

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2019

Table of Adoptions

No	Item	Summary of key Adoptions
1.	<p>To consider Notice of Motion</p> <p><i>“That this Council has ‘No Confidence in Councillor Bateson to carry out the role of Mayor for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in an impartial apolitical manner. It is concerning to the greater number of residents of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and beyond that he is glorifying terrorist criminals on social media platforms. In doing so he is causing immense hurt to the victims of those whom he is eulogising. His actions are detrimental to the office of mayor and damaging to the reputation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.”</i></p>	Motion Carried

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN CIVIC HEADQUARTERS, COLERAINE ON
THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2019 AT 7:00PM**

In the Chair : Deputy Mayor, Alderman S McKillop

Members Present : Alderman Boyle, Duddy, Fielding, Finlay, McCandless,
McCorkell, McKeown and Robinson

Councillors Anderson, Callan, Dallat O’Driscoll, Holmes,
McAuley, McCaw, McLean, MA McKillop, McMullan,
McQuillan, Mulholland, Quigley, Robinson, Schenning,
Scott, Wallace, Watton and Wilson

Officers Present : D Jackson, Chief Executive
M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services
D Hunter, Councils Solicitor
D Allen, Committee & Member Services Officer

In Attendance : Press (2)
Public (4)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Hillis and Councillors Baird, Beattie, Hunter and Knight-McQuillan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. TO CONSIDER NOTICE OF MOTION

“That this Council has ‘No Confidence’ in Councillor Bateson to carry out the role of Mayor for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in an impartial apolitical manner. It is concerning to the greater number of residents of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and beyond that he is glorifying terrorist criminals on social media platforms. In doing so he is causing immense hurt to the victims of those whom he is eulogising. His actions are detrimental to the office of mayor and damaging to the reputation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.”

Councillor Wallace stated his support for the Motion and read out a prepared statement.

'On the evening his party elected him to be Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and on the first full council meeting, Councillor Sean Bateson stated he was a proud young republican from Kilrea. He also told us that times they were a changing.

Although I would completely disagree with him in his political outlook I acknowledge his aspirations for a united Ireland.

However, I cannot agree with the Mayor of this Borough glorifying terrorists and terrorism and then insisting he is the Mayor for all the people in borough.

Unfortunately when he told us times are a changing I fail to see that change. Sinn Féin during the troubles were a party who had Members who were involved in the murder of men women and children and their Members also supported this terrorist campaign. Today's Members it would seem still support those who ruthlessly murdered their neighbours and our family and friends.

Councillor Bateson told us he was a proud young republican from Kilrea. Kilrea was also my hometown. My memories and Councillor Bateson's rose tinted heroes in history will be vastly different.

Kilrea was one of the bombed towns in Northern Ireland. I lay in bed many nights and my bed shook as another bomb went off. I was in the local Boys Brigade. We would have went to the local businesses and helped them salvage their stock and clean up to get them back in business as quickly as possible.

My neighbour and her boyfriend decided to go in their car one night to get something from the chip shop. When they returned, my neighbour leaned forward into the footwell of the car to lift the food. One of Sinn Féin's heroes opened her door and shot Willis Agnew.

He went round to the other side of the car, opened the door and as Willis was slumped over the steering wheel he began beating him over the head with the but of his gun. My neighbour threw her arm over his neck to try to protect him. The gunman battered her arm. He fired another shot into Mr Agnew and skulked off into the darkness.

A hero? I don't think so!

What about my friend Tommy Gibson. Tommy was just 27 years of age. He was married and had a child.

Tommy drove into the Bank Square in Kilrea to wait for his employer's van to collect him to take him to his work in Ballymoney. They were working on a new home for the elderly. Tommy was working any extra hours he could as he was working on his own new home for him and his wee family.

The heroes pulled up alongside Tommy's car and shot him several times in the head. His employer arrived minutes later. He said there were no words to describe how he was feeling. He described him as a decent hardworking young fellow.

Tommy, the father of a 14 month old daughter was also an ambulance driver with the Territorial Army for seven years. Some crime! Some heroes!

The same South Derry brigade shot another young man, David Sheils just outside Maghera. He was just 30 years old with a baby of just 4 weeks old. Like a Kilrea family a few days earlier he was a Protestant who was in the process of building a new home.

Of course the same Brigade in the same area had already left their horrible mark in that area. William Gordon a school welfare officer and his 10 year old daughter Lesley were blew up in an IRA booby trap bomb left under their car as they were going to school. A 10 year old child and still these terrorists are being eulogised by today's Sinn Féin politicians.

I have been approached by so many people to say Councillor Bateson is not my Mayor.

Mayor for all the Borough. I think not. Hopefully in time Councillor Bateson will be correct and times will change only this time for the better of us all.'

* **Councillor Quigley arrived at the meeting at 7.10pm.**

* **Alderman Finlay left the meeting at 7.10pm and rejoined the meeting at 7.12pm.**

Councillor Scott read out a prepared statement and stated his support of the Motion.

'Thank you Deputy Mayor for giving me the opportunity to speak on this motion and can I say from the start that I am supportive of the motion.

Mayor Bateson has lost the confidence of the people of this Borough. He made much of his – I will be the Mayor for all the people- catch phrase, but his attendance at memorials for convicted terrorists, as he speaks of their bravery, and his lack of consideration for the victims of terrorism, will be his legacy instead.

One of the men he allegedly spoke bravely of was responsible for the taking of an innocent life. Yvonne Dunlop was killed when a firebomb was placed in the Alley Katz Boutique in Bridge Street Ballymena. The coward Thomas McElwee, who left the device was not carrying out a war against an army that could fight back, he was terrorising the civilian population. Like all cowards before him he fled the scene without giving a warning and it was only when Mrs Dunlop spotted the device that others were made aware of its presence. Yvonne shouted a warning, which allowed her 9 year old son to escape but was unfortunately unable to save herself. Now there is bravery for you, Yvonne's first thought in discovering the device was not for herself but for her customers and her son, a far cry from the cowardice displayed by the bomber.

In this town where our Council sits, on the 12th June 1973, 6 civilians were murdered. The victims were aged in their 60's and 70's. On that day many more could have been killed including children, as the cowards who drove the bomb into Railway Road, were more worried about not getting caught than making sure that no-one was injured by their bomb. They could have shouted a warning before leaving the scene but were too frightened or cowardly to do so. No BRAVE MEN there then but I am sure there are plenty who will rewrite history and eulogise them when the time comes, with a poem. The survivors and the good people of Causeway Coast and Glens, will I am sure remember the victims and survivors of these cowardly men and that is fitting.

On the 13th of November 1992 that same cowardly murdering terrorist organisation returned to blow the heart out of Coleraine, but the town was not cowed, by their actions. Again this was no attack on an army by brave men but an attack on businesses, and livelihoods. Nothing to be proud of there.

It is hard to find any brave men of the IRA. The rural areas around our borders are full of cases where young protestant farmers were shot in the back, for no other reason than that they were the only son an heir to the farm, so that the farm could not be passed on. Genocide is the name for this crime but we don't see many calls for an investigation or calls for the people who gave the orders to be hauled before The Hague but undoubtedly there will be a poem written explaining how it was a brave act in the war for Irish Unity.

I have attended the scenes of many of the atrocities perpetrated by the IRA - men shot in front of their wives and children, men blown up by cowards skulking in hedgerows but none touched me more than that of a colleague who was killed whilst serving the public. He and his wife and family often came to Benone for their summer breaks and whilst there they would have visited Coleraine, Portrush, and the North Coast. This was where they felt safest. On that fateful Sunday he was killed by a landmine, leaving behind his wife and six children. A year later his wife came to Benone to be at the one place where they both found so much joy and on the night of the anniversary of his death she simply died. Her daughter who was only 18 at the time was left with a mother to bury and 5 siblings to look after. A daunting task at such a tender age but she did not hesitate in agreeing to become their big sister and substitute mum, now that is what I call bravery. This family and many others either live in or visit our Borough each year and would be dismayed to hear of the antics of our Mayor.

I believe that the Mayor stands condemned by all standards of public decency in that he failed to keep the high standards required of a First Citizen of this Borough and caused offence to many by his behaviour. He needs at the very least to apologise for his behaviour to the Councillors of this chamber and to the public as a whole. No mealy mouthed apology will do, no attempt to justify will wash. This is not a mayor for all the people.'

During the reading of Councillor Scott's prepared statement Alderman Boyle raised a Point of Order under Standing Orders Paragraph 18.11 *that a Member shall not speak for more than five minutes when replying to the debate on the Motion.* The Deputy Mayor allowed Councillor Scott to finish.

* **Councillor Quigley left the meeting at 7.14pm.**

Councillor MA McKillop read out a prepared statement.

'We are disappointed to be sitting here at the ratepayers' expense when what the Causeway Coast and Glens needs now, more than ever, is cooperation not division. Our Council's biggest spending department has a £4m deficit. Weekly earnings across this borough are the lowest in Northern Ireland. We should be showing leadership at this time and expending all our energy in driving our economy forward.

When it comes to creating a society at peace with itself, fostering reconciliation in our communities and bringing people together, one of the parties proposing this motion has no moral high ground. At Queen's University last month, they displayed posters saying 'Ulster is British' and 'Ulster is ours'. It may have escaped their attention but the Good Friday

Agreement, which they have always opposed, means that this place belongs to no one community, no one tradition and no one party. They should reflect on their own rhetoric and the damage it has had on communities.

Similarly, Sinn Féin displayed 'Brits-out' banners at that same event. Equally unacceptable, regardless of how they try to spin it, everyone is welcome in this place. As Seamus Mallon said recently, I don't care what you call it as long as we can all call it home.

We will not stand in this chamber and endorse the political stunts that are taking place this evening. Not while there are people in our communities demanding action on matters affecting them and their public services.

We are on the brink of a significant crisis in health, education, social security, climate change and the Brexit backdrop is frightening.

The crisis in our hospitals is shameful, our GP services are under serious pressure. Patients are waiting for lengthy periods of time for urgent medical care. The current situation in our local health care system is not acceptable, sustainable or safe.

The crisis in Education is no less shameful and will have a severe negative impact on our children's education. Principals and teachers are under a huge deal of stress because of budget pressures. Our children are currently paying for political failure.

We are facing a social security crisis. Tens of thousands of families across Northern Ireland are facing immediate hardship if the welfare mitigation package is not extended before we reach the cliff edge in 6 months. This is a crisis for people in all of our communities. When parties cannot resolve their differences in order to protect the most vulnerable, it is a damning political failure. Those least able to bear the burden are being forced to pay the price for that failure.

We are now living in a climate emergency. The IPCC has painted a stark picture of the consequences of inaction. We have less than 12 years to alter our behaviour or face prolonged climate chaos. Urgent action is now required from all levels of government, society, industry and business to end our addiction to fossil fuels, deliver the Green New Deal and build a truly sustainable future. We need to be working together.

Brexit uncertainty now dominates economic forecasts and we have no secure voice in the negotiations. Given that this is the area due to be most negatively impacted by any new trade regime investment confidence is

wavering. At this moment the only acceptable response is to come together and defend our economy.

Our constituents have now been denied a functioning Executive and Ministers for nearly 1000 days. In the absence of an Assembly we need to step up to the mark.

This is not the time for party political point scoring; it is the time to utilise all the power and influence we have and to work together to find a way forward to alleviate the many crises we face.

Our constituents are already frustrated at the thwarting of efforts to build a meaningful, shared, prosperous future.'

- * **Councillor Quigley re-joined the meeting at 7.17pm during Councillor McKillop's statement.**
- * **Councillor Watton left the meeting at 7.20pm during Councillor McKillop's statement.**

During Councillor McKillop's statement Alderman Duddy raised a Point of Order under Standing Order 18.9 'A Member who speaks on the Motion shall direct his/her speech strictly to the Motion under discussion, or an amendment thereof.'

The Deputy Mayor advised Councillor McKillop that she must keep to the Motion under discussion.

Councillor McKillop stated that the SDLP would be abstaining as a party from voting on the Motion.

- * **Councillor McKillop and Councillor Dallat O'Driscoll left the meeting at 7.24pm.**
- * **Councillor Schenning and Councillor Quigley left the meeting at 7.25pm.**

Councillor Holmes read out a prepared statement in support of the Motion.

'I didn't get elected to Council with any desire to be dealing with a motion like this. When we've budget issues, the need to deliver quality services and the ongoing Brexit debacle, the last thing this Council needs is time being taken up dealing with the worst elements of our politics. But given the comments made and the level of anger expressed to me about those comments, I had no option but join with this motion of 'No confidence'.

In terms of the tweet, I will say at the outset that I do not agree with the description of any terrorist act as brave. The dictionary describes it as courage. How much courage did it take to burn 26-year-old Yvonne Dunlop to death in her Ballymena clothes shop?

The Mayor's 45-word tweet on 11th August was not unusual for a Sinn Féin politician. Michelle O'Neill and Mary-Lou MacDonald spout similar platitudes on a regular basis. And perhaps if another Sinn Féin politician had tweeted these words it would have drawn little attention.

But not when the Mayor tweets it. Then it enters a different sphere because of the position of the Mayor. A Mayor is not only a Mayor when the chain of office is around their neck. It is a 24/7 role for the term of office. The second sentence of the Mayoral Protocol reads: "This is not a party-political role and the incumbent will always be mindful of the dignity of the office."

When politicians in Northern Ireland speak, it's usually to their own people. I know that the talk around my own area is that these comments are just part of Sinn Féin's positioning for a bid to unseat John Dallat as an MLA. If that's the case, it's sad that this is deemed an effective electoral strategy. In response to the criticism he unleashed, on August 15th, the Mayor tweeted "The GFA itself enshrines this right to commemorate those who died in conflict. Thus, despite agendas from certain quarters, remembering your dead is not something that has to be justified."

The Belfast Agreement seems to be getting used for all sorts of justification lately and it's paragraphs are always open to interpretation.

Dr Kevin Hearty of Queen's University wrote recently: "while the GFA explicitly acknowledged that 'victims have a right to remember as well as to contribute to a changed society', it nonetheless failed to define the term 'victim' or to elaborate on how these rights should be practicably exercised." Mike Nesbitt said at one stage that in terms of legacy the only thing we can agree on is who died and when. 20 years later we still can't even agree the definition of a victim.

Northern Ireland came out of a bloody 25-year conflict. We had over 3300 deaths – half of them at the hands of the IRA. The grief from the loss of a family member, whether a terrorist, a soldier, a policeman or civilian, cannot be dismissed. I would never expect their loss to be forgotten by any family or community. But we can remember our dead without glorifying their actions, particularly when the legacy left is like the one left by Thomas McElwee.

Everyone does indeed have a right to remember their dead, but innocent victims like Yvonne Dunlop are on a different plane to those perpetrators who died by their own hand or as a result of their own terrorist actions. We should never be afraid to call that out and we owe it to the innocent victims and the future generations to do so.

I would not expect to hear a Unionist mayor glorifying the actions of a loyalist terrorist and I will not hold a republican mayor to any less of a standard.

The least the Mayor could do is apologise for his offensive tweet and return some dignity to the office he holds.'

Councillor McLean read out a prepared statement in support of the Motion.

* **Councillor Mulholland left the meeting at 7.27pm during the reading of Councillor McLean's' statement.**

'In the exercise of their duty, any representative who has the honour of holding the position of Mayor should exude and live out the qualities of leadership and responsibility.

This has been the case with Mayors from across the political divide over many years. However, it is clear that the current incumbent of the office has shown deliberate disrespect and a lack of understanding of his responsibilities as first citizen of this Borough.

In praising a convicted IRA bomber who callously and brutally took the life of a young woman, Mr Bateson has debased and undermined the office he holds. His actions were a calculated insult to the many innocent victims of terrorism in Northern Ireland and beyond, including Yvonne Dunlop, who should be the sole focus of our remembrance.

There was never any justification for the terrorism we faced. It was wrong and those who seek to justify it, including our Mayor, should be ashamed of themselves.

The Mayor has brought this Council into disrepute and I welcome that my Group Leader has formally submitted a complaint to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards accordingly.

Mr Bateson's decision to praise an unrepentant terrorist makes his position as Mayor of our Council untenable. He has lost the confidence of a huge

swathe of the public in Causeway Coast and Glens and I believe will tonight officially lose the support of this Chamber.

I urge everyone to support the motion.'

Councillor McCaw condemned the notion of Members walking out of the Chamber or not turning up because they considered that they would not win the debate and hoped that this would not set a trend. He was very disappointed that this had happened at this meeting. He stated that he agreed with the vast majority of this Motion.

Councillor McCaw read out a prepared statement.

'It is very disappointing that we find ourselves in this situation. I would firstly like to ask why neither Alliance nor the SDLP were consulted or asked to sign this motion. As far as I can see, the way this has been approached serves to divide the community by pitting Unionists against everyone else, which is something we cannot support.

It is worth noting that the "no confidence" phrase has no legal standing. There is nothing in legislation or Standing Orders that allows us to remove a Mayor by a vote like this. I understand this has been reported to the Local Government Ombudsman and they can deal with this issue. The use of the phrase "no confidence" is therefore a piece of theatre and we can't support this either.

I will reiterate the Alliance Party's total opposition to all glorification or celebration of terrorism. The innocent victims are the people who must be at the centre of any debate such as this. We stand up for all innocent victims equally, whether they are victims of loyalist terrorism, republican terrorism or crimes committed by state actors.

The motion mentions social media. I hate social media. I use it as a means to connect with friends and constituents but it can be a very nasty thing. I condemn the abuse against the Mayor and extend my sympathy to his family that they have had to experience that as well. It doesn't matter whether it is Sean Bateson, Arlene Foster, Michelle O'Neill or Naomi Long; elected representatives should be able to continue the day-to-day work they have been elected to do without abuse.

"No confidence" has no effect. I believe times are changing in this Borough but in the direction of the centre ground. I believe that we can amend this motion to remove that wording and also reaffirm our total opposition to celebration or glorification of terrorism and our support for innocent victims.

Councillor McCaw wished it to be put on record that he offered his sympathy to those who had lost anyone in the troubles.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor McCaw

Seconded by Alderman Boyle

- that this Council recognises the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council should act in an impartial and apolitical manner when carrying out his role and representing all citizens of the Borough. This Council acknowledges the level of hurt caused in our society and condemns the glorification of terrorism, and that all commemorations marking the past, including social media activity connected to them, must be respectful of victims. Furthermore, this Council reinforces the importance that all appropriate action is taken to address the ongoing scourge of paramilitary activity in our community.

Councillor Wilson pledged his full support to the Motion. He stated that the Mayor should be apolitical and described the Mayors comments on Social Media as despicable. If the Mayor chooses to remain in Office the Members would have to accept this as they could only vote on the motion of 'No Confidence'.

Councillor McAuley stated that the reason the Notice of Motion was brought was a result of constituents' strong feelings in relation to the comments made by the Mayor on Social Media sites. The Mayor was offended at everything yet ashamed of nothing. Councillor McAuley stated that he was disappointed but not surprised that Sinn Féin were not in attendance at the meeting this evening.

Councillor McAuley read out a prepared statement in support of the Motion.

'A man who considers as a hero someone who incinerated a young mother to death is not worthy to be perceived as representing any reasonable, right thinking person. He disgraces the office he holds and should be removed immediately. I would add that he should also be barred from holding any similar office in future.'

Anyone who glorifies terrorism and murder has no place in the democratic process and I am saying that as someone who has seen the work of their murder machine first hand.

By not attending official remembrance events in his capacity as Mayor it is a slap in the face to the unionist community, he obviously does not represent the whole community. In my opinion he is a Mayor for one side

of our community. I have met him although I did not acknowledge him as I feel he has no interest in anything if it doesn't lie with the Sinn Féin agenda and he was totally unable to engage with anyone that was present at the event.

When I first heard about the appointment of Councillor Bateson – a known republican to the position of Mayor I feared this would isolate and leave the Protestant community feeling that they had no voice or representation from the First Citizen of the Borough. It wasn't long before these fears were realised, this young republican took no time to show disregard for the position and the entire community of the Borough.

He made no secret of his support for republican terrorism by attending a Sinn Féin IRA commemoration event in Bellaghy in memory of Thomas McElwee, a notorious republican, well known not only for the murder of many throughout South Londonderry but also the alleged leader of an IRA bomb squad who struck at the commercial heart of many towns across both County Londonderry and Antrim, including the 1973 bombing of Coleraine right in the heart of the CC&G Borough. Such actions should be condemned not only by the protestant community but by any right-thinking person regardless of religion or creed.

Mr McElwee finally meet his fate after refusing food whilst serving a prison sentence for his terrorist activities in HMP Maze/Long Kesh.

More recently the absence of the Mayor at the act of remembrance at the annual Air show in Portrush was notable, this coupled with another no-show from either Councillor Bateson or in fact any member of Sinn Féin at the recent parade in remembrance of the UDR soldiers from across the Borough who gave their life in the fight against terrorism shows a clear disregard for anything British within the Council area.

Councillor Bateson was elected to this position and pledged to serve all members of the community something he has clearly failed to deliver on.

There has also been notable silence from Councillor Bateson in recent days following the announcement that The Wright Group has entered administration resulting in the loss of 1200 jobs.

At a time when myself and 300+ constituents of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough have been made redundant there has been little to no communications from Councillor Bateson or Sinn Féin other than to call for inquiries into where some of the Wrights Group money has gone.

Yes, this needs to happen, but the priority should be the people effected and the efforts of Councillor Bateson and Sinn Féin should be directed to establish what help the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough can offer.

In my opinion, he cares little about people effected by the closure of The Wright Group as undoubtedly the majority of these people will be from the Protestant Community.

As a resident of the now Causeway Coast and Glens area from birth I feel that the glorification of terrorism by the present Mayor is unacceptable to the office but more importantly to the thousands of IRA victims.

While our area escaped the worst of troubles, many acts of murder and terrorism live long in our minds. I remember well the call as a key holder to come to Coleraine when it was blown apart in 1992 and I also remember the pain on a friend's face when his father was murdered by the IRA. Other murderous deeds also will never be forgotten, none more so the killing of 6 pensioners in 1973.

Therefore, after the present Mayor described a killer of an innocent mother of three as 'BRAVE'. I believe he should be removed from that post. The position of Mayor is one which the holder must represent ALL the people of the Borough.

How can a person who honours members of a terrorist organisation who killed its citizens and blew up one of its towns do that? It is incompatible!!!

Members, I trust these examples of how a range of the community feel are taken on board tonight by you all and an example is made to reassure everyone that the honouring of terrorism by those holding the position of Mayor cannot and will not be accepted by their elected representatives.'

Alderman Boyle read out a prepared statement in support of the Motion and on the dangers of Social Media.

'I second Councillor McCaw's amendment to this motion. This is a difficult situation to speak to.

I believe the Mayor's tweet was inappropriate and insensitive. Regarding social media, I like many others, have to be careful about Twitter and being 'caught out'. I note that recently a local DUP MLA actually shut down his Twitter account.

As a qualified advanced counsellor I supported many people affected by the trauma of the troubles for nearly thirty years as a mental health social worker.

One example was a young man with learning difficulties who was being harassed by paramilitaries. Another was a man who had mental health problems and had been 'sucked' into the paramilitaries. I supported both of them according to my professional values of dignity and respect for the individual. I also taught anti-oppressive practice to social work students so that they could practice without their religious or cultural views/baggage adversely affecting the services they provided.

I myself experienced a bomb exploding outside my house in Lisburn as a teenager. More recently I was under threat during the loyalist flag protest. Individual members of DUP and UU were seen distributing leaflets which contributed to antagonism towards Alliance at that time. Mainly single female Alliance Councillors were targeted by the protestors. I had to seek police advice about my safety.

I have always condemned paramilitary activity from both loyalist and republican sources.

This situation we are discussing is a symptom of the current lack of trust between parties and also of legacy issues not being addressed. Many people have criticised Sinn Féin and DUP for the ongoing absence of Stormont which has contributed to this.

There is a fashion now of 'being in the moment' but I sense that some have 'anticipatory outrage' about things that they believe someone else 'is about to do'.

Could we go back to the laughter of Rev Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness on the stairs at Stormont in 2007? I suspect that it was partly relief at not having to carry so much bitterness, mistrust and antagonism. Just to be able to put a piece of it down.

As Gandhi said: 'An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind'

Councillor Watton stated that he believed that Sinn Féin should never had been allowed to hold the Office of Mayor two years in succession.

The Deputy Mayor cautioned Councillor Watton to direct his speech to the Motion under discussion.

He stated that the Mayor was not the Mayor for everyone only the Mayor for Sinn Féin and that he had brought the Mayors' Office into disrepute. He stated that the Mayor was not his Mayor.

Alderman McCandless concurred with Councillor Watton and stated that the Mayor had caused deep hurt and upset in Coleraine.

Alderman McCandless read out a prepared statement in favour of the Motion.

'Sinn Féin talk of political freedom and that it means nothing if it does not embrace political, economic, social, cultural and human rights. They also talk of parity of esteem and equality of treatment must be guaranteed for all, and an inclusive society which addresses the political allegiances of Unionists and guarantees their rights and entitlements that they can have a sense of security and a stake in the proposed "New Ireland".'

These honeyed words are fine sentiments but unfortunately those in the Unionist family see the harsh reality played out in sentiments such as:-

Mary Lou McDonald "England get out of Ireland".

*Gerry Adams "The point is to actually break these ba*****s"(referring to Unionists).*

Alex Maskey referring to Northern Ireland as a "putrid little statelet".

Gerry Kelly "bigotry against the Irish language is endemic to Unionist ideology".

With comments like this from the hierarchy of the leadership of Sinn Féin it is no wonder that it cascades down the pyramid to their Councillors.

Councillor Catherine Nelson with her "Brits out statement".

Councillor Niamh Doris "The term Northern Ireland is like nails on a chalk board to me".

Councillor Sean Bateson referring to the Union flag as a butcher's apron.

One would wonder if there is an annual prize within Sinn Féin for the most insulting remarks against the Unionist family. I had hoped over the past few weeks as we all worked together in financial workshops that our relationship would improve.

As I have reflected on the tweets and postings of Councillor Bateson I reflect naturally on myself also and if I have caused offence to any Councillor or Council officer in this chamber I offer my apology.

I would also add that I have worked in cooperation with some of our Sinn Féin Councillors on Committees and am certain that they do not share Councillor Bateson's views.

Unfortunately due to the crisis in Stormont we are the only functioning form of Government in Northern Ireland and we must work together for the betterment of the 142,000 residents we represent. One of the outcomes of this evening needs to be a tightening up on Mayoral procedure.

To quote Alan Paton S. African author and anti-apartheid campaigner :- "It is not forgive and forget as if nothing wrong had ever happened, but Forgive And Go Forward, building on the mistakes of the past and the energy generated by reconciliation to create a new future".'

Alderman Duddy spoke in favour of the Motion.

Alderman Duddy stated that he was outraged at the comments the Mayor had put on Social Media glorifying terrorism and his comments were very concerning. He stated that he would never forget the faces of the family members of innocent victims. He concurred at most of the sentiments that had already been stated and that he was disappointed that the SDLP had not addressed the Motion and had walked out earlier in the meeting; he was not surprised at their attitude. He continued to say that Members could not remove the Mayor from Office at this meeting. He had been selected through d'Hondt and no matter what Members would have liked there was always going to be Sinn Féin Mayor.

Alderman Duddy stated that in his opinion and those of Members not only across the borough but much further afield, the Mayor had degraded and demeaned the Office of Mayor. The Mayor carried bitterness with him and would always continue to do so throughout his life. He was not surprised that Sinn Féin had taken upon themselves to abstain this evening.

Alderman Duddy made reference to the comment made by the Alliance Party in relation to being respectful. He stated that they didn't turn up to the Operation Banner memorial to commemorate the very men and women who served in Northern Ireland to keep peace and to keep anarchy off the streets of Northern Ireland, nor did they take the time to go to the unveiling of the memorial in Coleraine town centre to remember the men and women from the Ulster Defence Regiment who served this community with distinction.

Councillor Callan spoke in favour of the Motion.

Councillor Callan stated that he was sad to have to attend the meeting this evening but it was the right thing to do in light of reaction of the whole community; the comments were damaging to community relationships. He was disappointed and sad that Sinn Féin had chosen not to attend the meeting. He continued to say that he had hoped that the Mayor would reflect on his comments and retract and apologise for the hurt he had caused in the community but this had not happened.

Councillor Callan informed Members that at the outset the Mayor had pledged to be a Mayor for all and a citizen for all and that he had not lived up to that promise. He stated that Council needs to send a strong message of *'No confidence'* in the Mayor's ability to carry out his function and the fact that he has degraded the Office of Mayor that he currently occupies. Councillor Callan hoped Members would support the Motion put forward, and that Sinn Féin would reflect on the comments that they have made and the way that they have dealt with this issue. Going forward it is something that the Mayor needs to reflect on himself and the personal hurt he has caused to many people. It is sad that it had to come to this tonight but believed that it was the right course of action to take going forward.

Councillor McQuillan spoke in favour of the Motion.

Councillor McQuillan reflected on how he became to be involved in politics and that he had wasted 10 years of his life because there had been no positive effect on the next generation. He also commented that The Mayor had not attended the commemoration of the Battle of the Somme and the Operation Banner Parade.

Councillor McQuillan stated that he supported the proposed Notice of Motion not the Amendment. He concluded that it was not a night for political point scoring.

Councillor Anderson raised a Point of Order under Standing Orders Paragraph 16.4 that *'The Question Now be Put.'*

Councillor McCaw clarified the wording of his proposed Amendment.

The Deputy Mayor put the Amendment to Council to vote. 2 Members voted for, 17 Members voted against and 0 Members abstained.

The Deputy Mayor declared the Amendment **LOST**.

The Deputy Mayor put the substantive Motion to Council to vote. 17 Members voted for, 0 Members voted against and 2 Members abstained.

The Chair declared the substantive Motion **CARRIED**.

“That this Council has ‘No Confidence’ in Councillor Bateson to carry out the role of Mayor for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in an impartial apolitical manner. It is concerning to the greater number of residents of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and beyond that he is glorifying terrorist criminals on social media platforms. In doing so he is causing immense hurt to the victims of those whom he is eulogising. His actions are detrimental to the office of mayor and damaging to the reputation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.”

There being no further business, the Deputy Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at **8.10pm**.

Chair