

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 6th May 2025 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor J Craig (Chair)

Alderman H Legge (Vice-Chair)

Aldermen A Grehan and A McIntyre

Councillors D Bassett, T Beckett, J Gallen, B Higginson,
C Kemp, S Lowry, G McCleave, T Mitchell and G Thompson

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

Aldermen P Porter and S Skillen

**OTHER MEMBERS
OF COUNCIL
PRESENT IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Councillor G Hynds

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing
Head of Communities
Head of Economic Development
Head of Sports Services
Regeneration & Infrastructure Manager
Events Officer
Member Services Officers (RN & EW)

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and reminded Members that the meeting 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.

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

Alderman P Porter joined the meeting on a remote basis during the announcement about evacuation procedures. (6.02 pm)

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

The Member Services Officer read out the names of those persons who were present at the meeting, both in the Chamber and on a remote basis.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited Members to declare any interests they might have in relation to the business of the meeting and reminded them of the requirement that they complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard which had been provided with the papers for the meeting, and which were also available in the Chamber.

The following Declaration of Interest was made:-

- Alderman S Skillen. Item 4.1 of Report of Head of Communities – “Draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025/2026”. Member of Ballybeen Improvement Group. Pecuniary interest.

3. Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

3.1 Draft Winter Programme 2025

The Head of Economic Development, the Regeneration & Infrastructure Manager and the Events Officer were in attendance for this item of business.

The Director’s report provided key highlights of the 2024 Winter Programme and also key points and events in relation to the proposed Winter Programme for 2025 (the full draft programme being provided in an appendix). In addition to the narrative report, the following had been provided:-

- Winter Programme – “Lisburn Light Festival & Programme of Events 2024” – Evaluation;
- Draft Winter Programme 2025;
- Equality & Good Relations Screening Document.

The Director and other Officers responded to Members’ questions.

The Director:-

- took on board the request that the Carryduff Regeneration Forum be engaged with regarding the use of the Lidl site at Carryduff for the location of a Christmas tree;

3.1 Draft Winter Programme 2025 (Continued)

- took on board comments that the sound system associated with the City Centre events within the Winter Programme required enhancement;
- explained the position about expenditure associated with the provision of switches on street lighting poles to allow for Christmas illuminations.
- agreed that retailers should be encouraged to engage in late opening so as to take advantage of extra footfall in the City Centre.

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Alderman A McIntyre and agreed to recommend that:-

- the evaluation report of the 2024 Winter Programme be noted;
- the draft 2025 Winter Programme be approved.

The Head of Communities left the Chamber during discussion of this item.
(6.20 pm)

The Head of Economic Development and the Regeneration & Infrastructure Manager left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business.
(6.22 pm)

3.2 Requests to use Council Parks and Open Spaces

In addition to the narrative report, copies of applications from the undernoted organisations in regard to the use of Council parks and open spaces had been provided, together with the Equality Screening document. The Director apologised that the narrative and recommendation associated with the use of Moira Demesne had been omitted from the report, however the appendix had been included.

Organisation	Facility Requested	Purpose of Use	Date & Time
Purple Vine Loyal Orange Order	Moat Park, Dundonald	Number of events as detailed in report (eg religious, multi-cultural, food, music, fun fair, artisan market)	6 th – 12 July 2025 (inclusive). Times of various events detailed in report.
Dundonald Presbyterian Church	Billy Neill Country Park, Dundonald	Football & Bible Camp	26 th July 2025 (10.30 am – 3.30 pm)
Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (NI Branch)	Moira Demesne	Hosting of Lisburn & Castlereagh Pipe Band and Drum Major Championships on 14 th June 2025	13 th June 2025 from 1.00 pm for preparation works to 14 th June 2025 at 7.00 pm

3.2 Requests to use Council Parks and Open Spaces (Continued)

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Alderman S Skillen and agreed to recommend that - subject to engagement with the Safety Advisory Group and compliance with the usual booking requirements such as the provision of adequate insurance cover and the necessary risk assessments:-

- the requests referred to above for the use of Council parks and open spaces be acceded to;
- the Bye-Laws be set aside so as to enable the above-mentioned events to progress;
- infrastructure support be provided if so required.

The Head of Communities returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item of business. (6.25 pm)

The Events Officer left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (6.30 pm)

4. Report of Head of Communities

4.1 Draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025/2026

The Head of Service reported that a reduction in funding from the Executive Office necessitated the submission of a revised Good Relations Action Plan to take account of the revised level of funding.

The Head of Service pointed out that whilst the available funding was 25% less than that applied for, it still represented a 6% uplift on the previous year.

The Head of Communities detailed the rationale for the proposed changes to programmes within the Action Plan, together with their revised budgets. It was noted that the delivery of a number of the programmes could be complemented with the implementation and delivery of the Local PEACEPLUS Action Plan.

It was proposed by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that the 2025/2026 Good Relations Action Plan and associated budget as set out in the Head of Service's report be agreed and be submitted to the Executive Office in support of the Council's application for financial assistance.

5. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

5.1 Mrs Angela McCann, Head of Communities

The Chair, Councillor J Craig, referred to this being the last meeting of the Committee at which Mrs Angela McCann would attend in her role as Head of Communities. Following a recruitment exercise, Angela had been appointed as Director of Environmental Services and would be taking up post in early June.

Councillor Craig thanked Angela for her sterling work as Head of Communities and for her willingness to assist and advise Elected Members in the course of their work. Councillor Craig wished Angela every success in her new post. These comments and best wishes were endorsed by a number of other Members present.

5.2 Lough Moss Pitches - Condition
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson referred to the condition of the grass pitches at Lough Moss. Referees had voiced concerns at the condition of some of the pitches.

The Director agreed to look into this.

Councillor C Kemp left the Chamber at the conclusion of this matter. (6.45 pm)

5.3 Billy Neill Country Park – Toilet Provision
Councillor S Lowry

Councillor S Lowry referred to the lack of toilet provision at the Billy Neill Country Park in that there was no external provision and the building in the Park which did house toilets was not always open. “Protest posters” referring to this non-provision had been erected by members of the public.

The Director advised that toilets were now available in the pavilion and that communications would go up to that effect.

5.4 Park Life Programme 2025
Councillor J Gallen

At the Council meeting held on the 27th May 2025, it was agreed that Castlereagh East be amended to Castlereagh South.

Councillor J Gallen referred to the non-inclusion of Castlereagh ~~East~~ **South** venues in the Council’s Park Life Programme for 2024 and was looking forward to the Programme for 2025 as it includes a number of events for this DEA.

Councillor C Kemp returned to the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (6.47 pm)

5.5 Lisburn Rangers Football Club – League Success
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to the success of Lisburn Rangers Football Club in winning their league and thereby gaining promotion to the Premier Amateur League. Councillor Hynds asked that this success be marked in a suitable way.

The Chair, Councillor J Craig, noted these comments for appropriate action.

5.6 Derriaghy Football Club – Home Ground
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds understood that the car parking lines at the home ground of Derriaghy Football Club were to be redone and that issues regarding the goal posts were to be attended to.

The Director noted these comments for appropriate action.

5.7 Litter in Council Parks
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to issues regarding the accumulation of litter in Council parks and play parks and asked that these be addressed.

The Director noted these comments for appropriate action.

5.8 Aghalee Playing Fields - Condition
Councillor G McCleave

Councillor G McCleave referred to the poor condition of the Aghalee Playing Fields and asked that this be addressed. Councillor McCleave had raised this issue with a Council official earlier in the day.

The Director noted these comments for appropriate action.

5.9 VE Day Events by Community Groups
Councillor J Craig (Chair)

The Chair, Councillor J Craig, referred to the non-inclusion in the Council's publicity for VE Day of those events which community groups were organising.

The Director advised that this was in hand.

5.10 Lagan Valley LeisurePlex Car Park and Pitches - Litter
Councillor T Mitchell

Councillor T Mitchell referred to the presence of litter at the Lagan Valley LeisurePlex car park and at some of the pitches. A litter bin at the side of the pitches was overflowing.

These comments were noted by the Director for appropriate action.

5.11 Football Pitch Booking System
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen stated that whilst the booking system was working well, she had concerns that some local football teams were moving to other Council areas to play their football.

The Director would ask a member of the team to speak to Alderman Skillen off-line about this matter.

6. Confidential Report from Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The reasons for confidentiality were as set out in the agenda, ie:-

6.1 Local PEACEPLUS Action Plan – Lisburn & Castlereagh
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council.)

Redacted report to be available once the PEACEPLUS Action Plan had been approved.

6.2 Redevelopment of Wallace Park Play Park
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Redacted report to be available following ratification by Council on the 27th May 2025.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings. There were no members of the press and public at the meeting.) (6.55 pm)

6.1 Local PEACEPLUS Action Plan – Lisburn & Castlereagh

The Director reported extensively on the Council's delivery of the Local PEACEPLUS Action Plan which sought to secure funding from the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The Director updated Members on the provision of the funding and to certain issues which had arisen in this regard. The report detailed a number of options on how the Council could move forward on this matter.

The following documents had been provided to Members:-

- Tabular information in relation to Council projects under Theme 1 PEACEPLUS;
- Equality and Good Relations Screening.

By means of Shared Screen, the Director also provided a detailed analysis of legal options that had been contained in the report.

Councillor G Hynds, a non-member of the Committee, sought clarification in regard to information contained in the report. In order to allow the matter to progress, the Chairman – with the agreement of the Committee – adjourned the meeting at 7.25 pm to allow the information to be provided. The meeting resumed at 7.37 pm and the requested information was provided and explained by means of Shared Screen. Councillor Hynds acknowledged the information that was provided but still had concerns in regard to the issue before the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor T Beckett, seconded by Councillor G McCleave and agreed to recommend that:-

- conditional on approval by the SEUPB, Option 4 as outlined in the report and appendices, be agreed as the preferred way forward;
- the Community Investment Fund (CIF) amount be rescinded from the organisation as set out in the report and be returned to the CIF Fund;
- the Local Action Plan be resubmitted to the SEUPB for final approval.

During discussion:-

- Alderman S Skillen left the meeting on a remote basis. (7.12 pm)
- Councillor J Gallen left and returned to the Chamber. (7.15 pm and 7.17 pm)
- Councillor B Higginson left and returned to the Chamber. (7.19 pm and 7.20 pm)

6.2 Redevelopment of Wallace Park Play Park

In addition to the narrative report, a Project Initiation Request in regard to the “Proposed Refurbishment of Wallace Park Play Area and Associated Facilities” had been provided.

The Director responded to Members’ questions.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor G Thompson and agreed to recommend that:-

- the Project Initiation Request be agreed;
- a suitably qualified Integrated Design Team be procured so as to develop design concepts for the Wallace Park Play Park;
- a programme timeline be presented to Members once available.

Alderman A Grehan left and returned to the Chamber during discussion., (8.03 pm and 8.04 pm)

Councillor S Lowry left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (8.08 pm)

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and the audio recording were resumed. (8.09 pm)

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Provision of Briefing Notes of Meetings Alderman A Grehan

Alderman A Grehan considered that the provision of briefing notes of meetings would be a useful tool to Committees when they were being called upon to make decisions on the item in question.

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed that - in order to strengthen transparency, to evidence how decisions have been reached and to allow for more informed decision making:-

- a briefing note of any briefing meeting be provided to all Members of Council after the briefing meeting;
- the briefing note be also provided to the Council/relevant Committee when the item in question was being brought before Members for consideration;
- the procedure referred to above be in regard to both confidential and non-confidential items of business.

7.1 Provision of Briefing Notes of Meetings (Continued)
Alderman A Grehan

Councillor S Lowry returned to the Chamber during discussion. (8.10 pm)

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.12 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIR