

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Communities & Wellbeing Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 6.00 pm.**

**PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):**

Councillor T Mitchell (Chair)  
Councillor A Givan (Vice-Chair)  
Deputy Mayor Alderman H Legge  
Alderman A McIntyre  
Councillors J Craig, K Dickson, B Higginson, C Kemp, G McCleave, G Thompson and The Hon N Trimble

**PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE)**

Councillors R Carlin, J Gallen and Alderman S Skillen

**(NON-COMMITTEE)**

Councillor B Magee

**PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (NON-COMMITTEE)**

Councillor G Hynds and Alderman J Tinsley

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing  
Head of Communities  
Head of Sports Services  
Head of Parks & Amenities (Acting)  
Head of Economic Development  
Regeneration & Infrastructure Manager  
Member Services Officers (HB & EW)  
I.T. Officer

**Commencement of Meeting**

The Chair, Councillor T Mitchell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that it would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was to be considered under confidential business.

Unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. Mobile phones were to be turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting. Members attending remotely were asked to keep their cameras on. Finally, the Chair asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

The Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, joined the meeting during the housekeeping announcements at 6.02 pm as did Councillor R Carlin who joined the meeting remotely.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillor T Beckett and Councillor S Lowry.

2. Declarations of Interest

Two Declarations of Interest were made by Members regarding Item 3.2 - Community Investment Awards:

- Councillor T Mitchell declared a pecuniary interest as a shareholder in Ballymacash Sports Academy.
- Councillor C Kemp declared an interest in St Joseph's GAC (Glenavy) as a committee member.

3. Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

3.1 Proposed Winter Programme 2026

Members had been provided with an Evaluation of the Winter 2025 Programme and also the proposed Winter & Christmas Programme 2026. Also, a link to the 2025 Winter Programme Committee report had been provided within the Director's report.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing responded to questions from the Committee in connection with the budget for the winter programme.

There were several positive comments from Members about last year's Christmas programme.

It was recommended that Members agree to:

- The Draft 2026 Winter Programme
- A draw against the ringfenced reserve of £150,000

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, and agreed to recommend that the Director's recommendations, as outlined, be agreed.

Councillor A Givan also suggested re-positioning the platform in Bow Street, by turning it by 90 degrees to provide more space for people to walk past. Director undertook to give Councillor Givan's suggestion consideration, in line with the Event Management Plan .

Councillor K Dickson left the Chamber at 6.24 pm and returned at 6.28 pm.

The Head of Economic Development and the Regeneration & Infrastructure Manager left at the end of Item 3.1, the Winter Programme 2026.

### 3.2 Community Investment Fund

Councillors T Mitchell and C Kemp left the Chamber for this Item at 6.25pm.

The Vice Chair, Councillor A Givan, took the Chair and conducted this item of business (6.26 pm).

Members were provided with a narrative report about the Community Investment Fund and also an Equality Screening document and Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

It was proposed by Councillor J Craig, seconded by Councillor G McCleave, and agreed to recommend that: an update of the approval process for the Community Investment Fund be agreed, to include:

- i) Member approval of the In-Principle Letter of Offer, within the agreed budget and;
- ii) that subject to robust due diligence processes, the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing signs the Letter of Offer, in agreement with the Chief Finance Officer and;
- iii) with noting reports to follow.

### 3.3 Canal Boxing Academy – Fundraising Event

Councillors T Mitchell and C Kemp returned to the Chamber for this Item at 6.30 pm.

The Chair, Councillor T Mitchell, took the chair for the remaining items of business on the agenda.

The Director reported that Canal Boxing Academy had sent a letter about a Fundraising Event gala dinner on 23 May, inviting Lisburn & Castlereagh Council to support the event by purchasing tickets. The Director suggested that two tickets be purchased for the Chair and Vice Chair, or their nominees, to support this event.

A copy of the correspondence from Canal Boxing Academy and an Equality Screening document had also been presented to Members.

Comments and concerns were noted from two Members in connection with the issue of granting delegated authority to all future such requests for such events.

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that:

- the purchase of two tickets for the Chair and Vice Chair, or their nominees, to attend the above event be agreed, and;
- delegated authority is granted to the Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the relevant Head of Service for future requests of this nature which fall outside the Committee cycle.

The Director of Communities & Wellbeing confirmed that a report on such decisions taken under delegated authority would be brought back to the Committee for noting.

#### 4. Report of Head of Communities

##### 4.1 Community Bursary Scheme 2025/2026

A narrative report and Table of Applicants in connection with the Community Bursary Scheme had been provided and Members were asked to:

- Note the Community Bursary Scheme outcomes for Jan-March 2026
- Agree the remaining balance of £596 from the current year be rolled over into the Community Bursary Scheme for 2026/2027.

The Head of Communities responded to questions and comments from Members in relation to the Community Bursary Scheme which had been running for many years. The Head of Communities explained that a wider grant aid review is ongoing and an approach would be brought back to the Committee in the autumn.

It was proposed by Councillor J Craig, seconded by Councillor C Kemp, and agreed to recommend that:

- the Community Bursary Scheme outcomes for Jan-March 2026 be noted, and
- the remaining balance of £596 from the current year be rolled over into the Community Bursary Scheme 2026/2027

##### 4.2 Addressing Poverty & Social Exclusion Fund Criteria

A narrative report had been provided detailing the criteria of the Addressing Poverty & Social Exclusion Fund along with an Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

The Head of Communities explained that a budget of £80,000 was agreed by Council in April 2026 arising out of the DEA Investment Plan 2026/2027. Groups can apply for up to £3,000 if they meet the eligibility criteria and the aim is to support community-led initiatives to respond to local need and strengthen the wellbeing, resilience and inclusion of residents.

It was recommended that Members agree:

- To note the details and eligibility criteria, as outlined in the Officer's report, for the grant aid scheme and
- That, following assessment against the agreed criteria, delegated authority is granted to the Head of Communities, to agree the award of grants, with the outcomes subsequently reported for noting to a future Community and Wellbeing Committee.

Councillor N Trimble proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor G McCleave.

5. Report of Head of Parks & Amenities (Acting)

5.1 Request to use Hillsborough Forest Park

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with the application from Hillsborough Working Together and an Equality Screening document. The group has requested accessible car parking for their Twelfth of July event which is planned to take place on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

It was recommended that Members agree to;

- The use of Hillsborough Forest Car Park and
- Infrastructure support

There was discussion about how busy the car park at Hillsborough Forest is and the impact of the event on local people and visitors as it will be open to the public.

Councillor J Craig proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor N Trimble, who asked for clarification regarding how many accessible car parking spaces the group require and how many car parking spaces will be available to the public.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing confirmed that this would be clarified and that Members would be notified by email.

Councillor J Gallen left the meeting at 6.51 pm. Alderman J Tinsley left remotely also at 6.51 pm.

6. Any Other Business (Non-Confidential)

6.1 Property at River Road (flooding)  
Councillor J Craig

Councillor J Craig again drew attention to a property on River Road which had been flooded as a result of flooding from Aberdelghy Golf Course. Councillor Craig advised that the flooding did not get inside the property, thanks to the efforts of council staff who had worked into the night. However, the outside area had been impacted due to this flooding and he asked that it been cleaned up properly for the resident who is elderly.

Councillor J Craig asked for a detailed report and timescales on this. The Director undertook to bring this feedback to the Inter-Departmental team and issue a further update to Members thereafter

6.2 Communication Boards in Playparks  
Councillor C Kemp

Councillor C Kemp thanked the staff for installing the communication boards in another ten parks across the council area.

6.3 Rambler's Bridge & Mclroy Park  
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor Hynds expressed concern that Rambler's Bridge had not been cleaned up despite a previous request. Councillor Hynds also raised the issue of the broken signage at Mclroy Park.

6.4 Anti-Social Behaviour at the Community Garden, Lough Moss  
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson raised the issue of anti-social behaviour that had taken place over the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> May at the Community Garden at Lough Moss with planters upturned.

Councillor B Higginson asked council officers to reach out to Carryduff Regeneration Forum to offer assistance and also asked if security could be improved at the Community Garden.

6.5 Carryduff Colts Cup  
Councillor R Carlin

Councillor R Carlin proposed that the pitch booking fee be waived for the Carryduff Colts cross-community tournament taking place on 15<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> May, with large numbers of participants and spectators expected.

The Head of Sports Services confirmed that he would work with the Carryduff Colts to ensure that the event is a success.

Councillor B Higginson seconded the proposal by Councillor R Carlin.

The Director of Communities & Wellbeing explained that the financial cost of hiring the 3G pitches all weekend would be £1,400 and that groups can apply for funding through grants like the Community Festival Fund or the Sports Accelerator Fund.

There was discussion about whether making this decision at committee would set a precedent and about the importance of procedural fairness.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor N Trimble and seconded by the Vice Chair, Councillor A Givan, that the Community & Wellbeing Committee grants delegated authority to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the Head of Sports Services, to agree what assistance could be provided to Carryduff Colts on this occasion and that a report comes back to the Committee in June for retrospective approval thereon.

The amendment by Councillor N Trimble was put to the meeting and on a recorded vote being taken was declared 'carried,' there being 10 votes in favour, two votes against and one abstention, as follows:

In favour: Councillor J Craig, Councillor K Dickson, Councillor A Givan (Vice Chair), Councillor B Higginson, Councillor C Kemp, Alderman H Legge, Alderman A McIntyre, Alderman S Skillen, Councillor G Thompson and Councillor N Trimble **(10)**

Against: Councillor R Carlin and Councillor G McCleave **(2)**

Abstained: Councillor T Mitchell (Chair) **(1)**

6.6 Communication Boards in Playparks  
Councillor J Craig

Councillor J Craig suggested that the Willows Playpark in Dunmurry (off the Ballybog Road) would be an ideal venue for a communication board because there is a Special Educational Needs facility nearby.

The Acting Head of Parks & Amenities undertook to look into Councillor Craig's request.

6.7 Old BT Phone Boxes  
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds asked if BT could be asked for an update – some of the old phone boxes are in a bad condition and covered with graffiti and due to be removed.

6.8 Park Life 2026  
Alderman H Legge

Alderman H Legge explained that there are no details about this year's Park Life on the council website, yet it is advertised in the spring Citywide magazine.

The Acting Head of Parks & Amenities explained that there are eight Park Life sessions planned for summer 2026 with various types of music such as 'Jazz in the Park' and the details of which would be shared with Members.

Alderman H Legge also suggested giving more specific details about the music at 'Sunday Sessions' to help people decide what sessions to attend.

6.9 Irish Linen Centre staff at Kew Palaces, London  
Councillor T Mitchell

The Chair, Councillor T Mitchell, paid tribute to staff from the Irish Linen Centre who showcased their spinning techniques at Kew Palaces in London last month.

The Chair also highlighted that the current 'Silver Generations' exhibition at the Island Arts Centre is excellent and worth visiting. One of the silversmiths whose work is on display in the exhibition, Cara Murphy, has created jewellery for the royal family.

Alderman S Skillen left remotely at 7.20 pm.

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chair, Councillor T Mitchell, thanked those present for their attendance and - there being no further business - the meeting concluded at 7.21 pm.

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MAYOR/CHAIR