

Council

MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Monday, 4th November, 2013
at the hour of 6.00 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
(Councillor Ó Muilleoir) (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);
Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell, Ekin, McCoubrey,
R. Newton, R. Patterson, Robinson, Rodgers and Stoker;
Councillors Austin, Beattie, M. E. Campbell, Carson,
Clarke, Convery, Corr, Cunningham, Curran, Garrett,
Groves, Haire, Hanna, Hargey, Hendron, Hussey, Jones,
Keenan, Kelly, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín, Magee, Mallon,
McCabe, McCarthy, McKee, McVeigh, Mullan, A. Newton,
Ó Donnghaile, L. Patterson, Reynolds, Spence, Thompson,
Verner and Webb.

Reading of Scriptures

In accordance with Standing Order 9, the Lord Mayor read a passage from the Scriptures.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Smyth and Councillors Hendron and McNamee.

Minutes

Moved by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor,
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of the Council of 1st October be taken as read and signed as correct.

Disclosure of Family Relationship

The Chief Executive informed the Council that, in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, he had been advised by Councillor Verner that her husband, Mr. Sam Verner was employed by the Council within the Cleansing Services Section of the Health and Environmental Services Department.

Noted.

Request to Address the Council

The Chief Executive reported that a request had been received from Mr. Stephen Knox and Mrs. Leona Knox, the parents of Oscar Knox, seeking permission to address the Council on the importance of donating blood which, he pointed out, would be the subject of a Notice of Motion later in the meeting.

The Council acceded to the request and Mr. and Mrs. Knox were admitted to the meeting.

Mrs. Knox informed the Council that her son, Oscar, who was five years old, had, in November 2011, been diagnosed with cancer. Since that time, he had, as a result of the extensive treatment which he had undergone, required over 150 transfusions of blood or blood products. She pointed out that, currently, only 6% of eligible donors in Northern Ireland gave blood and that 40% of that donated was provided to cancer patients. It was, therefore, important to raise awareness of the need to donate blood and/or blood products and, accordingly, she expressed her support for the Motion which was being proposed by Councillor Cunningham. She concluded by thanking Alderman Robinson and Councillor Cunningham for the various ways in which they had supported Oscar and his family during their term as Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor respectively.

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, thanked Mr. and Mrs. Knox for being in attendance and they retired from the meeting.

Office of High Sheriff of Belfast for 2014

The Chief Executive reported that the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston) had received from the Northern Ireland Office a letter inviting him, in accordance with normal practice, to submit to the Secretary of State the names of three persons suitable for appointment to the position of High Sheriff of Belfast for the year 2014.

Moved by the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston),
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers and

Resolved – That the Council agrees to submit one name only for appointment to the Office of High Sheriff for 2014.

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford) and

Resolved – That Councillor L. Patterson be nominated to the Northern Ireland Office for appointment to the Office of High Sheriff for the City of Belfast for the year 2014.

Change of Membership on Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from:

- the Democratic Unionist Party indicating that it wished Councillor Reynolds to replace the former Alderman Humphrey on the Board of Visit Belfast;
- the Sinn Fein Party advising that it wished Councillor Beattie to replace the former Councillor Lavery on the Grand Opera House Trust Limited; and
- the Social Democratic and Labour Party stating that it wished Councillor Attwood to replace Councillor Hanna on the Board of Groundwork NI.

The Council approved the aforementioned changes.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and
the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee**

Moved by Alderman Robinson,
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 11th and 25th October and the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee of 11th October be approved and adopted.

Super Connected City Update

At the request of Councillor Webb, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee around issues of capacity, including that of BT, to integrate into the digital strategy.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 11th and 25th October and the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee of 11th October were approved and adopted.

Parks and Leisure Committee

Moved by Councillor McKee,
Seconded by Councillor Keenan and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Parks and Leisure Committee of 10th and 19th October be approved and adopted.

Development Committee

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor Ó Donnghaile and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Development Committee of 22nd October be approved and adopted.

Health and Environmental Services Committee

Moved by Councillor Corr,
Seconded by Councillor Austin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Health and Environmental Services Committee of 2nd October be approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Alderman Ekin,
Seconded by Councillor M. E. Campbell and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th October be approved and adopted, subject to the omission of those matters which had been delegated to it by the Council.

Town Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Hanna,
Seconded by Councillor Austin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Town Planning Committee of 3rd, 17th and 28th October be approved and adopted, subject to the omission of those matters which had been delegated to it by the Council.

Notices of Motion

Small Business Saturday

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Webb proposed:

“This Council recognises the difficulties faced by our business community, particularly, the small independent retailers who bring much vibrancy and character to our shopping districts. As a Council, we have supported the formation of local traders’ groups and initiatives such as Belfast Independent Retail Week. Building on this, the Council welcomes and pledges its support for the ‘Small Business Saturday’ initiative planned for December 7th, which aims to encourage people to shop in small, local shops. Belfast City Council also undertakes to use its

marketing and communication channels to promote Small Business Saturday amongst residents and visitors.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Corr.

After discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

Belfast Healthy Cities

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Keenan proposed:

“This Council congratulates Belfast Healthy Cities on its 25th anniversary and commends the significant work which it has done in tackling inequalities in health to date. The Council recognises the benefit of Belfast being a member of the World Health Organization European Healthy Cities Network which, through Belfast Healthy Cities, has placed Belfast on the international stage as a leading example of innovative practice in intersectoral working. The Council welcomes the forthcoming visit of Dr. Agis Tsouros of WHO Europe to Belfast on 28th and 29th November, which is an endorsement of Belfast Healthy Cities’ achievements and contribution to health and wellbeing.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Kyle.

After discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

International Mental Health Centre for Northern Ireland

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Alderman Rodgers proposed:

“This Council recognises that Northern Ireland has a high prevalence of poor mental health; notes that a previous World Mental Health survey stated that the Province has the world’s highest recorded rate of post-traumatic stress disorder and that violence had been a distinctive cause of mental health problems here. The Council acknowledges that trauma is one of the most hidden legacy issues of the Troubles; accepts the need to support and restore good mental health for those with difficulties at present across the Belfast City Council area and, therefore, calls for the creation of a new International Mental Health Centre for Northern Ireland which would be a world class facility for all.”

The Motion was seconded by Alderman Stoker.

After discussion, Alderman Rodgers agreed to withdraw the Motion in favour of having the matter raised through the appropriate Committee.

Belfast City Centre

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Hendron proposed:

“This Council recognises that Members will always seek to represent the areas for which they were elected. However, the City Centre businesses contribute a very large portion of the rate base which, in turn, contributes to the cost of provision of services across the City. The views and plans of the business community for the future of the City are important.

The Council agrees that the Party Leaders of the Council should provide civic leadership in seeking to provide a united voice, along with City Centre businesses, and, to that end, requests the Party Leaders to meet regularly as a group with representatives of the business community to ensure the future development and prosperity of the entire City of Belfast.

Furthermore, recognising the importance of the Christmas period to those businesses, the Council agrees that it is vital to attempt to build upon the normal Christmas promotion campaign through helping to animate the city and to promote the many exciting and enjoyable events, activities and offers happening in Belfast in the lead up to Christmas. Accordingly, the Council requests the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to give urgent consideration as to the possibility of identifying additional resources which could be allocated to that promotion campaign and, due to the urgency of making quick decisions, agrees, if such resources can be identified, to delegate authority for a decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, so that the activities funded by the resources can be put in place before Christmas.”

Accordingly, the Council requests the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to give urgent consideration as to the possibility of identifying additional resources which could be allocated to that promotion campaign and, due to the urgency of making quick decisions, agrees, if such resources can be identified, to delegate authority for a decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, so that the activities funded by the resources can be put in place before Christmas.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Jones.

After discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

Human Trafficking Bill

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Thompson proposed:

“This Council:

- Recognises that human trafficking and exploitation is a growing problem in Northern Ireland;
- Believes that existing statistics regarding the number of people trafficked in to Northern Ireland do not reflect the scale of the problem and are only the ‘tip of the iceberg’ in regard to the scale of the problem;
- Believes that no human being should be subjected to sexual exploitation, enforced labour or domestic servitude and condemns those who engage in human trafficking;
- Believes that more action should be undertaken to support those who have escaped from exploitation and to punish those who exploit them and, accordingly:
- Calls upon the Northern Ireland Assembly to endorse the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provision and Support for Victims) Bill.”

The Motion was seconded by Alderman Robinson.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Alderman Robinson, to the insertion within the final bullet point of the words “in principle” after the word endorse.

The Motion, as amended, was thereupon put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

Blood Transfusion Service

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Cunningham proposed:

“This Council recognises that, each year, 26,000 people require blood transfusions in the North. The Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service needs 8,000 new donors to come forward every year (due to people becoming ineligible) to maintain their service and, each week, the Service needs 1,500 donations. It is of great concern, therefore, that currently only 6% of the eligible population in Northern Ireland chooses to give blood.

A blood transfusion can be the difference between someone living or dying during emergency surgery, but it can also make the difference in helping treat long-term illnesses, such as cancer, or support maternity

care. Approximately 40% of blood transfusions are to those suffering with various cancers. Once a person becomes a blood donor, if their platelet count is high enough, they can then become a platelet donor (you can't give both at the same time).

This Council agrees to make every effort to raise the profile of the Blood Transfusion Service and, to that end, encourages all Elected Members to sign up as blood donors and to use their public profile to raise awareness and encourage their constituents to consider giving blood.

With the decline in the number of people signing up, there is a real risk that hospitals could suffer significant shortfalls in blood stocks, so this is an absolutely vital campaign. Belfast City Council has been a supporter of this campaign in the past and commits itself to continued support by hosting a large-scale Blood Donation Event which will be open to Councillors, staff and members of the public."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Ó Donnghaile.

After discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

Rejection of Terrorism

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston) proposed:

"This Council, mindful of a number of recent events which have caused hurt to victims, confirms its rejection of terrorism and reaffirms its opposition to the promotion of proscribed paramilitary organisations which have engaged in terrorism, both currently and in the past. The story we tell of the past is what we communicate to the future generations and a rejection of terrorism must be a central part of that."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Reynolds.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Mullan,
Seconded by Councillor Mallon,

"That the Motion be amended to provide that the words "together with the rejection of state violence from a range of organisations which caused and continue to cause hurt to many" be added to the end of the Motion.

On a vote by show of hands six Members voted for the amendment and thirty-nine against and it was accordingly declared lost.

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The original Motion standing in the name of the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston) and seconded by Councillor Reynolds was thereupon put to the meeting.

On a vote by show of hands twenty-three Members voted in favour of the Motion and sixteen against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Lord Mayor
Chairman