

**Ballymoney Borough Council  
Council Meeting No 940 – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

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## **BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of Council Meeting No 940 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 7.00 pm.

**IN THE CHAIR:** Councillor B Kennedy, Mayor

**PRESENT:** **Aldermen**  
F Campbell  
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor

**Councillors**  
A Cavlan                      J Finlay  
R Halliday                    M McCamphill  
P McGuigan                 T McKeown  
C McLaughlin               A Patterson  
E Robinson                  I Stevenson  
M Storey

**APOLOGIES:** **Aldermen**  
H Connolly

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive  
Director of Borough Services  
Director of Central & Leisure Services  
Head of Corporate & Development Services

### **940.1 THANKS**

Councillor Robinson thanked the Chief Executive who had accompanied her to a meeting of the Regional Development Committee earlier to discuss the gritting problem. She paid tribute to his valuable contribution. The Chief Executive returned thanks for her kind remarks.

### **940.2 RATES 2011/12**

The Chief Executive explained the purpose of the meeting was to give further consideration to the rate estimate for 2011/12 and to determine the district rate. The starting point was V.5 of the book, previously circulated.

At the last meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February, the changes to budgets suggested by Leisure & Amenities Committee and by members, as detailed in the minute, had been considered by management. Any new proposals to be considered were to be notified to the Chief Executive or Directors to allow management the opportunity to examine these. No additional suggestions had been put forward by members in advance of the meeting.

The Chief Executive reminded members that the Corporate & Central Services Committee had agreed a budget of £7500 for the freedom event to be included in the 2011/12 official & courtesy visits budget and to apply a balance of £5000, reducing the rate increase from 2.99% to 2.90%. He sought guidance on possible changes put forward by members for consideration.

Page	Service	Item	Change (£)
4	Cultural Facilities	NW200	+1000
4	Cultural Facilities	Causeway Museum	-2000
7	Contributions	Vintage Japanese M/C Club	-1000
13	Community Relations	Community Support Grants	+??
23	Waste Disposal	Disposal charges – effect of loss of custom	-??
27	Minor Works	Bi-lingual signs	+??
30	Official/Courtesy/Civic	Twinning Association Grant	+1000
30	Official/Courtesy/Civic	Civic – twinning visits	+1000
	Capital Schemes	R Dunlop Garden – loan charges	-3097
12	Capital Schemes	Revenue costs	+??

He advised that the question re effect of loss of custom on disposal charges had been dealt with in response to further questions submitted by Councillor Stevenson and responded to in memo dated 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011 from Director of Borough Services to the Chief Executive and copied to all members. He advised that a saving of £3097 on Memorial Garden loan charges had been identified by management.

The Mayor then put these items (as set out in the table above) to members to be considered. Consensus was reached on the following:-

- North West 200 +£1000 (contribution £11,000)
- Causeway Museum Service – no reduction – Director of Central & Leisure Services advising Council to await further information on review. The contribution included provided for £10,000 for delivery of Peace III projects and £2000 to buy in professional services for annual accreditation review of Museum, if necessary.
- Community Support Grant £3000, applicants only being considered if ineligible for good relations grant and only one grant allowed in any one year.
- Twinning Association +£1000
- Civic Visits +£1000

The Chief Executive advised that these would lead to an overall increase of £2000 calculated by the Director of Central & Leisure Services as an increase of 2.93%.

Councillor McGuigan referred to excess capital project provision following withdrawal of one community hall and asked that the extension of car park at Rasharkin Community Centre be considered under the capital projects budget, at no additional cost.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services advised that in previous version of estimates loan charges for community facilities had been recalculated to take account of 3 community facilities and play area resulting in saving of £15,000 in loan charges. A MUGA was also considered and this, if agreed, would be funded from unspent capital project budget. The saving was reinstated in the budget for 2011/12.

Alderman Simpson referred to the need to consider upgrade of Megaw Park facilities including car park provision arguing that Megaw Park was a great asset in the town centre and due to the poor quality of the facility, use was not being maximized. The previous proposal considered by Council for two multi-purpose arenas to be used by schools during the week and on Saturdays should, he said, be kept on the radar.

**Councillor Storey joined the meeting at this stage – 7.55pm.**

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Finlay and **AGREED:**

***that the meeting adjourn for 10 minutes to allow parties to consider the proposals put forward.***

The meeting reconvened at 8.08pm.

Based on the analysis of revisions to version 4 of rates estimates (Rates Estimates 2011/12 – Version 5) appended to minutes of Council Meeting 938 – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011 (Appendix A) and including additional official & courtesy visits budget agreed on the recommendation of Corporate & Central Services Committee and items where consensus reached earlier in the meeting, the following additional amendments to additions/reductions were put forward on behalf of the DUP group.

Page	Service	Item	Change
P6	Sports development		-£1000
P7	JDLC	Printing/stationery	-£1000
P7	JDLC	Publicity/promotions	-£1000
P16	EH	Sample purchases	-£500
P23	Waste disposal	Landfill tax	-£11,200 (rather than -£9184)
P23	Waste disposal	Disposal charges	-£19480 (rather than -£18580)
P23	Waste disposal	Green waste/brown bins	-£4619 (rather than 2347)
P23	Waste disposal	Electricity	-£3000
P23	Waste disposal	Recycling/vehicle maintenance	-£500
	Loan charges	Riverside Park	-£2293
P21	Street cleansing		+£2000 (rather than +£3000)

P22	Waste collection	Plant and vehicles	-£36000
P22	Loan charges	New refuse collection vehicle	+£16034
P22	Waste collection	Trade waste income reduction	+£9000 (rather than +£39000)
P32	Corporate management	Corporate training	+£3350 (rather than +£10,000)
	Loan charges option 1 (global amenities budget)	Changing rooms at Dervock	£500,000 over 30 years
	Loan charges option 2 (global amenities budget)	Changing rooms at Dervock and refurbishment and upgrading of Megaw Park	£1M over 30 years

Councillor McGuigan sought information from Councillor Stevenson on the rationale for reductions in budgets and the basis for recalculation of landfill tax and trade waste income reduction expressing concern about Council making a hasty decision on the budget reductions proposed without adequate information being provided to allow the proposals to be considered.

Councillor Stevenson said his landfill tax calculation was based on average tonnage at Quarter 3 and he considered the year end out-turn would be well below 9345 tonnes. Regarding trade waste, while income was being lost due to loss of contracts he considered council should not be expected to bail people out. He had estimated trade waste reduction at £9000, based on his presumption that if people were not using landfill disposal, haulage not happening and if his estimates were not correct the difference could be covered by underspend in other budgets. The Chief Executive cautioned against this as a poor practice and poor message to managers. He also drew attention to the timescale for procurement of a refuse collection vehicle which would not be in place until well into year.

The Director of Borough Services advised that the estimates he had prepared in relation to both waste collection and disposal were based on the best information available and that in his view the substantial cuts proposed were not prudent. He drew attention to the fact that whilst he had addressed in detail the questions posed within his remit by Councillor Stevenson he was nonetheless concerned by the lack of discussion. He advised that vehicle costs had been reassessed in light of the continuing escalation in fuel prices, the costs inevitably incurred in maintaining in a roadworthy condition of an aging fleet and member comment previously; pointing out that the proposal to purchase a refuse collection vehicle, whilst most welcome, would not do away with the need for additional money for both fuel and parts in the incoming year. He asked Councillor Stevenson to disclose how he had derived the figure for disposal fees as it was not clear from which element savings were being found, but was not given an answer. The Director also pointed out that the reduction he had proposed in trade waste income was based on actual figures concerning lost business.

Alderman Simpson concluded that since the proposed loans for Dervock Changing Rooms and Megaw Park would not come into operation until the end of the financial year there was minimal financial commitment in the 2011/12 and since the projects would be subject to economic appraisal this would provide safeguard for Council.

Councillor McGuigan said his party was opposed to the revised proposals put forward by Councillor Stevenson, on behalf of the DUP group, as insufficient information as to the rationale for some of the reductions had not been given and he had no confidence that the DUP budget reductions would allow Council to meet its obligations in terms of essential services.

Councillor McCamphill said he was not content to go with the figures calculated by the DUP group.

The Chief Executive referred to the range and extent of changes brought forward at the last minute without any discussion with relevant directors which had put undue pressure particularly on the Director of Central & Leisure Services with regard to last minute recalculations to enable rates to be struck.

Councillor Stevenson proposed, seconded by Councillor Finlay

***that Council accepts the revisions to Version 4 of the rate book(appendix A CM 938) , as amended by proposals agreed at this meeting and revised proposals put forward at this meeting, at an estimated increase of 1.69% or 2.24% if Dervock project was included or 2.79% if the Dervock and Megaw Park projects were included.***

The Mayor put the proposal to the meeting and voting was as follows:

For: 7 , Against: 5, Abstentions 3.

The meeting adjourned at 8.55 p.m. to allow the Director of Central & Leisure Services to make the proposed adjustments to the spreadsheets and recalculate the rate.

#### **The Director of Borough Services left the meeting at this stage.**

The meeting reconvened at 9.45 p.m. and in response to questions the Chief Executive advised that he had authorized the Director of Borough Services to retire from the meeting during the adjournment.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services advised that taking account of all revenue adjustments the rate increase was 1.71%. Additional capital project budget of £1/2M would cost £30,977 of loan charges bringing the increase to 2.25%. If capital projects increased to £1M the loan charges would be £61,954 giving an increase in rate of 2.79%.

The revised total net expenditure for the year, without capital projects was £7,177,018, with net amount to be raised £5,843,758.

In response to comments by Councillor Storey regarding further advice from officers the Chief Executive stated that officer advice had already been given to the meeting and in written responses to questions and there was nothing further to add, with the latest adjournment being simply to facilitate recalculation of rates estimates and it was now a decision for Council to approve the revised proposed budgets and set the rate for 2011/12. Officers will endeavour to live with the budgets set and any issues arising will be referred to relevant committee to allow Council to consider.

He stood by the comments made earlier that the degree of changes put forward at the last minute without any advice or notice to officers was not particularly helpful, put undue pressure on officers and is not a good way to do business. At Version 5 members had gone through the budgets line by line and reductions agreed, following this questions had been submitted by Councillor Stevenson and answers copied to all members. Members were asked at the previous meeting to submit any additional information and none had been received in advance of the meeting.

Councillor McGuigan voiced his concern about the importance of being satisfied on budgets as it was councillors who were striking the rates and it was important to ensure that Council did not place a burden on ratepayers but also more important that Council provide decent first class services to those we represent. His party, he said, had concerns about the impact of particular cuts and serious concerns about some of the things in the rates and how it is proposed to spend ratepayers' money.

Councillor McCamphill said he totally disagreed with the way the rate is being structured and would be voting against it.

Councillor Robinson recorded her dissatisfaction about the method of finding money from vacant properties and the limited revenue Council secured from the exercise. She also commented on the handling of the rate setting process, the value to members of further information in response to questions, the level of information on budget available in other councils, the recent variance report at 8 months showing £103,000 surplus in one directorate budget. The Chief Executive advised that all information requests had been responded to.

Drawing the debate to a close that Mayor thanked members and officers for their efforts and invited a motion on the rate.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services advised that based on the revised estimates put to her the non-domestic rate was calculated at 26.6575p and the domestic rate 0.3421p, an increase of 2.79%. Council was also required to approve the net expenditure for the incoming year of £7,238,972, with a net amount to be raised of £5,905,712 together with capital projects for 2011/12, estimated at £1,395,000 and loan charges of £104,004. (Rate estimate included, Appendix A)

Councillor Stevenson proposed and Councillor Finlay seconded

***that Council approve and authorise the general estimate of rates for 2011-12, including the capital projects (Appendix B), with total net expenditure of £7,238,972, net amount to be raised £5,905,712 and set the non-domestic rate at 26.6575p and the domestic rate at 0.3421p, an increase of 2.79%.***

On being put to the meeting voting was recorded as follows:

**For the motion (11)**

Councillor McKeown  
Alderman Simpson  
Councillor Storey  
Alderman Campbell  
Councillor Finlay  
Councillor Stevenson  
Councillor Halliday  
Councillor Robinson  
Councillor Patterson  
Alderman Cousley  
Councillor Kennedy

**Against the motion (4)**

Councillor McLaughlin  
Councillor McGuigan  
Councillor Cavlan  
Councillor McCamphill

Abstentions (0)

The Mayor declared the motion carried and the meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Appendix A Estimate of rates 2011/12

Appendix B Capital projects

**2011/2012 GENERAL ESTIMATE OF RATES - BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>SERVICES</b>	<b>Capital Charges £</b>	<b>Other Expenditure £</b>	<b>Misc. Income £</b>	<b>Net Cost £</b>
Cultural Facilities	20,655	228,828	0	249,483
Town Hall	50,411	101,960	38,360	114,011
Sports Development	0	67,273	6,000	61,273
Indoor Leisure	266,259	1,471,068	690,000	1,047,327
Summer Scheme	0	13,500	0	13,500
Sports Grounds Parks & Open Spaces	375,444	789,571	35,700	1,129,315
Tourist Facilities	58,884	129,011	107,100	80,795
Tourism	0	82,149	20,000	62,149
Community Services	30,760	73,942	12,120	92,582
Community Relations	0	132,692	101,894	30,798
Cemeteries	2,782	80,589	19,000	64,371
Public Conveniences	3,564	35,340	0	38,904
Environmental Health	2,256	570,261	184,682	387,835
Dog Control	2,141	93,350	17,000	78,491
Licensing	0	23,964	13,414	10,550
Street Cleaning	25,871	223,409	15,555	233,725
Waste Collection	90,658	745,007	245,720	589,945
Waste Disposal	46,654	1,321,842	44,500	1,323,996
Building Control	0	265,434	140,000	125,434
Other Community Assets	0	56,159	0	56,159
Minor Works	416	4,550		4,966
Economic Development		153,269		153,269
Members Allowances		197,825		197,825
Mayors Allowance		9,604		9,604
Official & Courtesy Visits		20,000		20,000
Democratic Representation	2,711	212,077		214,788
Corporate Management Costs	0	439,079		439,079
Non Distributed Costs		11,330		11,330
Registration Births Deaths & Marriages		40,336	40,336	0
Election Expenses		39,000		39,000
Emergency Planning		5,000		5,000
Contributions		20,950		20,950
S115 Expenditure		0		0
District Policing Partnership		148,760	111,570	37,190
Community Safety Partnership		76,550	76,550	0
Bank Interest				-20,000
			20,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>979,466</b>	<b>7,883,679</b>	<b>1,939,501</b>	<b>6,923,644</b>

Total Expenditure	8,863,145	6,923,644
Deduct Capital Charges		1,049,598
Add Loan Charges		1,364,926
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>		<b>7,238,972</b>
General Grant - Derating Resources	273,533	
	1,054,727	1,328,260
Balance Applied		5,910,712
		5,000
<b>Net Amount To Be Raised</b>		<b>5,905,712</b>
Est Product of 1p Rate		221,540
<b>District Rate - Non - Domestic Property</b>		<b>26.6575</b>
<b>Domestic Property</b>	0.012833	<b>0.3421</b>
<b>Domestic Rate Increase</b>	<b>0.0093</b>	<b>2.79%</b>

**Capital Projects 2011/2012****Loan Charges included in Rates Estimates**

	<b>cost</b>	<b>loan period</b>	<b>loan charge term</b>	<b>loan charge</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>years</b>		<b>£</b>
JDLC Swimming Pool Filtration Upgrade	60,000	20	1 year	4,585
Synthetic Pitch Carpet Replacement	150,000	20	1 year	11,463
JDLC Carpark Resurface	25,000	20	1 year	1,911
IT Equipment Upgrade	30,000	4	1 year	8,057
Replacement Refuse Collection Vehicle	130,000	10	1 year	16,034
Global budget for Megaw Park & Dervock Changing Rooms	1,000,000	30	1 year	61,954
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,395,000</b>			<b>104,004</b>