

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

**NMD/C/**

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### **Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 07 December 2020 at 6.00pm via Hybrid in Downshire Chamber and Microsoft Teams**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor L Devlin

**In attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor P Brown
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor C Casey	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Curran	Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor H Gallagher	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor V Harte	Councillor R Howell
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor G Malone
Councillor C Mason	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor H McKee
Councillor K McKeivitt	Councillor A McMurray
Councillor R Mulgrew	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor K Owen	Councillor G O'Hare
Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor M Savage
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor G Stokes
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Trainor	Councillor W Walker

#### **(Officials)**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive  
Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services  
Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active & Healthy Communities  
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism  
Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting)  
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal & Administration (Acting)  
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director, Corporate Service, Human Resources & Safeguarding  
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)  
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

**C/160/2020**

**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Doran and Enright.

**C/161/2020**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

On behalf of Council the Chairperson sent best wishes to Councillor Seán Doran who had been unwell but was improving. Thoughts continue to be with Sean and his family.

The Chairperson congratulated the Down Camogie team on winning the All-Ireland Intermediate Championship and the Armagh Camogie team for winning the All Ireland Junior Championships at the weekend.

The Chairperson paid tribute to Rostrevor native Susanna Ni Dhubhai who was the Senior Composite Design Engineer for the BWT Racing Point Formula 1 Team which had a fantastic result in the Grand Prix at the weekend, with a first and a third place. Members were advised the team was to be renamed Aston Martin Formula 1 for the 2021 season and that Susanna would be the most prominent Irish person involved with Formula 1 at this time.

The Chairperson once again reminded everyone that Covid 19 remained among us and that restrictions were to ease on Friday and appealed to everyone to shop local, support local but ultimately to stay safe. With further relaxations around Christmas, the Chairperson appealed to people to ensure that what they were doing was done safely whilst adhering to the public health messaging.

The Chairperson commented that whilst there was very positive news of a vaccine, it would be some months before it became widespread so for the sake of another few months she appealed to everyone to exercise caution.

The Chairperson sought Members co-operation in terms of contributions at Council meetings relating to Committee Minutes advising that Committees were the location to raise issues.

**C/162/2020**

**ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 02 November 2020 (copy circulated).

Councillor Andrews enquired if a response had been received from the Department of Health, Health and Social Care Trusts and relevant bodies regarding correspondence sent to them about addressing and implementing procedures to provide treatments to deal cancer and other health conditions that had been delayed due to the current pandemic.

Mrs Ward confirmed there was no response to date and any response received would be circulated to Members.

**Agreed:**

**The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 2 November 2020 was agreed on the proposal of**

**COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING**

**C/163/2020                    MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read:                                Minutes of Council Meeting held on 2 November 2020 (copy circulated).

**Agreed:                                The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Burgess.**

**C/164/2020                    MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2020 RE: GRUGANDOO WIND FARM PLANNING APPLICATION**

Read:                                Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 26 October 2020 re: Grugandoo Wind Farm Planning Application. (copy circulated).

**Agreed:                                The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 26 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Casey, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

**COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**

**C/165/2020                    MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 09 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read:                                Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 09 November 2020 (copy circulated).

**Agreed:                                The Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 09 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Stokes.**

**C/166/2020                    MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read:                                Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 November 2020 (copy circulated).

In proposing the approval of the minutes Councillor Savage reiterated that the Albert Basin Project Board would be set up and meet in January 2021 and a budget would be included within the 2020/21 rates process to ensure the delivery of phase one within this Council term.

**Agreed:                                The Minutes of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the**

**proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí.**

**C/167/2020**

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 November 2020 (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Trainor.**

**C/168/2020**

**MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2020 (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Owen.**

**C/169/2020**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
24 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Special Audit Committee Meeting held on 24 November 2020. (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Audit Committee Meeting held on 24 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

**C/170/2020**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 1 December 2020 re: outcomes of a conciliated process with the Labour Relations Agency. (copy circulated).

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Byrne to defer the minutes of Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 1 December 2020 to a Special Council Meeting, date to be confirmed.**



**C/175/2020**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM MINISTER FOR EDUCATION RE:  
CHILDREN TAKING TRANSFER TESTS IN THEIR OWN  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Read: Correspondence dated 16 November 2020 from Peter Weir, Minister for Education re: children taking transfer tests in their own primary schools. (Copy circulated)

Councillor Ó Muirí pointed out that the Northern Ireland Mental Health Champion Professor Siobhan O'Neill was appalled that transfer tests were proceeding and welcomed the correspondence from Minister Peter Weir which put the onus back on the Board of Governors.

**Agreed: The correspondence was noted.**

**C/176/2020**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM FINANCIAL CONDUCT AUTHORITY  
RE: C/132/2020 INCREASES IN VEHICLE AND HOUSE  
INSURANCE COSTS**

Read: Correspondence dated 9 November 2020 from the Financial Conduct Authority re: C/132/2020 Increases in Vehicle and House Insurance Costs. (Copy circulated)

Councillor Magennis advised she was not happy with the response received from the Financial Conduct Authority in which they justify increasing the insurance premiums in the postcode areas of BT34 and BT35 without concrete evidence of the risk involved. She commented that it may be the case that legal advice would be sought.

**Agreed: The correspondence was noted.**

**C/177/2020**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM DERRY CITY AND STRABANE  
COUNCIL RE: MOTIONS PASSED REGARDING AIR QUALITY  
ISSUE**

Read: Correspondence dated 13 November 2020 from Derry City and Strabane Council re: Motions passed regarding air quality. (Copy circulated)

**Agreed: The correspondence was noted.**

**C/178/2020**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM MINISTER FOR EDUCATION RE:  
PLANNED DISPOSAL OF ARDNABANNON OUTDOOR  
EDUCATION CENTRE**

Read: Correspondence dated 6 and 17 November 2020 from the Minister for Education re: Planned disposal of Ardnabannon Outdoor Education Centre. (Copy circulated)

Councillor McMurray pointed that whilst the response from the Minister was addressed to him he paid credit to all DEA Councillors for signing the joint letter regarding the planned disposal of Ardnabannon Outdoor Education Centre.

Councillors McMurray, Howell and Gallagher voiced their disappointment at the decision of The Minister of Education regarding the planned disposal of Ardnabannon Outdoor Education Centre.

**Agreed: The correspondence was noted.**

**C/179/2020 CORRESPONDENCE FROM MINISTER FOR HEALTH RE: REOPENING OF A&E AT DAISY HILL AND DOWNE HOSPITAL**

Read: Correspondence dated 23 November 2020 from the Minister for Health re: Reopening of A&E at Daisy Hill and Downe Hospital. (Copy circulated)

Councillor Trainor commented that Covid-19 was not the primary issue as to the current state of emergency services and that it was an historic lack of resources and funding to ensure appropriately trained staff.

**Agreed: The correspondence was noted.**

**C/180/2020 CORRESPONDENCE FROM FERMANAGH AND OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL RE: CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS**

Read: Correspondence dated 13 November 2020 from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council re: Coronavirus Pandemic on Further and Higher Education Students. (Copy circulated)

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Andrews that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council write to Fermanagh and Omagh District to thank them for the correspondence and support the motion on Coronavirus Pandemic on Further and Higher Education as outlined in the letter. It was also agreed to forward a copy of the Council's support to the other 10 Councils.**

**C/181/2020 NOTICE OF MOTION – SUSTAINABILITY**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor Lewis:

**"We note that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council aims to embed the ethos of sustainability throughout its operations. Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of people today and providing them with a good quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. With that in mind this Council commits to producing a report on how we could be making funding**





The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor Brown:

**“This Council welcomes the victory of President Elect Joe Biden Vice President Elect Harris and extends our congratulations and best wishes for their term of office.**

**Noting the ancestral links that President-Elect Biden has with Ireland, including the Cooley Peninsula and the Port of Newry, and the impact that he can have as an ally in any future discussions with the UK government on Post-Brexit trade, Council will write to the White House and the NI Consulate after his Inauguration inviting him to our district; to the city of Newry, to the resting place of St Patrick in Downpatrick and the wider district as part of any official visit he may plan to the Island during his term as President. It will also write to Louth County council inviting them to send a joint invite”.**

In proposing the motion, Councillor Brown provided an overview of facts and figures in relation to President Elect Joe Biden’s election victory and his links to this area. He pointed out it had been an historic election that had taken place during the unprecedented context of a global health crisis and that the President would have a busy start to his term dealing with the Covid pandemic and subsequent economic impact.

Councillor Brown pointed out Joe Biden had unwavering support for the peace process given the important role his party had played in bringing it together and that he has been vocal on his opposition to Brexit and the risks it poses for the Good Friday Agreement. He has a wealth of foreign knowledge and expertise.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Stokes referred to a speech Joe Biden had made in 2016 and that he was a man who valued his Irish heritage and ancestors. Councillor Stokes referred to the plans for the Albert Basin, formerly a site of Newry Port and how it would be fantastic if Newry, Mourne and Down Council had something to show on that site during a visit from the President.

Councillor Hanna spoke on behalf of the DUP and voiced disappointment at the motion and questioned why Council would welcome any political victor and that Council had not done so in the past. He expressed concern at divisive remarks made by President Elect Joe Biden and that his party would not be supporting the motion and called upon President Elect to apologise to the people of his tradition.

During discussion, Councillor Taylor acknowledged the ancestral links to the area however felt the motion was overtly political and for that reason he would not be supporting it.

Councillor Murphy spoke in support of the motion stating it was an opportunity to have access to the White House and provide leverage on matters such legacy issues.

Councillor Lewis advised his party would have supported the motion if it hadn’t taken one broad side on taking a view on American politics.

In summing up Councillor Brown said he understood the unionist parties concerns however the motion was included within the wider political context and why President Biden might be visiting.

The Chairperson put Councillor Brown's motion to a vote and asked for a show of hands, the results of which were as follows:

For: 31  
Abstentions: 6

The motion was carried.

**Agreed:** The motion was declared carried and it was agreed that Council welcomes the victory of President Elect Joe Biden Vice President Elect Harris and extends our congratulations and best wishes for their term of office.

**Noting the ancestral links that President-Elect Biden has with Ireland, including the Cooley Peninsula and the Port of Newry, and the impact that he can have as an ally in any future discussions with the UK government on Post-Brexit trade, Council will write to the White House and the NI Consulate after his Inauguration inviting him to our district; to the city of Newry, to the resting place of St Patrick in Downpatrick and the wider district as part of any official visit he may plan to the Island during his term as President. It will also write to Louth County council inviting them to send a joint invite.**

**C/185/2020**      **NOTICE OF MOTION – COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES AND COUNCIL POLITICAL PARTIES**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor Clarke:

**"This Council facilitates the formation of a forum to provide a regular means of communication between Trade Union representatives, and council political parties, Council officers will produce an option paper to be considered by councillors".**

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

**Agreed:** The Motion was referred to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor Gallagher:

**“This Council supports the PSNI annual Christmas anti drink driving campaign and recognises the seriousness of drink driving and the impact this can have and has had on many families across the District. Calls on the Minister for Justice to bring forward changes to the Drink drive limit to come into line with Scotland and to review the penalties that are imposed.”**

The motion was seconded by Councillor Trainor.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Gallagher stated that whilst the motion referred to the annual Christmas anti drink driving campaign it was something that needed to be brought forward 365 days a year. Between 28 November 2019 and 1 January 2020 there had been 418 drink and drug drivers arrested. The impact on families and the whole community required a change to legislation.

Councillor Trainor stated as a Council and through the work of PCSP Members were continually reminded of the dangers of drink driving.

A discussion ensued during which the motion was supported by Members.

Councillor Hanlon proposed an amendment to the motion that it include illegal and prescription drugs. Councillor Gallagher accepted the amendment.

In speaking in support of the motion, Councillor McMurray provided an overview of statistics from PSNI which showed an increase in driving under the influence over the Christmas period in 2018/19 on the same period in 2017/18. He also referred to legislation relating to drink driving and proposed an additional amendment that the motion to call upon the Minister for Infrastructure to bring forward the changes required.

Councillor Gallagher accepted the amendment to the motion.

Councillor Savage supported the motion and highlighted that as a border community there was a need for greater cooperation with Garda Siochana and PSNI.

**The motion, as amended, was unanimously agreed and declared carried.**

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Trainor that Council supports the PSNI annual Christmas anti drink and drug driving campaign and recognises the seriousness of drink and drug driving and the impact this can have and has had on many families across the District. Calls on the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Infrastructure to bring forward changes to the Drink Drug drive limit to come into line with Scotland and to review the penalties that are imposed.”**







