



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE THEATRE AT THE MILL ON MONDAY 1 JUNE 2026 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : The Mayor - Councillor L Kirkpatrick (outgoing)
The Mayor – Councillor H Cushinan (incoming)
- Members Present** : Aldermen – L Boyle, P Bradley, T Campbell, L Clarke,
M Cosgrove, M Magill, P Michael, and J Smyth
- : Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, A Bennington, M Brady,
J Burbank, M Cooper, S Cosgrove, P Dunlop, S Flanagan,
R Foster, J Gilmour, M Goodman, N Kelly, R Kinnear, AM Logue,
R Lynch, H Magill, A McAuley, T McGrann, E McLaughlin,
V McWilliam, M Ní Chonghaile, L O'Hagan, A O'Lone,
M Stewart, S Ward, B Webb and S Wilson
- Members Present (Remotely)** : Aldermen - J McGrath and S Ross
Councillor – B Mallon
- Officers Present** : Chief Executive – R Baker
Director of Economic Development and Planning - M McAlister
Director of Finance – J Balmer
Director of Community and Culture - U Fay
Director of Environment Services and Sustainability – M Lavery
Borough Lawyer (Legal, Land, Governance & Policy)
– P Casey
Head of Marketing Communications and PR– J McIntyre
Marketing Communications and PR Manager – A Erwin
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell
ICT Business Support Officer (Interim) – D Graham
Member Services Manager – A Duffy
PA to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor – L Molyneaux
Member Services Officers – S Fisher, C McGrandle and E Skillen
Mayoral Driver/Attendant - J Connor
- Officers Present (Remotely)** : Director of Organisation Development (Interim) – L Johnston

1. BIBLE READING, PRAYER AND WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting and advised Members of the audio recording procedures.

The meeting opened with a Bible reading and prayer by Reverend John Gilkinson

Alderman Boyle and Councillors Burbank, Cushinan, Goodman, Kelly, Kinnear, Logue, McAuley, McGrann, McLaughlin, Ní Chonghaile, O'Hagan and O'Lone joined the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

None

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. OUTGOING MAYOR'S REMARKS

The Mayor, Councillor Kirkpatrick reflected on the conclusion of her term, describing it as both demanding and deeply rewarding. She expressed pride in serving as the Borough's first female Mayor and hoped her tenure would encourage more women and girls to pursue roles in public service and politics. Over the year, she engaged extensively with businesses, schools, charities and community groups, praising the dedication of those who contributed to making the Borough a desirable place to live and work.

She highlighted accessibility and inclusion as key priorities, noting initiatives such as the Accessibility and Inclusion Conference and the launch of the 'We See You' inclusion branding. The Mayor also referenced her support for her chosen charities and thanked those who contributed to fundraising efforts.

She expressed heartfelt thanks to her party colleagues, Reverend Gilkinson, the Chief Executive, CLT officers, Member Services, particularly her PA Laura, and the Mayoral attendant Jason. She concluded by paying tribute to the Deputy Mayor, whom she regarded as a lifelong friend, and to her family husband Gary and daughters Eva and Emilie for their unwavering love and support throughout the year, while also thanking residents for giving her the privilege to serve as first citizen of the Borough.

In closing, she wished the incoming Mayor well and emphasised the importance of maintaining dignity and inclusivity in the role.

Party Group Leaders on behalf of their Groups, and individual Members paid tribute to the Mayor on a successful year.

5. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY INCLUDING MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR AND PRESENTATION OF PAST MAYOR'S MEDAL

5.1 APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR YEAR 4

Councillor Ní Chonghaile nominated Councillor Cushinan as Mayor for year 4.

Councillor Cushinan was accordingly selected Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey for the year 2026/2027.

The Mayor, Councillor Cushinan assumed the Chair.

In his opening remarks the Mayor expressed his honour at being elected and outlined his commitment to engaging with residents, supporting local businesses, and promoting rural development, with a particular focus on economic growth and conservation of Lough Neagh and surrounding areas.

He thanked his Party colleagues for their support and affirmed his intention to work constructively with all parties for the benefit of the Borough. He acknowledged and thanked the outgoing Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their service.

Reflecting on his long political journey, he spoke about his early involvement in politics, shared personal experiences from challenging times, and recalled his election as a Councillor, while acknowledging the contributions and loss of family, friends, and colleagues. He paid tribute to his late son Emmett, his father John, his mother Mary, and his late wife Clare.

Expressing gratitude for his family's continued support, he thanked his daughters Carol, Brenda, Marie-Clare, his son Ciarán, his grandchildren Molly, Maisie, Ethan and Jason, as well as his fiancée Siobhán and children Fintan, Tiernan and Dearbhail. He concluded by encouraging Councillors to maintain a healthy balance between their public responsibilities and family life.

The Mayor emphasised his commitment to representing all citizens equally, particularly those facing hardship, and concluded by affirming he would serve the entire community to the best of his ability.

Party Group Leaders on behalf of their Groups, and individual Members congratulated the Mayor on his appointment.

5.2 PRESENTATION OF PAST MAYOR'S MEDAL

The Mayor, Councillor Cushinan, presented Councillor Kirkpatrick with her past Mayor's medal and commended her again on her term in Office.

5.3 OUTGOING DEPUTY MAYOR'S REMARKS

The outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Gilmour reflected on her term describing it as a fast-paced and a rewarding year, noting that while she began with a mixture of nerves and excitement, it had been a privilege to

serve the Borough. She highlighted the many memorable experiences throughout the year, including engaging with new and existing Council staff and supporting community events and the Mayor's charities.

She expressed gratitude to her Party colleagues for the opportunity and extended sincere thanks to her family, particularly her husband Garth and children Jack and Aidan, for their patience, encouragement, and support.

She acknowledged the personal growth she experienced during the year, noting increased confidence and willingness to step outside her comfort zone. Thanks were extended to Council staff across all departments, with particular appreciation to her PA Laura and Suzie and Attendant Jason for their continued support and professionalism.

The Deputy Mayor also praised the Borough's community groups, businesses, schools, and charities, recognising their vital contribution to the area.

She paid tribute to the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Kirkpatrick for her leadership, support, and friendship, noting their strong partnership throughout the year.

In closing, she wished the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor every success in their roles and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve, describing the experience as both enjoyable and fulfilling.

Party Group Leaders on behalf of their Groups, and individual Members paid tribute, to the outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Gilmour on a successful year.

5.4 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR YEAR 4

Alderman Magill nominated Councillor Bennington as Deputy Mayor for Year 4.

Councillor Bennington was accordingly selected Deputy Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey for the year 2026/2027.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Bennington on her appointment as Deputy Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Bennington expressed pride and humility in accepting office, thanking party colleagues, family, and friends for their support and recognising the sacrifices involved in public service.

She committed to representing all residents with fairness and dedication, and highlighted the Borough's strengths, including its communities, businesses, and volunteers. She outlined key priorities for the year ahead, including supporting young people, recognising and assisting veterans, promoting health and wellbeing, valuing older residents, and encouraging economic development and regeneration.

The Deputy Mayor emphasised the importance of working collaboratively across the Council chamber and acknowledged the vital role of Council staff.

She paid tribute to her partner Val for her invaluable support and concluded by congratulating the incoming Mayor, Councillor Cushinan and affirmed her commitment to supporting him and pledged to serve the Borough with pride and determination.

Party Group Leaders on behalf of their Groups, and individual Members congratulated the Deputy Mayor on her appointment.

5.5 NOMINATION OF REMAINING POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY YEAR 4 – 2026/2027.

Members were nominated to the following positions of responsibility by their parties for year 4.

Party	Position	Member
DUP	Community Development Chairperson	Councillor H Magill
Sinn Féin	Operations Chairperson	Councillor E McLaughlin
Alliance	Planning Chairperson	Alderman L Boyle
DUP	Policy and Governance Chairperson	Alderman P Bradley
UUP	Audit and Risk Chairperson	Councillor S Wilson
DUP	Economic Development Chairperson	Alderman M Magill
Sinn Féin	Community Development Vice Chairperson	Councillor A O'Lone
DUP	Operations Vice Chairperson	Alderman L Clarke
DUP	Planning Vice Chairperson	Councillor S Flanagan
UUP	Policy and Governance Vice Chairperson	Councillor S Cosgrove
Alliance	Audit and Risk Vice Chairperson	Councillor A McAuley
DUP	Economic Development Vice Chairperson	Councillor B Mallon

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY – YEAR 4 (ALREADY AGREED FOR TERM OF COUNCIL)

Members were reminded that positions of responsibility were agreed for the term of Council at the Annual Meeting in May 2023, with changes being made to arc21 representation at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

Members were nominated to the following positions of responsibility for the remaining term of Council as follows:

arc21	Sinn Féin	Councillor M Goodman
arc21	DUP	Councillor A Bennington
arc21	Sinn Féin	Councillor H Cushinan
Housing Council	DUP	Councillor M Cooper
Partnership Panel	UUP	Alderman M Cosgrove
NI Veterans Advisory	DUP	Councillor A Bennington

6. **NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES' YEAR 4 - 2026/2027**

Nominating Officers provided details in relation to Committee Membership which was tabled at the meeting.

Members were nominated to Committees for Year 4.

YEAR 4 - 2026/27 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Total Membership 15

POSITION	PARTY	MEMBER
Chairperson	DUP	Councillor H Magill
Vice Chairperson	Sinn Féin	Councillor A O'Lone
Member	DUP	Councillor P Dunlop
Member	DUP	Councillor M Brady
Member	DUP	Councillor M Cooper
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor M Ní Chonghaile
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor T McGrann
Member	Alliance	Councillor J Gilmour
Member	Alliance	Councillor J Burbank
Member	Alliance	Alderman J McGrath

Member	UUP	Councillor S Wilson
Member	UUP	Councillor V McWilliam
Member	UUP	Councillor L Kirkpatrick
Member	SDLP	Councillor R Lynch
Member	IND 1	Councillor M Stewart

YEAR 4 - 2026/27 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Total Membership 15

POSITION	PARTY	MEMBER
Chairperson	DUP	Alderman P Bradley
Vice Chairperson	UUP	Alderman S Cosgrove
Member	DUP	Councillor J Archibald-Brown
Member	DUP	Councillor H Magill
Member	DUP	Alderman L Clarke
Member	DUP	Alderman S Ross
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor M Goodman
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor A O'Lone
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor M Ní Chonghaile
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor T McGrann
Member	Alliance	Councillor B Webb
Member	Alliance	Councillor N Kelly
Member	Alliance	Councillor J Burbank
Member	UUP	Councillor V McWilliam
Member	UUP	Alderman M Cosgrove

YEAR 4 – 2026/27 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Total Membership **12**

POSITION	PARTY	MEMBER
Chairperson	Alliance	Alderman L Boyle
Vice Chairperson	DUP	Councillor S Flanagan
Member	DUP	Alderman M Magill
Member	DUP	Councillor B Mallon
Member	DUP	Councillor J Archibald -Brown
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor R Kinnear
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor AM Logue
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor T McGrann
Member	Alliance	Alderman T Campbell
Member	UUP	Councillor R Foster
Member	UUP	Councillor S Cosgrove
Member	SDLP	Councillor R Lynch

YEAR 4 – 2026/27 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Total Membership **6**

POSITION	PARTY	MEMBER
Chairperson	UUP	Councillor S Wilson
Vice Chairperson	Alliance	Councillor A McAuley
Member	DUP	Councillor A Bennington
Member	DUP	Alderman M Magill
Member	DUP	Councillor M Brady

Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor L O'Hagan
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YEAR 4 – 2026/27 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Total Membership 8

POSITION	PARTY	MEMBER
Chairperson	DUP	Alderman M Magill
Vice Chairperson	DUP	Councillor B Mallon
Member	DUP	Alderman S Ross
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor M Ní Chonghaile
Member	Sinn Féin	Councillor E McLaughlin
Member	Alliance	Councillor B Webb
Member	UUP	Alderman M Cosgrove
Member	UUP	Councillor R Foster

7. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO OUTSIDE BODIES YEAR 4-2026/2027

Nominations were tabled at the meeting based on the 2026/2027 representation to Outside Bodies.

Proposed by Councillor Webb

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

nominations to the positions and to Outside Bodies for Year 4 be agreed.

Members were nominated to Outside Bodies Year 4 as follows:

BODY	No.	Agreed Term	Year 4 NOMINATION
Belfast Hills Partnership	2	Annual	Councillor A McAuley
			Councillor E McLaughlin
Diversity Champions	4	Annual	Alderman P Bradley
			Councillor M Ní Chonghaile

BODY	No.	Agreed Term	Year 4 NOMINATION
			Alderman L Boyle
			Councillor L O'Hagan
Knockagh Monument Joint Committee	2	Annual	Alderman S Ross
			Councillor R Foster
Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues	3	Annual	Councillor M Goodman
			Councillor A McAuley
			Councillor R Lynch
Lough Neagh Partnership	5	Annual	Councillor P Dunlop
			Councillor H Cushinan
			Councillor J Burbank
			Councillor S Wilson
			Councillor R Lynch
Mindwise Mental Health Champions	2	Annual	Councillor T McGrann
			Councillor R Lynch
National Association of Councillors	8	Term of Council	Alderman J Smyth
			Councillor J Archibald-Brown
			Councillor B Mallon
			Councillor L O'Hagan
			Councillor M Goodman
			Councillor J Gilmour
			Councillor B Webb
			Councillor S Cosgrove
Northern Ireland Amenity Council	1	Annual	Councillor V McWilliam
Sixmilewater Trust	5	Annual	Councillor J Archibald-Brown

BODY	No.	Agreed Term	Year 4 NOMINATION
			Councillor L O'Hagan
			Alderman L Boyle
			Councillor S Wilson
			Councillor R Lynch
Somme Association	2	Annual	Councillor R Foster
			Alderman S Ross
Swift Champion	1	Annual	Councillor A Logue
All Party Group on Climate Action	2	Annual	Councillor J Burbank
			Councillor R Lynch
APSE Representative	1	Term of Council Via d'Hondt (Alliance nomination position 62)	Councillor B Webb
NILGA Strategic Policy Network representative	1	Term of Council	Alderman J Smyth

8. NOMINATIONS OF MEMBERS TO NILGA YEAR 4

Members were nominated to NILGA by their parties for Year 4 as follows:

PARTY	NOMINATION
Alliance	Councillor B Webb
DUP	Councillor A Bennington
Sinn Féin	Councillor M Goodman
UUP	Councillor V McWilliam
DUP	Councillor M Cooper
Alliance	Councillor J Gilmour
Sinn Féin	Councillor H Cushinan

DUP	Alderman J Smyth
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There being no further business the Mayor thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 8pm.

Henry Cushman

MAYOR