



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD
AT ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE
ON MONDAY 7 OCTOBER 2024 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor A McAuley
- Committee Members (In person)** : Aldermen – L Clarke, and J Smyth
Councillors – J Gilmour, E McLaughlin, H Magill and M Stewart
- Committee Members (Remote)** : Alderman P Bradley
Councillors – R Foster and AM Logue
- Non Committee Members: (Remote)** : Councillors – R Lynch and L O'Hagan
- Officers Present** : Director of Sustainability – M Lavery
Director of Parks & Leisure Operations - M McDowell
Head of Parks Operations - P Mawhinney
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell
Member Services Officer – C McIntyre

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the October Operations Committee meeting and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures. The Chairperson commended Council's recent achievement at the UK Active Awards where Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre had won 'Regional Club/Centre of the Year'.

1 APOLOGIES

Alderman McGrath
Councillors Burbank, McWilliam and Ní Chonghaile.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 WM/S/004 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval of Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

2. Introduction

Section 42 of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 required specified public bodies to develop climate change action plans for both mitigation and adaptation measures and submit these to Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). It was proposed that Council would submit a joint Climate Change Action Plan, covering both mitigation and adaptation measures (circulated).

3. Key Issues

The Waste and Sustainability team, in conjunction with other departments and the Sustainability Steering Group, had produced a Climate Change Action Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

A Members' workshop, facilitated by Climate NI, was held on 29 August 2024, with representatives from key Council departments in attendance. The purpose of the workshop was to collectively review, discuss and finalise the climate risk register, and agree the draft actions and objectives for the final plan.

The proposed Climate Change Action Plan had met the requirements of the legislation and once approved would be submitted to DAERA. The Action Plan would be a working document, which would be reviewed, evaluated and modified annually in preparation for and subsequently in line with yearly reporting obligations.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The publication of the Climate Change Action Plan itself would not present any financial implications. Members should note, however, that there were actions contained within the plan which would require financial input if they were implemented. Such actions would be subject to Council's financial regulations, including the development of a business case if necessary and normal procurement procedures.

5. Governance

The governance of the Climate Change Action Plan primarily lay with the Sustainability directorate. However, input from all relevant departments would be required to successfully deliver the approved actions. Future reporting against the climate change actions would also require further approval by

Council before submission to DAERA.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

the Climate Change Action Plan be approved.

ACTION BY: Claire Evans, Climate, Waste and Sustainability Officer:

3.2 PK/REG/014 APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the renewal of Dunamoy Cottages as an approved venue in which Civil Marriage/Civil Partnership Ceremonies could be conducted.

2. Background

Under the terms of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 and the Civil Partnership Act (2004), the Council had the responsibility to approve appropriate applications for Place Approvals for Civil Marriage and Civil Partnerships, which lasted for 3 years. The process required that a Notice of Interest be displayed for a three-week period in a prominent place at the venue to allow for any public objection.

3. Current Position

A renewal application for a Place Approval had been received from Dunamoy. The venue was previously approved by the Council in October 2021, with specified areas for the venue for approval as follows:

- Dunamoy Conference room

No public objections had been received relating to the venue.

Proposed by Alderman Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Stewart and agreed that

Dunamoy Cottages be re-approved to hold Civil Marriages under the terms of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 and Civil Partnerships under the Civil Partnership Act (2004).

ACTION BY: Paula Redpath, Registrar

3.3 G/MSMO/067 NEWTOWNABBEY ROTARY CLUB PLANTING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the Newtownabbey Rotary Club to plant crocuses at V36 as part of their efforts to support Polio awareness.

2. Background

Council had supported the Newtownabbey Rotary Club over the last number of years through their crocus planting initiative. In 2019, the Club had established a commemorative crocus bed at Jordanstown Special Needs School, marking the start of their local commitment. In 2021, they expanded the project by adding crocus planters at the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice in Glengormley. Continuing their efforts in 2022, they planted a commemorative crocus bed in Hazelbank Park. Each year, these plantings had served as visual symbols of the Rotary Club's dedication to the eradication of Polio.

3. Current Position

The Council had supported the Newtownabbey Rotary Club's crocus planting initiative for several years, contributing to both community engagement and enhancement of local parks and open spaces. In addition to their aesthetic appeal, the crocus plantings had enhanced biodiversity in each area, while also raising awareness for an important cause of the global fight against Polio.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth

Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and agreed that

approval be granted for the Newtownabbey Rotary Club to plant crocuses at V36 as part of their ongoing efforts to promote Polio awareness.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

3.4 PK/GEN/217 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DISCS - MUCKAMORE CRICKET & LAWN TENNIS CLUB, ST. COMGALL'S GAA CLUB, MOSSLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

1. Purpose

This report sought approval for the installation of flower bed discs to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Muckamore Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club, the 100th anniversary of St. Comgall's GAA Club and 75th anniversary of Mossley Football Club.

2. Background

In 2024, three prominent local sports clubs would celebrate significant milestones: Muckamore Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club would reach its 150th anniversary, St. Comgall's GAA Club its 100th, and Mossley Football Club its 75th. These Clubs had played vital roles in their respective local communities,

promoting physical activity, nurturing talent across generations, and contributing to numerous sporting achievements over the years.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Council had previously approved the installation of anniversary celebration discs in flower beds across the Borough to recognise such significant milestones of local sports clubs and community organisations and their contributions to the community during that time.

4. Location of Discs

The proposed locations for the installation of the anniversary discs were as follows, situated near the respective Club bases:

- **Muckamore Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club:** Roundabout at Belfast Road, near the entrance to Antrim Technology Park.
- **St. Comgall's GAA Club:** Dublin Road Roundabout, opposite St. Comgall's Parish Church.
- **Mossley Football Club:** At the entrance to Mossley Park.

These locations had been selected for their proximity to each Club, ensuring local visibility and relevance.

5. Financial Implication

The installation of three anniversary celebratory discs would incur a cost of £500 to the Council.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations confirmed that discs would remain in situ until the summer bedding is completed in 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Logue and agreed that

the installation of flower bed discs to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Muckamore Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club, the 100th anniversary of St. Comgall's GAA Club, and 75th anniversary of Mossley Football Club be approved.

ACTION BY: Paul Mawhinney, Head of Parks Operations

4 ITEM FOR NOTING

4.1 EH/PHWB/017 FALLS PREVENTION SEMINAR

1. Purpose

In recognition of Falls Prevention Week (16th-20th September) Environmental Health had hosted two Falls Prevention seminars aimed at raising awareness of fall risks in the home and offering practical measures to prevent them.

2. Introduction

Falls were the leading cause of severe injuries among older adults, with nearly one in three people over 65 experiencing a fall at home each year. This rate increased for those aged 75 and above. Falls were also the primary reason older adults were admitted to hospital, which placed additional burdens on the NHS. Beyond the financial costs, the personal impact of falls on the elderly was significant; they were the main reason older people lost their independence and would transition into long-term care. A fall would often trigger a cycle of fear, causing inactivity, reduced strength and balance, and ultimately, a higher risk of further falls. The consequences of falls among the elderly were wide-ranging, affecting not just physical health but also social and psychological well-being.

3. Key Issues

Falls Prevention Week raised awareness that falls were preventable and older adults could take steps to lower their risk. As part of the week's activities, Environmental Health had organised and hosted two free seminars at the Theatre at the Mill and Stiles Community Centre, Antrim.

These seminars included essential advice on fall prevention, services available to the community and presentations by experts from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's Occupational Therapy and Falls Prevention Teams, along with the Council's Home Safety Officer. The 40 attendees gained valuable insights into fall prevention measures and had the chance to ask questions directly to experts.

Evaluation forms had been distributed and the feedback revealed that 100% of participants found the event beneficial to them. Furthermore, 95% of attendees reported feeling more secure in their homes after participating in the seminars. Among the many positive comments, one participant commented;

"Well-organised with good speakers who were informative and approachable."

The Home Accident Prevention section on the Council's website provided advice and guidance on staying safe at home, including videos on fall prevention. Residents over 65 could also ask the Home Safety Officer questions and register for a free home safety check;

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/residents-community-information/community-advice/home-accident-prevention/>

4. Summary

During Falls Prevention Week two seminars were hosted with 40 participants. The seminars focused on fall risks and prevention measures with 95% of attendees reporting that they felt safer at home afterward.

Proposed by Councillor Magill

Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

6 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

- 6.1 In response to a Member's query, the Director of Parks and Leisure Operations confirmed that the installation and maintenance of bus shelters was the responsibility of Translink.

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed

that the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease.

5 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

5.1 IN CONFIDENCE WM/arc21/4/VOL11 ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the most recent arc21 Joint Committee meetings.

2. Introduction

The Arc21 Joint Committee met on a monthly basis and each month the papers were reviewed by the Operations Committee.

3. Previous Decisions of Council

All previous papers had been noted.

4. Main Report

The papers for the arc21 Joint Committee Meeting had been circulated for:

- 26 September 2024

These documents were confidential and may be legally privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure so therefore Members were advised that they should not disclose this information to any third party and the information must be kept secure.

5. Summary

The main issues from the September 2024 meeting were:



The Director of Sustainability agreed to clarify with arc21 in relation to details of the current planning application for the Residual Waste Treatment Project.

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and agreed that

the report be noted.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability

5.2 IN CONFIDENCE WM/WG/002 WINTER GRITTING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' instruction on the winter gritting services for the designated town and villages.

2. Background

From November to April each year, Council had maintained a Winter Operations Plan to assist staff in delivering Council services as safely and efficiently as possible during the winter months. The Plan also included provision for gritting services at all Council facilities and designated areas such as town centres and car parks, the delivery of the waste collection services during adverse weather, and snow clearance operations.

3. Key Issues

The Plan would be activated when there was a strong possibility of ice occurring, based on Met Office warnings and media weather reports, and results in the gritting of the designated areas, including town and village centres; a copy of the designated areas had been circulated for Members' information

The gritting operations were completed by staff who volunteered to come in out-of-hours for enhanced overtime rates. Unfortunately insufficient numbers of staff were volunteering to provide all the gritting services required at Council sites as well as town and village centres and Officers could not guarantee all areas would be serviced.

Officers had been assessing the current gritting provision and while Council had a legal responsibility to provide reasonable safe access and egress to its facilities, including car parks under our remit, the gritting service provided in the town and village centres was an additional provision.

Council did have an Agreement, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads to clear designated "town centre footways and pedestrian areas" of snow and ice during periods of "heavy snowfall or prolonged" adverse weather. As part of this agreement DfI Roads provided Council with the salt/grit mix free of charge, paid an annual service fee, £[REDACTED], and extended its indemnity to Council.

In order to maintain the current service of gritting, Officers had sought quotes from commercial companies who provided this type of service. The cost to grit Council's town and village centres was approximately £[REDACTED] per gritting event with the total cost for the year estimated at [REDACTED] depending on the severity of the winter.

Therefore, Members' instructions were sought as to whether they wished to continue the gritting of the designated towns and villages when the relevant cold weather triggers were met; this would be an additional service to the one provided under the MoU with DfI.

When Members' instructions had been received, the Winter Operations Plan would be updated and presented at the next Operations Committee meeting. In addition the DfI MoU was due for renewal and would also be included for approval.

The Director of Sustainability addressed a number of queries from Members in respect of costs, extension of the remit of the Winter Operations Plan and funding provision from DfI.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed that

(b) the current programme of gritting of the designated towns and villages be approved;

(b) the updated Winter Operations Plan and renewal of the DfI MOU be presented at the next Operations Committee meeting.

ACTION BY: Michael Laverty, Director of Sustainability and Matt McDowell, Director of Parks & Leisure

5.3 **IN CONFIDENCE** PK/GEN/040 COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend the discontinuation of the Commemorative Programme across the Council's parks and cemeteries.

2. Background

The Council's Commemorative Policy, which underpinned the Commemorative Programme, was approved in January 2016 and had been previously implemented by the legacy Newtownabbey Council. The programme allowed individuals to commemorate loved ones by purchasing a memorial bench or tree in Council-owned parks and cemeteries. This programme had seen significant public interest, resulting in the placement of numerous benches and trees throughout all relevant spaces across the Borough.

3. Key Issues

Several key issues had emerged from the programme, including:

- **Personal Mementoes:** Increasingly, benches and trees in public spaces were being used as places to leave personal items such as flowers, plaques, or trinkets. While these actions were prohibited under the terms and conditions of the programme, enforcement had been difficult due to the emotional nature of these gestures.
- **Space Limitations:** Due to limited space, the Council had already paused accepting requests for memorial benches or trees at various locations, including Carnmoney Cemetery, Hazelbank, and Jordanstown Loughshore.
- **Maintenance Costs:** The Council was responsible for maintaining memorials as long as they remained intact. As many commemorative benches aged, maintenance costs were rising, particularly with older materials that were prone to damage and wear.
- **Public Feedback:** Officers had received an increasing amount of negative feedback from members of the public relating to memorials being placed in public parks.

4. Key Action

Where possible, Officers would contact individuals who had previously purchased a memorial tree or bench to remind them of the terms and conditions regarding what may be placed at the memorial. The Council would continue to maintain all memorials, in accordance with policy, until they became irreparable.

The Director of Parks and Leisure Operations addressed a number of queries from Members in relation to communication with those that had enquired and

also what is the process when a bench or tree is at point of replacement.

Proposed by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the discontinuation of the Commemorative Programme across the Council's parks and cemeteries be approved.

Alderman Smyth wished to be recorded as being against the recommendation.

ACTION BY: Emma Thompson Bereavement Services Manager

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and agreed

that the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.07pm.

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.