Member Services Officers (BF & EW)
Technician
IT Officer
Mayor's Chaplin

Commencement of the Meeting

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, reminded the Council that the special meeting had been convened to enable Members and the Council to express their condolences and pay tributes on the occasion of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday, 8th September. He explained that everybody, who so wished, would be afforded an opportunity to address the Council, given the sad and historic occasion being marked on the death of the monarch.

1. Apologies

The Member Services Officer read out the names of those in attendance and it was noted that apologies for inability to attend had been received from Alderman D Drysdale, together with Councillors D J Craig, J McCarthy and G McCleave.

2. Minute's Silence in Memory of Her Majesty the Queen

The Council stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect on the passing of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

3. Prayers

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, invited his Chaplain, the Reverend Roger Higginson, to address the Council. The Reverend Higginson read a passage from the Scriptures and spoke of the sad passing of Her Majesty and the sense of loss which had been felt, both on a worldwide basis and within the Council area, since her death the previous Thursday.

3.1 Tributes to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, reminded the Council that the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had been a solemn occasion for the nation, for the City of Lisburn and the Council area. The Council, he pointed out, occupied a rare position within the United Kingdom since Royal Hillsborough was located within its boundary. He referred to the deep sense of pride and satisfaction that the granting of Royal Status to Hillsborough by the late Queen had brought to the Council in 2021, which had enhanced the sense of affinity between the community and the monarchy. He stated that Queen Elizabeth II had first visited Lisburn in 1953, and, more recently, she had conferred city status on Lisburn in 2002. He recalled that he had first been in the late Queen's presence whilst he was attending an event at the Queen's University of Belfast in 2008, and also, in 2012, at an event in Titanic Belfast. He said that when the Queen entered a room she filled it with her smile and presence.

The Mayor pointed out that when events of world significance occurred, they were etched on people's memories. The death of Queen Elizabeth II, he added, was one such event. The Queen had been a constant presence throughout everyone's lives and her passing would impact on emotions and memories. He stated that a common theme of many tributes paid had referred to the Queen's faith, her selflessness and devotion to duty. These were qualities that resonated with everyone, regardless of affiliation or aspiration. Her achievements were such that it was entirely right to acknowledge what she had accomplished throughout her record-breaking reign.

The Mayor reminded the Council that the late Queen had also a family who mourned her, not only the passing of a mother, but of a grandmother and a great-

grandmother. Her death, he added, had also created a new reality in that we had a new King. King Charles III, in inheriting his mother's mantle, would require much wisdom and grace and, on behalf of the Council, the Mayor wished the new King best wishes in that role.

Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy

Prior to commencing her address, the Deputy Mayor placed on record her gratitude to the Mayor, the Chief Executive and Council officials who had showed great civic leadership in leading on the Council's response to the passing of the late Queen. She referred to the great sense of personal loss that had been felt across the Council area since the announcement of the Queen's passing on Thursday, and extended her sincere condolences. She said that, for her, the late Queen's contribution to the cause of peace and reconciliation was particularly meaningful. She referred to the Queen's visit to the Republic of Ireland in 2011 as an inspirational moment that had set her apart, not simply as a constitutional figurehead, but also as a true leader. In particular, the late Queen's words which had been spoken in the Irish language was a notable gesture that captured a unique moment that showed true leadership. In concluding, the Deputy Mayor added her own personal appreciation to Queen Elizabeth II for her long and distinguished service.

Councillor A Gowan

Councillor A Gowan stated that the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth mourned the loss of a Queen who had been respected, admired and loved across the world. He added that, within communities across the nation, just like those in his own Downshire East DEA, there was a real sense of sadness and loss. Her Majesty, he said, had been an exemplar of service, duty, integrity and devotion to everybody who had been blessed to live under her remarkable reign.

He added that the Queen had gone far beyond her duty as a monarch and was emotionally and symbolically maternal; indeed, he added, she had been the mother of the nation. Councillor Gowan stated that she had been a Queen who had laughed with us, comforted us, rallied and lifted us up. As a new Carolean age began, Councillor Gowan said that we as a society had been blessed with the long reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He stated that it was his wish that the new King would reign over us with paternal strength, integrity and selflessness, complementing the maternal legacy of our Most Gracious Elizabeth the Great.

Councillor J Gallen

On behalf of the SDLP group on the Council, Councillor J Gallen extended his deepest condolences to all those who were mourning the death of Queen Elizabeth II. He referred to her state visit to Dublin in 2011 and quoted from the speech, which she had delivered at the banquet held in her honour. It was a speech, he said, which had celebrated the shared ties and values between the two nations and the spirit of goodwill and partnership that had been forged through the Northern Ireland peace process. Councillor Gallen spoke of the Queen's love and affection for Ireland and its people, and how she had honoured Irish President,

Michael D Higgins, in 2014, by affording him an extended state visit to the United Kingdom. He concluded by reiterating, on behalf of his party group, his and its heartfelt sympathies on the passing of the late Queen.

Alderman J Tinsley

Alderman J Tinsley began by thanking the Mayor and the Chief Executive for the work which they had undertaken in leading the Council's response to the passing of Her Majesty on Thursday evening. He referred to the late Queen's long and glorious reign and, in particular, his personal pride when he had met the Queen when she had opened Lagan Valley Island on 15th November, 2001, and other occasions when he had been in her company. He pointed out that the death of the Queen had impacted on all generations and that she had been respected throughout the world. He paid tribute to the Queen for her enduring sense of duty, which had been exemplified in appointing a new Prime Minister just two days prior to her death. Alderman Tinsley said that the Queen had been a deeply spiritual person and that her faith had been fundamental to her life. He added that she had been an example and an inspiration to everyone.

Councillor H Legge

Councillor H Legge said that it had been a privilege for her to chair the Council's Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group in 2021/22, which had been established to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty. She said that that role had enabled her to appreciate that great affection there was across the Council area for Her Majesty and it was a true highlight for her to mark the remarkable reign of the Queen. She expressed her condolences to the Royal Family and extended good wishes to King Charles III and the Queen Consort, Camilla, as they embarked upon their new roles.

Councillor R Carlin

Councillor R Carlin conveyed his personal condolences on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, and particularly to those people within the Unionist community who mourned. He paid tribute to the part played by the Queen in promoting peace and reconciliation across the islands of Britain and Ireland and expressed sympathy to her wider family as they sought to come to terms with their grief.

Alderman J Dillon

Alderman J Dillon referred to his deep sense of loss and sorrow on hearing of the passing of the late Queen. He recounted his fond memories of being in her company and, in particular, the honour he had in 2001 when, as Mayor of the former Lisburn Borough Council, he had welcomed the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to Lisburn on the occasion of the opening of Lagan Valley Island. In 2002, when Lisburn had been afforded city status, as part of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee celebrations, Alderman Dillon spoke about his pride when he, again as Mayor, had accepted the Royal Charter from the Queen at a ceremony held in Hillsborough Castle. In addition, he talked about his immense pride when he had travelled to Buckingham Palace to receive his MBE, which Her Majesty

had awarded him in the 2003 New Year's Honours. He said it had been a privilege to have represented the Council on such occasions and again expressed his sorrow on the loss of somebody who had been an inspirational and historic figure.

Alderman A Grehan

Alderman A Grehan, on behalf of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, extended condolences to the Royal Family and stated that the passing of the late Queen had been a sad day for the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and particularly Northern Ireland. She said that the Queen had been a central part to all our lives during her long reign. Alderman Grehan reflected that she had been privileged earlier in her career to have worked at events at which the Queen was in attendance. She had been truly impressed by the Queen's personality and by the deep respect which she had shown to fellow attendees and staff alike. She referred to the Queen's visit to the Republic of Ireland in 2011 and paid tribute to her for the leadership she had shown as part of the peace process. She added that the world had lost a true leader and expressed best wishes to King Charles III in his new role.

Councillor A Ewing

Councillor Ewing expressed his deep sadness at the news of the Queen's passing. He stated that the death of the Queen was an occasion that everybody had sadly anticipated and it was truly the end of an era and a sad moment in history. She had lived a wonderful life of faithful and dedicated service to the nation. She had been, he pointed out, an enduring presence in all of our lives for decades, who had underpinned all that was great and noble, with the wonderful qualities and character she possessed. She was selfless, he said, and dedicated to service and somebody from whom we could all learn. He recalled meeting Her Majesty and The Duke of Edinburgh in June 2014 at Hillsborough Castle, saying it had been an occasion that he and his family would always remember with pride. He expressed his thoughts and prayers for the King and the Royal Family.

Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin extended his personal condolences and prayers to the Royal Family and recalled his childhood memories of the death of the late King George VI and the Queen becoming monarch in 1952. From that time, he had always taken an interest in the work of the Queen and admired her leadership and ability. In particular, he recalled being at a garden party in Buckingham Palace and, while he did not meet the Queen, he was impressed by her ability to be a reassuring and calming influence. It was, he said, a personal touch which was just one of her many qualities. He said that many words had been said and written since the passing of Her Majesty, but, to Councillor Mackin, three qualities shone through. They were her sincerity as a human being, her steadfast devotion to her duties and her sound and sincere Christian faith.

(Councillor S Lee left the Chamber at 12:01pm and returned at 12:04pm).

Councillor A Givan

Councillor A Givan expressed his sorrow on the passing of the Queen, particularly since it had occurred merely two days after she had appointed a new Prime Minister and seemed to be in such good spirits. He outlined how the Queen had been respected and how her passing had been a great loss to the nation. The respect and esteem in which she had been held was rooted, he said, in her deep Christian faith, a faith that she had called, 'the iron curtain of my soul'. He added that her devotion to the Scriptures had been crucial in her personal qualities of respect, care, selfless service, devotion to duty and compassion. She exuded a positivity that was rooted in her faith in God, a fact that was illustrated, he recalled, in a foreword she had written in a book for the Scripture Union in her 90th year. He ended by extending his sincere condolences to the Royal Family and, in particular, King Charles III.

(Councillor John Palmer left the Chamber at 12:09pm and returned at 12:11pm).

Councillor N Anderson

(Councillor T Mitchell left the Chamber at 12:12pm and returned at 12:17pm).
(Councillor J Gallen left the Chamber at 12:13pm and returned at 12:17pm).

Councillor N Anderson said that the passing of the Queen had been a truly historic moment in that she had been our last link to the imperial past and our last connection in public life to World War II. The Queen, he added, had been an embodiment of the values that made the United Kingdom a great country, an example to all public servants, and a person who possessed virtues that were a role model to everyone. She would be remembered, he stated, as 'Elizabeth the Great' and 'Elizabeth the Good'. Councillor Anderson quoted the Queen who, on her accession to the throne in 1952, had asked, 'that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life'. He concluded by saying that we had been truly blessed by God for the Queen and her reign.

Alderman P Porter

Alderman P Porter paid tribute to the Queen for a life of selfless service, and conveyed the immense feeling of loss and deep sorrow that had been felt across the Lisburn South DEA. Her Majesty, he said, had been a constant in an ever-changing world and the nation would pause in grateful memory for a life filled with sacrifice and duty. For over 70 years, he added, Her Majesty had been a beacon of light through many dark days and we all felt that we knew her, but she was the Queen for everybody. On a personal level, he recalled with fondness the occasion when, as Mayor in 2010, he and his wife, Nicola, and family, had had the privilege of welcoming Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh to Lisburn. He said that she and the Duke had been a calming influence for everybody, including his family members, on that occasion. He concluded by noting the great sense of loss and sadness at the news of her passing and hoped that King Charles III would be comforted by the outpouring of love and support of a very grateful nation.

Alderman S Martin

Alderman S Martin expressed his sadness at the passing of the Queen and referred to the constant and reassuring presence which she had been to the nation throughout her reign. He recalled, in his younger days, being present when the Queen had visited the Council and met the then Mayor, Alderman J Dillon. He paid tribute the late Queen for her timeless set of values, her duty to service and to a reign that had been personified by great dignity. He recalled his own time as Mayor in 2021/22, which had coincided with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. He expressed his pride when he had successfully nominated Fort Hill Primary School to receive one of 70 ancient trees which the Queen had gifted as part of her celebrations.

He referred to the late Queen's unique relationship with the Council and his pride, in October 2021, when as Mayor he was to receive the Letters Patent from the Queen in a ceremony conferring Royal status on Hillsborough. However, he said that the day had been tinged with sadness since Her Majesty had been unwell and could not attend. He ended by saying that he had been proud to have been Mayor on that occasion and that the Queen had been a true bridge-builder and an example to everyone.

Councillor A Swan

Councillor A Swan expressed his personal sorrow at the passing of the Queen and recalled that he had been in her presence on three occasions, most notably at a Maundy Thursday Ceremony at Armagh Cathedral. He said that the ceremony had been very moving in that personified and symbolised to him what the Queen and the Royal Family had stood for, that being, a the life of service to people. He added that he had always been impressed by the Queen's devotion to duty and wished the new King well in his role.

Councillor C McCready

Councillor C McCready said that the Queen's 70 years of devoted service had set an example to everybody. The Queen, he added, possessed a fantastic devotion to duty and a brilliant sense of humour, which had been illustrated in her role at the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympic Games. He quoted the Queen, who had once said, 'each day is a new beginning and I know that the only way to live my life is to try and do what is right. To take a long view to give the best that a day brings and to put my trust in God'. That quote, he said, showed the deep faith that she held and added that we should all endeavour to follow in her footsteps.

Alderman O Gawith

The last speaker to pay tribute to the Queen was Alderman O Gawith, who recounted his fond childhood memories of seeing the Queen as a schoolboy and, again, he passed on his sincere condolences to the Royal Family and wished King Charles III well in his new role.

4.0 Confidential Business – Report of the Chief Executive

(Alderman J Baird left the Chamber at 1:00pm and returned at 1:03pm).
(Councillor J Gallen left the Chamber at 1:04pm).

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, advised the Council that the Chief Executive's Report would be considered 'in committee', since it contained confidential information relating to the Council's area subsequent to the passing of the Queen and the succession of the King.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman P Porter, and agreed that Council hear the report of the Chief Executive 'in committee'.

"In Committee"

4.1 Report of the Chief Executive

The Council noted the report of the Chief Executive and the comments of the Members thereon.

4.2 Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing and seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed that the Council come out of committee and normal business be resumed.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 1:05 pm.

Worshipful Mayor