

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on
Tuesday, 1st March, 2022 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire) (Chairperson); and The High Sheriff, (Councillor Hussey); Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Howard, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McCusker, McKeown, McLaughlin, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

Summons

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl), Alderman Copeland, and Councillors Beattie, Ferguson, Heading, Smyth and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Donnelly declared an interest in relation to the Motion under the heading "Mountainview Centre", in that he and his employer had been involved in direct conversations regarding the centre and he left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in relation to the item "Requests for the Use of Parks for 2022 Events" under the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that she was an employee of Féile an Phobail, and if the issue arose that she would leave and not take part in the discussion or vote.

Councillor Murphy declared an interest in relation to the item "Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service, under the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that he was a Board Member of Ligoniel Improvement Association, and if the issue arose that he would leave and not take part in the discussion or vote.

Clarification

Councillor de Faioite advised that the minutes of the proceedings of the Special Council meeting of 7th February omitted that, he had reported an apology for inability to attend. The Council agreed that the minutes be varied accordingly.

Minutes of the Council Meeting

Moved by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire),
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Monthly meeting of the Council of 1st and the Special meeting of 7th February be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Condolences

Several Members paid tribute to former Alderman, Christopher Stalford, following his sudden death, and expressed sympathy and condolences to his family for their tragic loss.

Platinum Jubilee

Alderman Kingston highlighted that the Queen would be celebrating her platinum jubilee as the longest serving British monarch and he requested that the Office of the Lord Mayor would write to the Queen to offer congratulations. The Deputy Lord Mayor confirmed that he would liaise with the Lord Mayor to issue the correspondence.

Ukraine

A number of Members condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and expressed concern and sympathy with the Ukrainian people. The Deputy Lord Mayor stated that a press statement would be released, on behalf of the Council, to encourage the people of Belfast and Northern Ireland to give generously to relief efforts that had been organised by the local community.

Changes to Committees and Outside Bodies

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from Sinn Fein of the following changes in membership:

- Councillor Black to replace former Councillor Magennis on the West Belfast Partnership Board; and

- Councillor McCann to replace former Councillor Magennis on the National Association of Councillors and Councillor Carson on the Active Belfast Board Ltd.

The Council noted the changes.

Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th February, 2022, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Bonfire Management

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McLoughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Magee,

That the matter would be placed on the agenda for the March meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, in order that a progress update would be provided to the Members.

The amendment was put to the Council and passed.

Update on Draft Amenity Bye Laws

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Michael Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the matter be referred back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for further consideration.

On a recorded vote, sixteen Members voted for the amendment, and thirty-two against, and it was declared lost.

<u>For 16</u>	<u>Against 32</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Hussey); and Aldermen Kingston, McCoubrey, and Sandford; and Councillors, Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, T. Kelly, McCullough,	Alderman Rodgers and; Councillors Baker, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Howard, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Magee, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe,

Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner	McCann, McKeown McLaughlin, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, O'Hara, and Walsh.
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Bloody Friday - 50th Anniversary Commemoration

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, under the heading "Bloody Friday – 50th Anniversary Commemoration" be amended as follows:

"This Council remembers with great sadness the horror of the events of 21st July 1972, which became known as 'Bloody Friday', when the Provisional IRA exploded over 20 bombs across this City within a period of 80 minutes, resulting in the deaths of 9 people and physical injuries to over 130 others. The Council commits to providing its citizens with the opportunity to engage in a programme of commemoration but also education, designed to build positive relationships for the future.

On this 50th anniversary year, the Council will reach out to survivors and family members of those killed or injured on 'Bloody Friday' through organisations such as the South East Fermanagh Foundation which have supported them, to organise acts of solemn remembrance for all victims and survivors of this atrocity, and to organise other suitable events which will capture our rejection of terrorism in this City, both during 'The Troubles' and in the future.

~~In addition, the Party Leaders will discuss the potential for holding a separate day of reflection to remember all of the victims of the Troubles in Belfast."~~

This Council recognises the hurt and trauma of all victims, families and survivors from the past conflict here in the City of Belfast. The Council notes that throughout the following years and decades there will be significant anniversaries for citizens of this City regarding the conflict on this part of the island.

The Council reiterates its commitment to doing everything in its power to ensure that violence is a thing of the past.

Belfast City Council will ensure that all those who were affected by our recent past are recognised equally.

That is why the Council will dedicate one day a year in which we remember the past and create a space for victims and survivors of all communities to commemorate and remember the past, while encouraging reconciliation between our communities.

Lastly, the Council will seek to erect a memorial for all those impacted by our past and will be dedicated to all victims, survivors, and families.”

The amendment proposed by Councillor McLaughlin, therefore read:

“This Council remembers with great sadness the horror of the events of 21st July 1972, which became known as ‘Bloody Friday’, when the Provisional IRA exploded over 20 bombs across this City within a period of 80 minutes, resulting in the deaths of 9 people and physical injuries to over 130 others. The Council commits to providing its citizens with the opportunity to engage in a programme of commemoration but also education, designed to build positive relationships for the future.

On this 50th anniversary year, the Council will reach out to survivors and family members of those killed or injured on ‘Bloody Friday’ through organisations such as the South East Fermanagh Foundation which have supported them, to organise acts of solemn remembrance for all victims and survivors of this atrocity, and to organise other suitable events which will capture our rejection of terrorism in this City, both during ‘The Troubles’ and in the future.

This Council recognises the hurt and trauma of all victims, families and survivors from the past conflict here in the City of Belfast. The Council notes that throughout the following years and decades there will be significant anniversaries for citizens of this City regarding the conflict on this part of the island.

The Council reiterates its commitment to doing everything in its power to ensure that violence is a thing of the past.

Belfast City Council will ensure that all those who were affected by our recent past are recognised equally.

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Lastly, the Council will seek to erect a memorial for all those impacted by our past and will be dedicated to all victims, survivors, and families.”

On a vote, twenty-three Members voted for the amendment and twenty-seven against, and it was declared lost.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th February were thereupon approved and adopted, subject to the foregoing amendment.

Minutes of the People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor Garrett,

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th February, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th February be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor McAteer,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th February, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Request to Create a New Film Classification Rating

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe,

That, the Council agrees to depart from Standard Licence Condition 2(b) which stated that, ‘No persons under the age of fifteen years shall be admitted to any Exhibition when a ‘15’ film is in the programme’ and to permit cinema operators to impose a rating of ‘15A’ for the Belfast City Council area in respect of ‘The Batman’ film, which would allow patrons under the age of 15 entrance to view the film, when accompanied by an adult.

The amendment was put to the Council and passed.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th February, were thereupon approved and adopted, subject to the foregoing amendment

Minutes of the Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Brooks,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 15th February, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd Shareholders Committee

Moved by Councillor McCabe,
Seconded by Councillor Bradley,

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster hall Shareholders' Committee of 21st February be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst,

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 22nd February, 2022, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Motions to be debated by the Council

The Samaritans

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Kyle proposed:

“This Council commends and recognises the extraordinary efforts of the Samaritans during the period of Covid 19 and beyond. The ability of the volunteers to react quickly and effectively during the pandemic and to continue to offer support to anyone who needs a listening ear day or night, 365 days a year is to be commended.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Mountainview Centre

(Councillor Donnelly, who had declared an interest in this item, left the meeting for the duration)

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Matt Collins proposed:

“This Council notes with concern that the childcare service at Mountainview Centre in West Belfast is due to close in the coming weeks.

This follows a recent announcement by the Ardmonagh Family Centre, also based on the Upper Springfield Road, that it too, is reluctantly having to terminate its services.

The Council recognises the vital resource that the Mountainview Centre has been to a large number of families over many years; by providing after schools activities and childcare services at an affordable rate.

The Council believes the closure of this service will have a negative impact on families in West Belfast.

This Council also expresses concern that several staff will face redundancy as a result of this closure.

Given the recent spiralling cost of living, and the inability for working class families to access affordable childcare, it is imperative that this centre remains open to provide after schools services and creche facilities at an affordable rate for parents.

The Council resolves to convene an urgent cross-party meeting, reaching out to both the Education and Communities Ministers and their officials, as well as Council officers and staff of the Mountainview Centre, in order to explore the possibility of keeping the doors of this invaluable service open.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Michael Collins

At the request of Councillor Corr, the proposer agreed to insert the following paragraph at the end of his motion:

"Furthermore, we also ask that any meeting with the education minister discusses the devastating cuts that are being made to Glor na Mona in the same community of the Upper Springfield where a 98% cut is being made to the budget Glor na Mona receive from the EA".

At the request of Councillor Pankhurst, the proposer agreed to insert that, the urgent cross-party meeting would include the Education Authority and the Department for Finance.

The motion, as amended, therefore read:

"This Council notes with concern that the childcare service at Mountainview Centre in West Belfast is due to close in the coming weeks.

This follows a recent announcement by the Ardmonagh Family Centre, also based on the Upper Springfield Road, that it too, is reluctantly having to terminate its services.

The Council recognises the vital resource that the Mountainview Centre has been to a large number of families over many years; by providing after schools activities and childcare services at an affordable rate.

The Council believes the closure of this service will have a negative impact on families in West Belfast.

This Council also expresses concern that several staff will face redundancy as a result of this closure.

Given the recent spiralling cost of living, and the inability for working class families to access affordable childcare, it is imperative that this centre remains open to provide after schools services and creche facilities at an affordable rate for parents.

The Council resolves to convene an urgent cross-party meeting, reaching out to the Education, Finance and Communities Ministers and their officials, as well as the Education Authority, Council officers and staff of the Mountainview Centre, in order to explore the possibility of keeping the doors of this invaluable service open.

"Furthermore, we also ask that any meeting with the Education Minister discusses the devastating cuts that are being made to Glor na Mona in the same community of the Upper Springfield where a 98% cut is being made to the budget Glor na Mona receive from the EA".

The motion, as amended, standing in the name of Councillor Matt Collins, was put the meeting and passed.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson