LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Lagan Valley Island and Remote Locations on Tuesday 6 October, 2026 at 8:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER: The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor B Higginson

Deputy Mayor, Alderman A McIntyre

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, O Gawith, M Gregg, H Legge, S P Porter, and J Tinsley

Councillors J Bamford, R T Beckett, R Carlin, P Catney, D J Craig, K Dickson, A P Ewing, J Gallen, A Givan, J Harpur, G Hynds, C Kemp, S Lowry, D Lynch, U Mackin, B Magee, G McCleave, C McCready, N Parker, G Thompson and N Trimble

PRESENT REMOTELY: Alderman S Skillen and A Grehan, and Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, A Gowan, J Laverty BEM, M McKeever and R McLernon

IN ATTENDANCE: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing
Member Services Manager (Acting)
Member Services Officer
Technician
IT Officer

Purpose of the Special Meeting of Council

The Special Meeting of Council had been convened following receipt of a letter signed by eight Members of the DUP requesting The Right Worshipful the Mayor to convene a Special Meeting of Council to consider a matter regarding the conduct of Elected Members on the Garvagy Road in Portadown, on Sunday 27 September 2026.

Commencement of the Meeting

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Higginson, welcomed those present to the Special meeting of Council.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor advised that the meeting was being livestreamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings. The Mayor pointed out that, should the meeting go into committee to consider confidential business, any members of the press and the public in attendance would be required to leave the Council Chamber for the duration of those matters.

Commencement of the Meeting (Cont'd)

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

The Mayor requested that all mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting and pointed out that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, whilst the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillors A Martin and T Mitchell.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To consider Concerns in relation to actions By Elected Members

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Higginson, advised that a letter dated 30 September 2026 signed by eight Members of Council had been received by the Chief Executive, requesting under Standing Order 3.2 that a Special Meeting of Council be convened as a matter of urgency. The letter stated that the reason for requesting the Special Meeting was to consider a matter of significant concern regarding the conduct of Elected Members on the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, on Sunday 27 September 2026 which was inconsistent with the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.

A copy of the letter had been appended to the agenda for the special meeting.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor also reminded Members that PSNI investigations are ongoing and in line with the Code of Conduct for Councillors, Members should refrain from making unsubstantiated statements in order to protect themselves and the Council from reputational damage.

Alderman J Tinsley addressed the Council during which he made a number of comments in connection with the on-going protest against the Portadown District Orange Order parade on the Garvaghy Road, Portadown, including:

- all Elected Members, on being elected to Council, affirm that they will abide by the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors by signing an Acceptance of Office document.
- the rule of law applies to everyone equally
- being elected to this Council does not put anyone above the law, the same standards apply to all Members equally
- the issue is not about taking away anyone's right to protest
- blocking a public road is unlawful

3. To consider Concerns in relation to actions By Elected Members (Cont'd)

- Elected Members must lead by example

Alderman Tinsley proposed that:

- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council notes reports of councillors attending the Garvaghy Road protest on 27 September 2026 and subsequent protests. It also notes the Chief Constable's statement that a criminal investigation is under way regarding "unlawful protest on the Garvaghy Road".

- the Council resolves to write to the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards, asking the Commissioner to consider whether any councillor's conduct warrants investigation under the Councillors' Code of Conduct, and

- the Council also resolves to write to the Northern Ireland Policing Board requesting that it consider whether any Member of the PCSP, including Chairpersons, in attendance at the Garvaghy Road protest on 27 September 2026 warrants examination under its Code of Conduct.

Councillor A Givan seconded Alderman J Tinsley's proposal and made a number of comments in support of the proposal including;

- the reputation of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has been damaged by the actions of one or more of its councillors by acting unlawfully on the Garvaghy Road, Portadown
- paragraph 3.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct states that councillors in the course of their public duty should uphold the law and paragraph 4.1 of the Code of Conduct states that Councillors hold public office under the law must act lawfully
- It is Important this evening that the Council sends out a clear and unambiguous message that residents in the Council area are expected to behave lawfully without exceptions

A number of Members, on behalf of their respective political parties, addressed the Council.

Councillors J Gallen, D Lynch, R Carlin and P Catney spoke against Alderman Tinsley's proposal and outlined their respective political party's position in regard to the on-going situation on the Garvaghy Road.

Alderman S P Porter, and Councillors G Hynds, N Trimble, A P Ewing spoke in support of Alderman Tinsley's proposal.

Councillor C Kemp spoke about the current on-going issues on the Garvaghy Road which, she stated, were affecting all communities.

During his address Councillor Hynds referred the horrific verbal abuse of women outside courtrooms in recent days.

3. To consider Concerns in relation to actions By Elected Members (Cont'd)

Councillor D Lynch also put on record his personal condemnation of the verbal abuse of female politicians outside court in recent days.

Councillor C Kemp and Alderman M Gregg sought clarification on the wording of the proposal and asked, from a legal point of view, if the Council is content that the proposal did not identify any particular councillor. The Director of Communities & Wellbeing pointed out that the proposal did not name individual councillors.

At this juncture Councillor G Hynds proposed an addendum to Alderman Tinsley's proposal, namely;

- the Council also writes to the Chief Constable of the PSNI conveying the Council's support to the Chief Constable and the PSNI Officers in applying the law

Alderman J Tinsley indicated that he would accept the above addendum to his proposal, as did Councillor A Givan, being the seconder of the proposal.

Councillors J Harpur and S Lowry left and returned to the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor read out proposal, as amended:

- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council notes reports of councillors attending the Garvaghy Road protest on 27 September 2026 and subsequent protests. It also notes the Chief Constable's statement that a criminal investigation is under way regarding "unlawful protest on the Garvaghy Road".

- the Council resolves to write to the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards, asking the Commissioner to consider whether any councillor's conduct warrants investigation under the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

- the Council also resolves to write to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, requesting that it consider whether any Member of the PCSP, including Chairpersons, in attendance at the Garvaghy Road protest on 27 September 2026 warrants examination under its Code of Conduct, and

- the Council also writes to the Chief Constable of the PSNI conveying the Council's support to the Chief Constable and the PSNI Officers in applying the law

Alderman M Gregg proposed a further amendment to Alderman Tinsley's proposal following which it was agreed that the meeting be adjourned for 10 minutes in order that the amended proposal be set out in an email and sent to all Members.

Adjournment of Meeting

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 9.08 pm.

3. To consider Concerns in relation to actions By Elected Members (Cont'd)

Resumption of Meeting

The meeting resumed at 9.15 pm.

Alderman J Tinsley agreed to accept Alderman Gregg's amendment to his proposal, namely;

- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council notes reports of councillors attending the Garvaghy Road protest on 27 September 2026 and subsequent protests. It also notes the Chief Constable's statement that a criminal investigation is under way regarding "unlawful protest on the Garvaghy Road".

- the Council resolves to write to the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards, asking the Commissioner to consider whether any *reported* councillor's conduct warrants investigation under the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

- the Council also resolves to write to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, requesting that it consider whether any r*eported* Member of the PCSP, including Chairpersons, in attendance at the Garvaghy Road protest on 27 September 2026 warrants examination under its Code of Conduct, and

- the Council also writes to the Chief Constable of the PSNI conveying the Council's support to the Chief Constable and the PSNI Officers in applying the law.

Alderman J Tinsley's proposal, as seconded by Councillor A Givan, and as amended by Councillor G Hynds and further amended by Alderman M Gregg, was put to the meeting and on a recorded vote being taken was declared carried, there being 32 votes in favour and 6 votes against. The recorded vote was as follows:

FOR: Alderman J Baird, Councillor J Bamford, Councillor R T Beckett, Councillor S Burns, Councillor D J Craig, Councillor K Dickson, Alderman A G Ewart MBE, Councillor A P Ewing, Alderman O Gawith, Councillor A Givan, Councillor A Gowan, Alderman M Gregg, Alderman A Grehan, Councillor J Harpur, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Higginson, Councillor G Hynds, Councillor C Kemp, Councillor J Laverty BEM, Alderman H Legge, Councillor S Lowry, Councillor U Mackin, Councillor B Magee, Councillor C McCready, Deputy Mayor, Alderman A McIntyre, Councillor M McKeever, Councillor R McLernon, Councillor N Parker, Alderman S P Porter, Alderman S Skillen, Councillor G Thompson, Alderman J Tinsley and Councillor N Trimble T**OTAL: 32**

AGAINST: Councillor D Bassett, Councillor R Carlin, Councillor P Catney, Councillor J Gallen, Councillor D Lynch and Councillor G McCleave **TOTAL: 6**

Conclusion of Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Higginson, thanked those present for their attendance.

There being no further business for consideration, the meeting was terminated at 9.23 pm.

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Mayor