

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 12 September 2022 at 5.00pm, in the Mourne Room, Downshire and online via Microsoft Teams, to mark the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II

Chairperson: Councillor M Savage

In attendance: **(Committee Members)**

Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Curran
Councillor L Devlin
Councillor C Enright
Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor H Gallagher
Councillor G Hanna
Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor A Lewis
Councillor D McAteer
Councillor H McKee
Councillor A McMurray
Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor K Owen
Councillor H Reilly
Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly

Officials in Attendance: Ms M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism
Ms C McAteer, Democratic Services Manager
Ms L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer

SP/023/2022: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

There were no apologies.

The Chairperson welcomed all to the Special Council Meeting to mark the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and said it was evident from the reaction to her passing

both locally, nationally and internationally the huge respect in which she was held right across the world.

The Chairperson said regardless of political viewpoints or views on the monarchy, very few people would contest Her Late Majesty's dedication, devotion and selfless sense of duty that she had demonstrated throughout her long 70-year reign.

He said Her Late Majesty was a woman of immense integrity who showed a great sense of duty and affection for her people, who also had a sense of humour and a great love for horse racing.

The Chairperson acknowledged there would be a mixture of perspectives in the chamber, however he said he wished to specifically recognize the deep sense of loss felt by those Members and the community they represented who were from the British tradition, on the passing of Her Late Majesty. He expressed his deepest condolences to them and to the Royal Family at this difficult and sad time and said her passing not only marked the end of her long reign and the end of an era and a link to post war life but also decades of admiration and love from the Unionist Community across Newry Mourne and Down.

The Chairperson said citizens across the District who were from the Irish tradition and other traditions also had great admiration for Her Late Majesty and her ability to understand the complexities of Northern Ireland and demonstrate her desire to do all in her power to assist in the Peace Process was something, he, as a nationalist politician and many others in his community recognised and respected. Her Late Majesty's desire to reach out the hand of friendship and partnership to build stronger relationships east and west on these islands and her memorable words as Gaeilge on her visit to Dublin along with her visit to the Garden of Remembrance were a reflection of her role, not only as a monarch but as a peacemaker and earned her huge respect with Irish people.

The Chairperson concluded his remarks saying on behalf of the citizens of Newry Mourne and Down District, he offered deepest condolences to the Royal Family at this very difficult time.

He then invited the Party Group Leaders and any Independent Members to speak.

Councillor Taylor said the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II had been a very emotional and somewhat surreal experience. He said to have the same serving Monarch for a period of 70 years was truly historic and her reign had spanned 5 generations of his own family, which he said was truly remarkable and an indication of the remarkable service she had given.

Councillor Taylor said Queen Elizabeth II had visited Northern Ireland many times over the years and he said he had had the pleasure of attending a public party within the

grounds of Stormont to mark the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee where she had been present with the late Prince Philip.

Councillor Taylor said it was important to note that Queen Elizabeth II had conferred city status upon Newry during the year of her Golden Jubilee celebrations, this award, he said continued to offer both the City of Newry and the wider District the opportunity to regenerate, thrive and succeed and would benefit not just ourselves, but future generations. Councillor Taylor said this was her lasting legacy to us and it was one that should be embraced by all to ensure the delivery of prosperity for all citizens in the District.

Councillor Taylor said Queen Elizabeth II had been held in the greatest affection by so many and highly respected around the world. He said she was the ultimate testament of all that was exceptional about the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Councillor Taylor said Queen Elizabeth had had a deep and abiding commitment to the Christian faith which was evident throughout her life in her words and deeds.

He offered his deepest condolences to the Royal Family and he offered his allegiance to the new Monarch King Charles III as he assumed his reign.

Councillor Taylor concluded his remarks with the words 'God save the King'.

The Chairperson then invited Councillor Hanna to address the Members.

Councillor Hanna said on behalf of the DUP party, he wanted to convey sincere condolences and sympathies to King Charles III and all the royal family on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. He said Queen Elizabeth II had been an incredible person who was both diplomatic and discreet and who set an admirable example of leadership.

Councillor Hanna said during her reign, Queen Elizabeth II had met with many world leaders and represented the UK through many difficult and troubled times and she had been there to steady the nation in difficult times.

Councillor Hanna acknowledged that although Queen Elizabeth II had suffered great loss during the troubles, she demonstrated her commitment for love and peace and her visit to Dublin in 2011 where she laid a wreath in the Garden of Remembrance was testament to that.

Councillor Hanna said he had been in the presence of Queen Elizabeth II several times and she set an example all should aspire to.

Councillor Hanna said he wished King Charles III well as he commenced his reign and

concluded with the words 'God save the King'.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Sharvin to address the Members.

Councillor Sharvin said Queen Elizabeth II had dedicated her life to public service and had been loved and admired by many people around the world. He said the Queen was an important figure for many people on this island and she had been very well respected.

Councillor Sharvin said Queen Elizabeth II had played an important role in helping to improve British and Irish relations with her 2011 visit to Ireland being a watershed moment, where she made a number of significant gestures including speaking in Irish and visiting the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin.

Councillor Sharvin said Queen Elizabeth II had visited Rostrevor and Warrenpoint as a child and was familiar with the Newry Mourne and Down District.

He said his thoughts and that of the SDLP party were with everyone who held the Queen dear, especially those in the North at this difficult time.

Councillor Sharvin said regardless of peoples' view of the Monarchy, it was important that sensitivity was shown in the days and weeks ahead and to be mindful it was a sombre occasion for many across the North and indeed the world. He concluded by extending thoughts, prayers and sympathies to all those in mourning.

The Chairperson invited Councillor McKee to address the Members.

Councillor McKee said he had been very saddened to learn of the death of Queen Elizabeth II and said she had been the Head of the Monarchy for his lifetime. He said the television coverage since the news of her passing demonstrated the perfection, power and authority of the British Government.

Councillor McKee said he had been in the presence of the Queen several times and had met other members of the Royal Family, including the now King Charles III. He said Queen Elizabeth II had been a dedicated monarch for the 70 years of her reign and he believed the country would go from strength to strength under the reign of King Charles III.

Councillor McKee concluded with the words 'God save our gracious King and long live King Charles'.

The Chairperson invited Councillor McMurray to address the Members.

Councillor McMurray said his thoughts and prayers went to the entire Royal Family at this sad time, who were mourning a much-loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, but he said, while they had lost a matriarch, the entire country and indeed Commonwealth had lost a person who had been a figure-head and leader for 70 years and he said her loss would be keenly felt by many.

Councillor McMurray said she showed commitment and dedication to the country and commonwealth during her reign and it would be very strange not to see her carrying out her duties.

He said, regardless of constitutional views, she was an icon and a touchstone to various shared histories and the fact that her first Prime Minister was born in 1874, whilst her last one was born in 1975, a difference of 101 years, was worthy of historical note.

Councillor McMurray said Queen Elizabeth was woman of faith, who embodied grace and forgiveness, and this was apparent in her speech given in Dublin in 2011 and equally by her actions at the Belfast Lyric Theatre one year later. Throughout her reign, the Queen worked tirelessly in service to the country and Commonwealth receiving praise from all quarters for her selfless dedication to the role, which he said was only one of the aspects of her life that would remain as her lasting legacy and he said he hoped it would bring some comfort to all those grieving at this sad time.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Ó Muirí to address the Members.

Councillor Ó Muirí said the Sinn Féin Party, were in many ways diametrically opposed to the idea of Monarch, however, he said it was critical in the spirit of charity and good will to comment on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.

Councillor Ó Muirí, on behalf of Sinn Féin extended condolences on the death of Queen Elizabeth II whose sorrowful loss he said was deeply felt by her family, and many people across our society, particularly those of a unionist tradition whom with great pride and devotion held Queen Elizabeth and the Royal family very dear.

Councillor Ó Muirí said it had been a mammoth achievement to have marked 70 years of dedicated public service to the British people when Queen Elizabeth celebrated her Platinum Jubilee earlier this year.

Councillor Ó Muirí asked it be recorded the value and respect the Sinn Féin Party placed on the significant contribution Queen Elizabeth had made to the advancement of peace and reconciliation between the different traditions on our island, and between Ireland and Britain during the years of the peace process and he noted the memorable visit made by her to Dublin in 2011.

Councillor Ó Muirí said, on behalf of Sinn Féin he acknowledged the sorrow, and the huge sense of grief and loss that many people would be feeling at this time across our community, and particularly in the chamber today, elected representatives, council workers and those across the public and civil services.

He said he offered his sincere sympathies and condolences to all in true friendship and he concluded with the words 'may she rest in peace'.

The Chairperson thanked the speakers and said numerous books of condolences had been opened throughout the District, that would be forwarded on to the Royal Family in due course.

The meeting concluded at 5.40 pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 October 2022.

Signed: Councillor M Savage
Chairperson of Council

Signed: Ms M Ward
Chief Executive
