

## **NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**NMD/C/**

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### **Minutes of Council Meeting held on Tuesday 3 May 2022 at 6.00pm via Hybrid in Downshire Chamber and Microsoft Teams**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor O Magennis (Teams)

**In attendance in Chamber:** Councillor T Andrews  
Councillor D Curran  
Councillor D McAteer

**In attendance via Teams:**

Councillor P Brown	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor C Casey
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor H Gallagher	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor A Finnegan	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor V Harte	Councillor R Howell
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor G Malone
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor McMurray
Councillor R Mulgrew	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	Councillor J Tinnelly

**Officials in attendance  
in Chamber:** Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager  
(Acting)

**Officials in Attendance  
Via Teams:** Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration  
& Tourism  
Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services  
(Acting)  
Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs P McKeever, Democratic Services Officer

**C/079/2022**

**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Magennis chaired the Meeting in her role as Deputy Chairperson.

Apologies were received from Councillors Devlin, McKevitt, Owen, Savage, Stokes and Trainor and from Marie Ward and Michael Lipsett.

**C/080/2022**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**C/081/2022**

**ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 2022**

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 4 April 2022 (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 4 April 2022 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor McEvoy**

Councillor Hanlon advised that several Members were experiencing difficulty accessing Teams.

**COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING**

**C/082/2022**

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 2022**

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 4 April 2022 (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4 April 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

**C/083/2022**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2022 RE. BALLYKINLAR**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 28 March 2022 re Ballykinlar (copy circulated).

Councillor Curran asked if there was an update on Ballykinlar, Ms Carville advised him that Mr Lipsett had been trying to set up a meeting with the group and she said Mr

Lipsett would contact him separately outside of the meeting.

**Agreed: Mr Lipsett to update Councillor Curran regarding the Down GAA Centre of Excellence at Ballykinlar.**

**Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting re Ballykinlar held on 28 March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Curran.**

**C/084/2022 MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2022 WITH NIAS & SHSCT**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 28 March 2022 with NIAS & SHSCT (copy circulated).

Councillor McAteer referred to the recent death of Jody Keenan in Newry while waiting for an ambulance and said this very sad incident had highlighted the seriousness of the situation and it was vital to bring forth problem solving solutions to the NIAS in all facets of their work. Councillor McAteer said the situation was unacceptable and was very difficult for NIAS staff and he asked that this item be retained on the action sheet to keep track of progress.

**Agreed: It was agreed to bring forth problem solving solutions to the NIAS in all facets of their work and for this action to be retained on the Action Sheet to keep track of progress.**

**Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 28 March 2022 with NIAS & SHSCT were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mulgrew.**

**COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**

**C/085/2022 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 APRIL 2022**

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 April 2022 (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 April 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Curran.**

**C/086/2022      MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2022**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2022 (copy circulated).

**Agreed:            The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

**C/087/2022      MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2022**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 20 April 2022 (copy circulated).

**Agreed:            The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 20 April 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Casey.**

**C/088/2022      MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2022**

Read: Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 21 April 2022 (copy circulated).

**Agreed:            The Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 21 April 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

**C/089/2022      PLANNING MINUTES**

There were no issues referred from the Planning Committee.

**FOR NOTING**

**C/090/2022**

**RESPONSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RE.  
NOTICE OF MOTION C/055/2022 – CHARLOTTE’S LAW**

Read: Letter dated 7 April 2022 re. Notice of Motion C/055/2022. (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The correspondence dated 7 April 2022 from the Department of Justice was noted on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

**C/091/2022**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM FERMANAGH AND OMAGH  
DISTRICT COUNCIL RE. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Read: Letter dated 12 April re. Domestic Violence. (copy circulated)

**Agreed: The correspondence dated 12 April 2022 from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council re. Domestic Violence was noted on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

**C/092/2022**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM FERMANAGH & OMAGH  
DISTRICT COUNCIL RE. CONTINUING HEALTHCARE  
PROVISION**

Read: Letter dated 12 April 2022 re. Continuing Healthcare Provision. (copy circulated)

**Agreed: The correspondence dated 12 April 2022 from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council re Continuing Healthcare Provision was noted on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

**C/093/2022**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM FERMANAGH & OMAGH  
DISTRICT COUNCIL RE. RECRUITING STAFF WITHIN**

## **HOSPITALITY**

Read: Letter dated 12 April 2022 re. Recruiting staff within hospitality.  
(copy circulated)

**Agreed:** The correspondence dated 12 April 2022 from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council re Recruiting Staff within Hospitality was noted on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

## **C/094/2022 CORRESPONDENCE FROM FERMANAGH & OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL RE. ST. BRIGID'S DAY**

Read: Letter dated 21 April 2022 re. St Brigid's Day. (copy circulated)

**Agreed:** The correspondence dated 12 April 2022 from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council re St. Brigid's Day was noted on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

## **C/095/2022 CORRESPONDENCE FROM ARDS & NORTH DOWN RE. LIGHTING UP FOR UKRAINE**

Read: Letter dated 25 April 2022 re. Lighting up for Ukraine. (copy circulated)

**Agreed:** The correspondence dated 12 April 2022 from Ards & North Down was noted on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

## **C/096/2022 RESPONSE FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RE. NOTICE OF MOTION C/073/2022 – FREE SCHOOL MEALS**

Read: Letter dated 26 April 2022 re. NOM C/073/2022. (copy circulated)

**Agreed:** The correspondence dated 26 April 2022 from the Department of Education was noted on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

Councillor Byrne referred to Notices of Motion received from other Councils requesting support and said our support should not be given without prior discussion and we should write back noting the Notices of Motion rather than supporting them.

Ms Taggart said the usual procedure was to write back 'noting' the Notices of Motion, unless discussion had taken place and an agreed position taken.

## **NOTICES OF MOTION**

**C/097/2022**

### **NOTICE OF MOTION – IRISH LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND LEGISLATION**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Ó Muirí:

*"This council supports the campaign for Irish language rights and the implementation of Irish language legislation.*

*"It is long overdue that our Irish language citizens and communities are recognised in law, as promised in many of our peace agreements.*

*"On Saturday, May 21, thousands will travel to Belfast City Hall to support the Dream Dearg campaign, including many from our own council area.*

*"We call on the council to support their campaign and also extend a huge ádh mór oraibh to the thousands who will travel to Belfast to represent local Irish language communities and schools at An Lá Dearg 2022.*

*"As an act of solidarity and support from the council, we will, on Friday, May 20, illuminate Newry Town Hall in red, symbolising the campaign for language rights."*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Ó Muirí said 5,600 days had passed since an Irish Language Act had been promised at St. Andrew's in 2006.

Councillor Ó Muirí said it was unacceptable that in 2022 the Irish Language Community had to campaign for basic rights that were promised in legislation. He said he hoped school children and their families who were passionate about the Irish language would travel to Belfast to walk with the Dream Dearg to demand the Irish language rights that were promised.

Councillor Ó Muirí asked that Council light up Newry Town Hall and said someone may wish to caveat with that, in requesting the Downshire Centre was also illuminated on Friday 20 May 2022 to symbolise support of the campaign for Irish language rights across the District.

Councillor Reilly said whilst he had no issue with the Irish language, he had concerns that some aspects of the legislation could disenfranchise a large proportion of the population in terms of employment who did not have the use of Irish and therefore because there was no detail of what would be included in the legislation he could not support the Motion.

Councillor McAteer expressed support for the Motion on behalf of the SDLP and said parties needed to adopt a more mature approach and reasonable debate undertaken to address the concerns from all parties. He said a commitment had been made in June 2021 by Brandon Lewis, Secretary of State for N. Ireland to pass the legislation in Westminster if Stormont collapsed and this had not happened. Councillor McAteer said Irish language rights needed to be enshrined in legislation as soon as possible with full debate, ideally in Northern Ireland, but if necessary in Westminster.

Councillor Reilly requested a recorded vote.

Councillor Ó Muirí said the idea behind the legislation was to protect the language rights of a young generation who were growing up now. He spoke of the difficulty encountered in 1972 at the opening of the first Bunscoil on the Shaws Road in Belfast due to the absence of legislation. Councillor Ó Muirí referred to Councillor Reilly's concerns regarding the disenfranchisement of a large proportion of the community and said an Ombudsman would be in place to address any questions and in terms of employment he considered it would only be applicable if a particular position required Irish speaking skills and then it could possibly be included as a desirable criteria as opposed to an essential one.

Councillor Ó Muirí reminded Members that the Motion before them was to support An Lá Dearg in Belfast and to illuminate the Town Hall.

Councillor Burgess said although he did not have a problem with anyone learning the Irish language, he had concerns if it had affected jobs in the civil service and that an applicant with Irish speaking skills would be favoured above one who hadn't; he said this element caused fear in his community.

Councillor Ó Muirí said he wanted to make it clear that the intention of the Irish language legislation was not to take jobs away from people but to create opportunities for people with Irish to be able to apply for jobs for which Irish was essential. He said it was about parity of esteem and it needed to be discussed at the Assembly and for the Ombudsman to be in place to regulate and allay all fears.

Councillor Hanlon said the Irish language didn't belong to any one community, it was there for all. She said there were more than 7,000 children being educated by Irish medium and opportunities need to be created for them.

Councillor McAteer asked that it be put on record, in light of Councillor Burgess's comments, that if there was anything discriminatory in any legislation, he would walk away from it, but he said in this instance and in the context of Northern Ireland it would be a healthier place if this was sorted out to the satisfaction of everyone.

Councillor Magennis advised that Councillor Reilly had withdrawn his request for a recorded vote, however, she said as there was dissent among Members, she would call for a vote by way of a show of hands.

FOR:	23
AGAINST:	1
ABSTENTIONS:	1



The Motion was carried.

**AGREED:**

**"This council supports the campaign for Irish language rights and the implementation of Irish language legislation.**

**"It is long overdue that our Irish language citizens and communities are recognised in law, as promised in many of our peace agreements.**

**"On Saturday, May 21, thousands will travel to Belfast City Hall to support the Dream Dearg campaign, including many from our own council area.**

**"We call on the council to support their campaign and also extend a huge ádh mór oraibh to the thousands who will travel to Belfast to represent local Irish language communities and schools at An Lá Dearg 2022.**

**"As an act of solidarity and support from the council, we will, on Friday, May 20, illuminate Newry Town Hall in red, symbolising the campaign for language rights."**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 18.38hrs.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 June 2022.

**Signed:**

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**Chairperson**

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**Chief Executive**