NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 5 October 2026 at 6.00pm in Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

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In the Chair: Councillor G Hanna

In attendance in

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor J Brennan	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor P Campbell	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor L Devlin	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor D Finn	Councillor G Galbraith
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor V Harte
Councillor M Hearty	Councillor T Howie
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor G Kearns
Councillor A King	Councillor C King
Councillor N Lawlor	Councillor Lee-Surginor
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor A Quinn
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor J Truesdale
Councillor H Young	

In attendance via Teams:

Councillor C Enright	Councillor R Howell
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor S O'Hare

Officials in attendance:
Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs A Jones, Director of Corporate Services
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Ms E Kirk, Assistant Director of People & Legal
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

C/126/2026: **APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

An apology was received from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism.

The Chairperson took the opportunity to share some of the highlights over the previous month which included attending events for the following:

- A lecture on the 1798 Rebellion.
- The Irish Motocross Championship.
- The Classroom to Career event at Castlewellan High School.
- An event at Oppen Maple Hall, Kilkeel, hosted by the Schomberg Society.
- The launch of Footsteps in the Forest.
- The 25th anniversary of the Castlewellan Maze.
- St Vincent de Paul Centre.
- The Newry Business Awards.
- The unveiling of a memorial plaque to Commodore Milligan, who served during the Second World War.
- The Ultimate Pitch.
- The opening of the new 3G pitch at Saintfield Football Club.

The Deputy Chairperson noted that she had the honour of welcoming the President of Ireland to the Peace Maze in Castlewellan.

The Chairperson advised that two emergency notice of motions had been received and would be dealt with at the appropriate time during the meeting.

C/127/2026: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Howell declared an interest in Item 13 – Notice of Motion - Establishment of a Fleadh Legacy Fund.

C/128/2026: **ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2026**

Read: Action sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 September 2026. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy , seconded by Councillor Andrews, the Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 September 2026 was agreed.**

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/129/2026: **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2026**

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 September 2026 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 September 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/130/2026 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 September 2026 **(copy circulated**).

In response to a query from Councillor Lewis regarding additional advertising and communications in relation to financial assistance calls, given that the calls were taking place earlier, Mrs Ward advised that she would raise the matter with the ERT Director, Mr Mallon.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Kearns, the Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 September 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/131/2026 MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2026

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 September 2026 **(copy circulated).**

In response to a query from Councillor Feehan regarding the current status of Newry City Park and the anticipated timeframe for progress, Mrs Ward advised that liaison with DfI and the procurement process was ongoing and that it was hoped both processes would align.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Byrne, the Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 September 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/132/2026 MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2026

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2026 **(copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Howie, the Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/133/2026 MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 September 2026 **(copy circulated).**

Councillor Reilly referred to the S&E Working Group and expressed concern that matters discussed by the Group were not fully visible to all Members. He proposed that the Working Group be dissolved and that all related matters be considered directly by the S&E Committee.

Officers advised that the Working Group had been established to consider operational service issues prior to formal consideration by the Committee. It was noted that the Group was not a decision-making body and that its minutes, presentations and recommendations were subsequently reported to the S&E Committee and Council, where appropriate. Members were also advised that all presentations had been available to all Members.

Following the discussion, Councillor Reilly withdrew his proposal.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Campbell, the Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 September 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/134/2026: **CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

No correspondence arising.

C/135/2026: **NOTICE OF MOTION – EQUAL FUNDING FOR CHURCH HALLS**

The following Motion had been received from Councillor Bowsie:

"Church halls are vital community facilities throughout rural and urban areas of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council and should not be excluded from being able to apply for council grants that are available to other community halls.

This Council agrees, where a church hall meets the council's existing definition of a 'community facility' (e.g. it is available to the whole community for public use or hire), it should not be denied funding merely on the basis that the hall's management committee pertains to a religious body.

This Council resolves that in order to be eligible, halls must be managed by a constituted community association or a church body registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, and thus the applicant will ensure it has governing rules which do not restrict any section of the community from using the building or restrict any type of activity, other than for reasons of insurance or legal protections already afforded to such charities."

This was seconded by Councillor Lewis.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.**

C/136/2026: **NOTICE OF MOTION – MATERNITY SERVICES AT DAISY HILL HOSPITAL**

The following Motion had been received from Councillor Devlin:

"That this Council recognises the vital role of inpatient maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital and the importance of safe, accessible maternity care for women across Newry, Mourne and Down and the wider region; expresses its concern at the staffing pressures threatening the sustainability of the service and believes that women should not face unequal access to maternity care because of where they live; calls on the Minister for Health, Department of Health and Southern Health and Social Care Trust to work urgently to support recruitment and retention at Daisy Hill, protect inpatient maternity services and deliver a safe, sustainable solution that works for women, families and staff.
Council further calls for the Department of Health to review and reform the current arrangements for the recruitment, employment and deployment of specialist medical staff across Trusts, with consideration given to a region-wide approach that enables staff to be deployed according to need and supports more equitable terms and conditions, helping to address persistent recruitment and retention challenges."

This was seconded by Councillor Feehan.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Devlin emphasised the importance of maintaining safe and accessible maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital. She highlighted concerns regarding the potential impact on women and families across the district, particularly those in rural areas who could face significantly longer journeys to access inpatient maternity care.

Councillor Devlin stated that access to maternity services should be based on need and that all women should have equitable access to safe care regardless of where they lived. She also acknowledged the commitment and professionalism of staff at Daisy Hill Hospital and stressed the importance of supporting recruitment and retention efforts to ensure the long-term sustainability of the service.

While recognising that patient safety must remain paramount, Councillor Devlin urged that all available measures be explored to address staffing challenges and maintain local maternity provision. She expressed the hope that the Council would speak with one voice in support of fair and equal access to maternity services for women and families across the district.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Feehan thanked Councillor Devlin for bringing it forward and referred to the strong public attendance and cross-party support demonstrated at the recent public meeting on Daisy Hill Hospital. He stated that concerns regarding the sustainability of maternity services were linked to difficulties recruiting and retaining specialist staff and called for greater transparency regarding recruitment efforts. He also advocated a regional approach to workforce planning and specialist staff recruitment to support the long-term sustainability of services.

Councillor Young welcomed the motion and highlighted the importance of retaining maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital. She expressed concern regarding recruitment and retention challenges and stressed the importance of listening to frontline staff, improving workforce planning and ensuring every effort was made by the Department of Health, the

Minister for Health and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust to retain the service.

Councillor Harte expressed Sinn Féin's support for the motion and highlighted the concern and uncertainty experienced by expectant mothers and families. She paid tribute to staff and stated that access to local maternity care was a patient safety issue. Councillor Harte expressed concern that temporary service changes could become permanent and urged the Trust, the Minister for Health and the Department of Health to take all necessary steps to address recruitment challenges and secure the long-term future of the service.

Councillor Reilly expressed concern regarding the impact any temporary closure could have on both patients and staff. He questioned the capacity of Craigavon Area Hospital to accommodate additional births, highlighted the challenges longer travel times would present for rural communities and expressed support for efforts to secure the staffing required to retain the service.

Councillor Taylor welcomed the motion and emphasised the importance of a united response. He highlighted representations received from the public regarding the value of local maternity provision and advised that he had raised the matter with senior Trust officials and the Minister for Health. He stressed the need for a long-term solution to staffing pressures and reaffirmed his support for retaining inpatient maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital.

In summing up, Councillor Devlin thanked Members for their support and stated that a unified voice from the Chamber sent a positive message.

Agreed: **It was agreed that this Council recognises the vital role of inpatient maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital and the importance of safe, accessible maternity care for women across Newry, Mourne and Down and the wider region; expresses its concern at the staffing pressures threatening the sustainability of the service and believes that women should not face unequal access to maternity care because of where they live; calls on the Minister for Health, Department of Health and Southern Health and Social Care Trust to work urgently to support recruitment and retention at Daisy Hill, protect inpatient maternity services and deliver a safe, sustainable solution that works for women, families and staff. Council further calls for the Department of Health to review and reform the current arrangements for the recruitment, employment and deployment of specialist medical staff across Trusts, with consideration given to a region-wide approach that enables staff to be deployed according to need and supports more equitable terms and conditions, helping to address persistent recruitment and**

retention challenges.

C/137/2026: NOTICE OF MOTION – ESTABLISHMENT OF A FLEADH LEGACY FUND

The following Motion had been received from Councillor Finn:

"Newry Mourne and Down district council recognises the incredible impact that Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann had in Belfast this summer and further recognises the work of Comhaltas and the volunteers who made the week such a success. The Council notes the number of musicians, singers, storytellers and dancers from across our district who attended the Fleadh, and will, take steps to prepare a paper on the establishment of a Fleadh legacy fund to support the work of those artists and young people: and, will further write to the other local councils to ask that they also consider this preparation so that we can see the legacy of the Fleadh and our artists protected into the future."

This was seconded by Councillor Galbraith.

The Deputy Chairperson asked the Chairperson to reconsider his decision to refer the motion to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group, noting that the purpose of the motion was to secure additional funding for the arts.

The Chairperson confirmed that his decision to refer the motion to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group would stand.

Councillor Byrne sought clarification on the referral of the motion to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group. He expressed concerns regarding consistency, noting that previous motions relating to Fleadh events had been referred to the ERT Committee. He also requested clarification on the process for progressing matters from the Equality and Good Relations Working Group to Committee.

Mrs Ward advised that where a unanimous decision could not be reached by the Equality and Good Relations Working Group, the matter would be referred to the SP&R Committee with details of the discussion and the absence of consensus, and it would then be for the SP&R Committee to determine the matter.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Equality & Good Relations Reference Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

C/138/2026: NOTICE OF MOTION – DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY

The following Motion had been received from Councillor Feehan:

"Newry Mourne & Down District Council;
Acknowledges that the majority of physical brain development occurs in the first three years

of life, when children form over 1 million new neural connections per second; Recognises the benefits of reading, and reading aloud, to young children which can promote the development of basic literacy and vocabulary skills, establish strong inter-personal relationships between children and parents/guardians, as well as improving longer term educational, health, social and economic outcomes; Is concerned about the rising cost of living which will limit the ability of families to pay for essential educational resources like books for young children; Agrees to investigate and establish a pilot of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in the District to provide a new book each month for children aged 0-5, working with any interested partners to secure the success and sustainable funding of the scheme."

This was seconded by Councillor Finn.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Active & Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.**

C/139/2026: **NOTICE OF MOTION – IRISH UNITY REFERENDUM**

The following Motion had been received from Councillor Quinn:

"This Council notes that the Good Friday Agreement provides the democratic means to achieve Irish reunification, through unity referendums. If that's what the people decide; condemns the British Prime Minister's recent comments in relation to a referendum on Irish Unity and will write to the British Government reminding it of its obligations under the Good Friday Agreement and urge London to begin preparations and discussions with the Irish government to set a date for the unity referendums, as outlined in the Good Friday Agreement."

This was seconded by Councillor D Murphy.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Equality & Good Relations Reference Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.**

The Chairperson advised two Emergency Notice of Motions had been received, the wording of which had been emailed to all Councillors and to enable them to be heard, it would be necessary to suspend Standing Order 29.1 for which a qualified majority vote was required, no fewer than 80% of Members present and voting.

Mrs Ward clarified that each of the two emergency motions require a vote to suspend Standing Order 29.1 to enable them to be tabled.

The Chairperson put the matter of suspending Standing Order 29.1 to enable Councillor Rice's motion to be heard to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows: (copy attached)

FOR:	34
AGAINST:	6
ABSTENTIONS:	0

Miss Taggart confirmed a qualified majority had been reached.

The Chairperson advised that Standing Order 29.1 had been suspended by a qualified majority vote, enabling the emergency motion to be heard. He advised that he had decided to refer Councillor Rice's motion to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group under Standing Order 16.1.6.

Following a query from Councillor Rice regarding the Standing Order which gave the Chairperson authority to refer the motion after Council had agreed to hear it, the Chairperson confirmed that this was provided for under Standing Order 30. Councillor Rice subsequently proposed that Standing Order 30 be suspended.

In order to clarify the position for Members, Mrs Ward advised that Standing Order 16.1.1 had been suspended, while Standing Order 16.1.6 remained in effect. She further noted that the Chairperson had exercised his authority under Standing Order 30 to refer the motion to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group and that Councillor Rice had subsequently proposed suspending Standing Order 30.

Councillor Byrne sought clarification from Legal Services. He stated that, irrespective of his party's position on the motion, he had concerns about suspending Standing Order 30, as it removed powers from the Chairperson and could set a precedent for the handling of future motions. He further questioned the purpose of the Chairperson's role if such powers could be removed.

Councillor D. Murphy stated that the motion had been submitted as an emergency motion and that there was urgency in considering it. He noted that delaying consideration for several weeks would not have been appropriate and stated that this was why most Members wished to hear the motion that evening. The Chairperson responded that, in his view, the motion had not been urgent.

It was agreed to adjourn the meeting at this point, proposed by Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Devlin.

The meeting did then adjourn – 6.51pm

Councillors Enright and Tinnelly left the meeting during the adjournment – 7.13pm and 7.40pm respectively.

The meeting did then resume – 7:50pm.

The Chairperson confirmed that following discussions, despite his concerns it would damage community relations, that both motions would be heard.

C/088/2026: EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION – PARADES COMMISSION DETERMINATION

The following Emergency Motion was received from Councillor Rice:

'That Newry, Mourne and Down District Council expresses its concern at the Parades Commission determination in relation to the Drumcree parade and the Garvaghy Road. This Council stands in solidarity with the residents of the Garvaghy Road and supports their right to live in peace, free from sectarian discrimination, intimidation and harassment, and without an unwanted parade being forced through their community.

This Council recognises the Irish Government's role as co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement and calls on the Taoiseach and Tánaiste to stand with the Garvaghy Road community, engage directly with their representatives and use every appropriate avenue available to them to ensure the rights, dignity and expressed wishes of residents are respected.

This Council further affirms that no community should be dragged backwards into the division and conflict of the past and that dialogue, equality, mutual respect and respect for local communities must remain at the heart of our peace process.'

Councillor Rice advised of an amendment to the motion as follows;
'That Newry, Mourne and Down District Council expresses its concern at the Parades Commission determination in relation to the Drumcree parade and the Garvaghy Road.

This Council stands in solidarity with the residents of the Garvaghy Road, supports their right to live in peace and recognises the widespread sympathy for residents, including from those from a Protestant and unionist background, as expressed in a recent open letter.

This Council recognises the UK and Irish Government's roles as co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement and calls on the British Prime Minister, British Secretary of State, Taoiseach and Tánaiste to stand with the Garvaghy Road community, engage directly with all sides of the dispute and use every appropriate avenue available to them to ensure the rights, dignity and expressed wishes of residents are respected.

This Council further affirms that no community should be dragged backwards into the division and conflict of the past and that dialogue, equality, mutual respect and respect for local communities must remain at the heart of our peace process.'

The motion was seconded by Councillor Quinn.

In speaking to his motion, Councillor Rice commended the residents of the Garvaghy Road and stated that they had the right to live in peace and free from intimidation. He noted that the Orange Order had not paraded along the Garvaghy Road for 28 years and residents did not wish to see the dispute reopened.

He referred to rights protected under the European Convention on Human Rights and questioned whether reopening the route was necessary when an alternative route existed.

Councillor Rice stated that the motion called on the Irish Government to engage directly with the Garvaghy Road community and argued that the progress made over the previous 28 years should be protected. He concluded by reaffirming Sinn Féin's support for the residents. In seconding the motion, Councillor Quinn stated that residents wished to live in peace and have their community treated with dignity and respect. She stressed that the motion was not an attack on any culture or tradition but argued that respect should be afforded equally to all communities.

Councillor Quinn questioned why the issue had re-emerged after almost three decades and stated that younger generations should not inherit the divisions of the past. She further questioned the basis of the Parades Commission's determination and concluded by supporting the principles of dignity, respect and equality.

Councillor Bowsie stated that Sinn Féin had acted inconsistently by supporting a motion on mutual respect while participating in what he described as an unlawful protest. He argued that legally established rights should not be restricted on the basis of local opposition and maintained that decisions should be based on evidence rather than emotion. He criticised the conduct of some protesters and concluded by commending the Portadown District Orange Order for pursuing the matter through lawful processes.

Councillor Lewis stated that the key issue was whether the rule of law should be upheld regardless of personal views. He noted that the Portadown District Orange Order had pursued the matter through legal channels over a period of 28 years and that opposition to the parade had sought to prevent a lawful determination being implemented.

He also criticised comments made about the Orange Institution and concluded by expressing the view that opposition to the parade had been politically motivated and sectarian in nature.

Councillor Truesdale stated that the Drumcree dispute had a long and difficult history and that reopening the issue risked damaging community relations. She advised that Alliance had opposed reopening the matter and argued that dialogue and mediation, rather than further confrontation, offered the best means of resolution. Councillor Truesdale acknowledged the Orange Order's legal entitlement but stated that exercising that right was not obligatory and urged all parties to act lawfully and peacefully.

Councillor Taylor stated that the determination recognising Portadown District's legal entitlement to complete the parade should be respected. He commended the Orange Order for pursuing its objectives through lawful processes and noted its willingness to engage in mediation.

Councillor Taylor criticised recent demonstrations, which he considered damaging to community relations, and expressed concern regarding what he viewed as disrespect towards the unionist community and the Orange Institution. He concluded by stating that recent events had reinforced concerns regarding the protection of unionist identity and rights.

Councillor Feehan confirmed the SDLP's support for the motion and expressed regret that the issue had re-emerged. He stated that the focus should be on reducing tensions and avoiding a return to past divisions.

Councillor Feehan rejected suggestions that those demonstrating on the Garvaghy Road were not local residents and emphasised the need to recognise the historical impact of the dispute on the community. He concluded by calling for intervention to help resolve the matter and by reaffirming support for local residents.

Councillor Reilly expressed concern regarding what he described as hostility towards the Orange tradition during events surrounding the Garvaghy Road dispute. He stated that opposition to the parade reflected wider attitudes towards the unionist community and its traditions and argued that many involved in protests had not been local residents. Councillor

Reilly also condemned comments directed at Carla Lockhart MP and Diane Dodds and expressed concern regarding what he considered misogynistic treatment. He concluded by stating that those involved had made a significant mistake.

Councillor Jackson stated that respect for the rule of law was a fundamental requirement within society and expressed concern regarding individuals choosing to disregard legal requirements. Referring to events on the Garvaghy Road, he criticised comments and speeches directed towards members of the Orange Order and concluded by stating that such actions had strengthened opposition among many unionists to the concept of a New Ireland.

In summing up, Councillor Rice stated that the motion sought to protect a community which, in his view, had sustained peace for 28 years and to ensure that its rights were balanced fairly. He reiterated that residents were not seeking to prevent an Orange Order parade but wished an alternative route to be used. Councillor Rice called on the Irish and British Governments to uphold the principles of the Good Friday Agreement and concluded by reaffirming Sinn Féin's support for the residents.

As there was dissent in the chamber, the matter was put to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows: (copy attached)

FOR:	32
AGAINST:	6
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The motion was declared carried.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Quinn, the following was agreed;**

- **Newry, Mourne and Down District Council expresses its concern at the Parades Commission determination in relation to the Drumcree parade and the Garvaghy Road.**
- **This Council stands in solidarity with the residents of the Garvaghy Road, supports their right to live in peace and recognises the widespread sympathy for residents, including from those from a Protestant and unionist background, as expressed in a recent open letter.**
- **This Council recognises the UK and Irish Government's roles as co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement and calls on the British Prime Minister, British Secretary of State, Taoiseach and Tánaiste to stand with the Garvaghy Road community, engage directly with all sides of the dispute and use every appropriate avenue available to them to ensure the rights, dignity and expressed wishes of residents are respected.**
- **This Council further affirms that no community should be dragged backwards into the division and conflict of the past and that dialogue, equality, mutual respect and respect for**

local communities must remain at the heart of our peace process.'

In response to a point of order from Councillor D. Murphy regarding the suspension of Standing Orders, Mrs Ward advised that she had previously stated that each motion would require a vote to permit it to be tabled. However, she clarified that, as Standing Orders had been suspended prior to Councillor Rice's motion, they would remain suspended until the next meeting.

C/089/2026: EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION – RULE OF LAW

The following Emergency Motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

'Following the launch of a criminal investigation of incidents on the Garvaghy Road (Portadown) on Sunday 27th September, this Council agrees that all elected representatives support the rule of law.'

In speaking to his motion, Councillor Lewis stated that, regardless of whether he agreed with decisions taken by the Council or the Parades Commission, he was expected to abide by the law. He stated that the motion sought to reaffirm that all Members supported the rule of law in accordance with paragraph 3.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Councillor Lewis further stated that the motion sought confirmation that all Members remained committed to that principle.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Jackson, who reiterated that the rule of law should be upheld at all times. He stated that there was no ambiguity in this regard and that individuals either respected and complied with the law or they did not.

Councillor Byrne stated that he believed it was inappropriate to debate matters relating to individuals and potential criminal investigations within the Chamber and proposed an amendment to the motion. He proposed the removal of the first line of the motion and that the second line be amended to read:
"That this Council agrees that all elected representatives are bound by the Code of Conduct, which affirms their responsibility to uphold the rule of law."

Councillor Lewis accepted the amendment.

Councillor Quinn stated that matters relating to compliance with the rule of law should be addressed through the appropriate legal processes. She noted that decisions regarding potential prosecutions were subject to evidential and public interest tests being applied by the relevant authorities.

Councillor Taylor welcomed the motion and stated that support for the rule of law should be a fundamental principle for all elected representatives.

Councillor Reilly stated that elected representatives had a particular responsibility to uphold and promote compliance with the law. Referring to previous incidents of public disorder, he stated that he had encouraged individuals to leave the roads and avoid actions which could lead to further difficulties, despite receiving criticism for doing so. He further stated that

elected representatives should act within the law and work to ensure that society continued to function effectively and urged all Members to do likewise.

In summing up, Councillor Lewis stated that elected representatives had a responsibility to recognise that their words, actions and calls to others could have a significant impact on the wider community. He further stated that it was important to remember that all actions should be carried out lawfully and peacefully at all times.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Jackson that this Council agrees that all elected representatives are bound by the code of conduct that affirms us to uphold the rule of law.**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.34pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 November 2026.

Signed:

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Councillor G Hanna
Chairperson

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Marie Ward
Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 5 October 2026 VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Suspension of Standing Order 16.1.6 to table Emergency Motions

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	For			
C Bowsie		Against		
J Brennan	For			
P Byrne	For			
P Campbell	For			
W Clarke	For			
L Devlin	For			
C Enright	For			
K Feehan	For			
D Finn	For			
C Galbraith	For			
M Gibbons				Absent
O Hanlon	For			
G Hanna		Against		
V Harte	For			
M Hearty	For			
R Howell	For			
T Howie	For			
J Jackson		Against		
G Kearns	For			
A King	For			
C King	For			
M Larkin	For			
N Lawlor	For			
D Lee-Surginor	For			
A Lewis		Against		
O Magennis	For			
A Mathers	For			
D McAteer	For			
D Murphy	For			
K Murphy	For			
S Murphy	For			
S O'Hare	For			
A Quinn	For			
H Reilly		Against		
M Rice	For			
M Ruane	For			
D Taylor		Against		
J Tinnelly	For			
J Truesdale	For			
H Young	For			
TOTALS	34	6	0	1

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 5 October 2026 VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Emergency Notice of Motion – Parades Commission Determination

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	For			
C Bowsie		Against		
J Brennan	For			
P Byrne	For			
P Campbell	For			
W Clarke	For			
L Devlin	For			
C Enright				Absent
K Feehan	For			
D Finn	For			
C Galbraith	For			
M Gibbons				Absent
O Hanlon	For			
G Hanna		Against		
V Harte	For			
M Hearty	For			
R Howell	For			
T Howie	For			
J Jackson		Against		
G Kearns	For			
A King	For			
C King	For			
M Larkin	For			
N Lawlor	For			
D Lee-Surginor	For			
A Lewis		Against		
O Magennis	For			
A Mathers	For			
D McAteer	For			
D Murphy	For			
K Murphy	For			
S Murphy	For			
S O'Hare	For			
A Quinn	For			
H Reilly		Against		
M Rice	For			
M Ruane	For			
D Taylor		Against		
J Tinnelly				Absent
J Truesdale	For			
H Young	For			
TOTALS	32	6	0	3