

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

**NMD/AGM/**

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### **Minutes of Annual Meeting of Council held on Monday 3 June 2024 at 5.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor V Harte 5.00pm – 5.22pm  
Councillor P Byrne 5.22pm – 5.40pm

**In attendance:**

**(Councillors)**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor P Campbell	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor C Enright	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor D Finn	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor M Gibbons	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor G Kearns
Councillor T Howie	Councillor C King
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor K Murphy	Councillor S Murphy
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Truesdale	Councillor H Young

**(Officials)**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive  
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism  
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment  
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities  
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)  
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer

**AGM/001/2024**

### **APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Brennan, Clarke, Howell, Jackson, Magennis, D Murphy, Rice and Ruane and from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services.

Outgoing Chairperson Councillor Harte stated that the role of Chairperson had been an honour and a responsibility she had been humbled to take. She expressed her heartfelt gratitude to her Sinn Fein colleagues for entrusting her with the role, and for their unwavering support, thanked Councillor Sharvin for his support as Deputy Chairperson and for working together so positively and further thanked the Senior Management Team and all Council staff for their hard work and commitment to the success of the Council, with a special mention to Democratic Services for their tireless work and support.

Councillor Harte paid tribute to those that she had met over the year whose hard work helped deliver the incredible events and initiatives across the district. She further noted the

many positive and negative events that had occurred over the year, such as the floods that highlighted the community spirit of the district, and also the opportunity she had to raise funds for local grassroots organisations.

Councillor Harte paid special tribute to her chosen charities; Down Right Brilliant; Life Change Changes Lives; Newry All Stars Special Olympic Club; Sound Friends; and Well Lane Warriors and highlighted the crucial role they played in transforming the lives of individuals and families within the community.

Councillor Harte then wished the incoming Chair and Deputy Chair the very best in their role and noted that leading was a challenging task but expressed her confidence in their ability to continue to make a positive impact on the community. She expressed her gratitude to her family for their unwavering and ongoing support, encouragement, and love.

Councillor Harte noted that her year had been filled with meeting such ordinary people doing such extraordinary things and ended by stating that in a world where you can be anything, be kind.

Outgoing Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Sharvin stated that it had been an honour to serve as Deputy Chairperson for the Council and that it was filled with such a variety of events and gave a special mention to the signing of the contract for funding for Newry City Park, the Christmas light switch on in Downpatrick, Newcastle and other areas and leading the St Patrick's day parade this year. He noted that one theme had been present at every event he had attended over the past year, and that was the warm welcome by the community, event organisers and Council Officers.

Councillor Sharvin then paid tribute to outgoing Chairperson Councillor Valerie Harte and to his SDLP colleagues for their support over the past year, extended his thanks to everyone for their support throughout his term in office, with a special thank you for all the staff in Democratic Services and wished the incoming Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson every success in their year ahead.

Councillor Devlin, on behalf of the SDLP grouping on Council, congratulated both the outgoing Chair and Deputy Chair for a successful year working together across the District for everyone and wished them well in their future endeavors.

Councillor Hanlon, on behalf of the Sinn Féin party grouping on Council, congratulated both the outgoing Chair and outgoing Deputy Chair for a successful year working across the District for the betterment of everyone.

Councillor Hanna, on behalf of the DUP party grouping on Council, congratulated both the outgoing Chair and outgoing Deputy Chair on their year in office and thanked them for the work they had carried out.

Councillor Taylor extended personal thanks to the outgoing Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and noted how they had given the role their all and wished them well for the future.

Councillor Truesdale on behalf of the Alliance party grouping on Council, thanked both the outgoing Chair and outgoing Deputy Chair for their contribution throughout their term of office and wished them both good luck for the future.

Councilor Tinnelly extended his thanks to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for their hard work as ambassadors for the District and congratulated them for a successful year.

Councillor Harte and Councillor Sharvin thanked Members for their kind comments.

**AGM/002/2024            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**AGM/003/2024            APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

**Read:**                      Appointment to Statutory Positions of Responsibility Year 2. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Ward called upon Councillor Devlin as nominating officer for SDLP to nominate a Councillor for the position of Chairperson of Council for Year 2, 2024/25.

Councillor Devlin nominated Councillor Byrne for the position of Chairperson of Council for 2024/25, which was seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

Councillor Byrne subsequently accepted the post of Chairperson of Council for 2024/25.

Mrs Ward called upon Councillor Lee-Surginor as nominating officer for Alliance Party to nominate a Councillor for the position of Deputy-Chairperson of Council for 2024/25.

Councillor Lee-Surginor nominated Councillor Lee-Surginor, which was seconded by Councillor Truesdale.

Councillor Lee-Surginor subsequently accepted the post of Deputy Chairperson of Council 2024/25.

Councillor Byrne and Councillor Lee-Surginor were duly nominated as Chairperson and Deputy-Chairperson respectively of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council for the year 2024/25.

Mrs Ward then called upon the nominating officers of each of the parties to nominate to the following statutory positions of responsibility and the following nominations were made by the respective nominating officers and formally accepted by the nominees:

Chair of ERT                                      Councillor Bowsie  
Proposed by Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Lewis

Deputy Chair of ERT                              Councillor Clarke  
Proposed by Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Harte

Chair of AHC                                      Councillor Galbraith  
Proposed by Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Andrews

Deputy Chair of AHC                              Councillor Mathers  
Proposed by Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Kearns

Chair of S&E                                      Councillor Kearns  
Proposed by Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Harte

Deputy Chair of S&E                                      Councillor Enright  
Proposed by Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Howie

Chair of SPR    Councillor Howie  
Proposed by Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Truesdale

Deputy Chair of SPR                                      Councillor King  
Proposed by Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor O'Hare

Chair of Planning    Councillor D Murphy  
Proposed by Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor K Murphy

Deputy Chair of Planning                                      Councillor Hanna  
Proposed by Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Lewis

Mrs Ward noted Council's thanks to the outgoing Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for their work over the year and invited them to step down.

**Councillors Harte and Sharvin vacated the Chair at this point in the meeting.**

**Councillors Byrne and Lee-Surginor assumed the Chairperson and Deputy-Chairperson roles at this point.**

**AGM/004/2024                      NEWLY APPOINTED CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR ASSUME ROLES**

Incoming Chairperson of Council, Councillor Byrne, addressed the meeting and thanked the outgoing Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for their work over the past year that had been carried out with professionalism, dignity, and respect. He congratulated the newly appointed Deputy Chairperson Councillor Lee-Surginor and expressed his optimism for their working relationship.

Councillor Byrne stated he was honoured to be the first SDLP Chairperson of the Council from Slieve Gullion and was grateful to follow in the footsteps of his party colleague John Feehan, he thanked his Party colleagues for their trust shown in him and stated that it was a privilege to represent the whole district as its first citizen.

Councillor Byrne reflected on the magnitude of holding the role of Chairperson and expressed his gratitude that he was able to play a small part in promoting the LGBT community. He stated that as Chairperson he was committed to working with marginalised and vulnerable groups, to protect the dignity of the human person and to have respect for each and every person within the community. He expressed his wish that he would be a champion for inclusion and stated that one of his chosen charities would be that of Cuan Mhuire as the work they carried out across the district was simply lifesaving.

Councillor Byrne further expressed his goals of building a strong community within the District, of championing trade and investment into the District and of working with local tourism providers to promote the District as a premier tourism destination on the island.

Councillor Byrne advised that the work to improve communities by elected members was not possible without the support of Council employees who cared about the district as much as elected members did, and that he looked forward to being a champion for the District. He ended by stating that together, we are stronger.

Incoming Deputy Chairperson Councillor Lee-Surginor paid tribute to outgoing Chairperson, Councillor Harte and to outgoing Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Sharvin, for their work ethic in ensuring they represented the whole District. He thanked his Party colleagues for their support and thanked the people of Rowallane for their support in returning him as their Councillor. He expressed his optimism for the year ahead, to continue to grow and support the tourism sector and in showcasing the District. He further committed his support to those businesses affected by the floods, and to the voluntary and community sector who were facing funding cuts. He expressed his hope to continue the next year stronger than ever before by building on the success of the last.

**AGM/005/2024                    APPOINTMENTS TO STATUTORY COMMITTEES 2024/25**

Read:                                List of Committee picks 2024/25 (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Ward advised it had been agreed to use the default method of Quota of Greatest Remainder for appointment to Committees, with the remaining 7 positions being allocated by the d'Hondt method.

The positions were confirmed as follows:

Sinn Féin	Planning Committee
UUP	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Councillor Gibbons	Active & Healthy Communities
Councillor Tinnelly	Planning
UUP	Sustainability & Environment Committee
Councillor Gibbons	Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Councillor Tinnelly	Audit

The Chief Executive advised that the remaining names for committee selection should be given to Democratic Services as soon as possible.

**Agreed:**                                **It was agreed to approve the appointments to Committees using Quota of Greatest Remainder. (Copy of Committee List 2024/25 appended to these Minutes)**

**AGM/006/2024                    TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO EXTERNAL BODIES AND ORGANISATIONS (EXCLUDING STATUTORY POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY) AND INTERNAL BODIES AND FORUMS**

Read:                                List of External Bodies and Organisations 2024/25.  
(**Copy circulated**)

**Noted:**                                Working Group Terms of Reference will require updating at their first meeting.

**Noted:**                                **It was agreed to note the External Bodies and Organisations List. (excluding Statutory Positions of Responsibility)**

**AGM/007/2024                    SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR INCOMING YEAR**

**Read:** Schedule of Meetings for the year 2024/25.  
**(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the Schedule of Meetings for the year 2024/25.

**AGM/008/2023**      **SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO COUNCILLORS**

**Read:** Newry Mourne & Down District Council Scheme of Allowances payable to Councillors. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to approve the Newry Mourne & Down District Council Scheme of Allowances payable to Councillors.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 5.40pm.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson**

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**Chief Executive**