

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

**EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 15th September 2010

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR J McKENNA)

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2010

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and may I, with your permission, open our Extraordinary meeting. I would like to welcome those former Councillors who will shortly be appointed as Honorary Aldermen in recognition of their services to the Council. Unfortunately, Frank Robinson is unable to be with us today due to health problems. I am sure you would wish to join with me in sending Frank and Sheila our best wishes. (*hear, hear*)

Can I call on Councillor Atha, please, to move the Aldermen?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress, I propose that Jonathan Brown, Miles Crompton, Michael James Davey OBE, JP, William Kilgallon OBE, Richard Manning, Frank Robinson and Jean Veta White MBE be admitted as Honorary Aldermen of the City of Leeds.

In so doing, may I advert to three of them initially, the others being dealt with by my other colleagues.

The first tranche, as it were, taken alphabetically – which has always been an order which has particularly appealed to me – I would mention three outstanding individuals, individually and collectively who have made an enormous commitment to the city of Leeds – not merely to the Council, to the whole city of Leeds.

Michael Davey, he started off as a tram conductor, obviously on his way, and he got a TUC scholarship, which was quite remarkable in those days and, as a result of that, he was able to tour America along with two enormously important bodies, the American Federation of Labour and the CIO - Congress of Industrial Organisations – to see what the problems were in the States in relation to trade union activity. He brought that great wealth and knowledge back to this country. Of course, he is best known here for his trade union activity. He has been District Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union and then a regional Secretary for the same union. His concern for the under-privileged and needy led to his being an activist in the Labour Party, including several years as a councillor, first for Seacroft and then for Killingbeck and Seacroft.

During these years he served on a number of committees, too numerous to recite, but he will be remembered not for the number of committees he served on or chaired, but for the integrity and direct honesty that he brought to all he did. He was universally respected from all aspects of the compass and that is something not very many of us achieve. I say that with some modesty, as I think I do too. I was so sorry when he decided to retire from the Council. He was such an honoured guest on the Council as a member and we all sorry to see him go. He was honoured, too, by the Catholic Church by being offered the highest award given to a lay person in the Church. You might say a quick prayer for us all, Michael, here, as there are some in need, as I look round, of such assistance!

Continuing the religious note, it is my next pleasure to welcome Bill Kilgallon, whom I first met when he was a young priest at the Cathedral down the road. He might even have heard my confession and it is something to be said for us both that we speak to each other still as friends. He continued his ministry outside the priesthood in a way that is in fact an enormous example to us all, achieving things that none of us will achieve in the same way.

He had certain advantages – a first degree in theology, which in politics must be very helpful, a social work qualification at the LSE, an MA from Warwick and an MSc from Lancaster. He is picking up degrees, as it were, relatively easily, it seemed. His most memorably achievement was to set up from miniscule beginnings, on the principle that faith achieves all, an amazingly comprehensive social care organisation which dealt with some of the most destitute and damaged individuals in our society, and this was long before most of us were thinking of caring for those individuals. His creation of St Ann's Shelter and Housing Action, now St Ann's Community Service, alone should have gained him national recognition. He remained Chair of that organisation for the remarkable period from its inception in 1978 to 2002. What a memorial for anyone to leave behind. An extraordinary record.

He did not finish there. He has been Chief Executive of the Social Care Institute for Excellence and chair of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust from 1998 to 2002 and, like Mike Davey who he shares today with, he shared his same social concerns and these were reflected in his political life. He was elected to the Council in 1979 and remained a member until he withdrew in 1992, having served on a number of committees as Chairman and also as a very successful Lord Mayor.

I am moving his name along with Mike's with the greatest humility in the view of that kind of record.

Then we come to possibly the crème de la crème, one of the three, Jean White, MBE. She left school at 17, took up a nursing qualification in this country having received a scholarship to come here to study. She married Owen in 1960 and I think he has ever since congratulated himself on being so lucky!

She worked at St James's for 30 years and was involved setting up the Mental Health Department. She served as a Roundhay Ward Councillor from 1995 to 2000 on a number of committees like Social Services, Adult Social, Community Benefits, all of which reflected her concern and devotion to others. She was the first black person to be Deputy Lord Mayor for Leeds, a post that she filled with great grace, graciousness and warmth.

Her commitment to voluntary work has not been confined to her particular community but that community has extended to her frequent bequests of bestowment of honours – things like the National Black Women's Achievement Award, the Yorkshire Black Achievement Award, the York Ministry for Women's National Councillor Spring Honours Award, the Barbadian Association Certificate of Excellence – these are just a few of the honours that have been showered upon her and that is capped in the end by this award of the MBE at the Palace in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

To all those three I offer my congratulations in advance of, I am sure, a successful vote. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Atha. Can I call on Councillor Carter now to second, please?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I begin by associating myself and my group with the comments made by Councillor Atha. We are delighted to support the nomination of all the people nominated here today with one exception, which I will come to in a moment.

I could not help but wonder, Lord Mayor, when Councillor Atha referred to Honorary Alderman Kilgallon very shortly leaving the priesthood and having heard his

confession, it was not because he had been told that confessions usually lasted ten minutes and Bernard was in for six hours! *(laughter)*

However, my Lord Mayor, can I comment fairly briefly on the two nominees from my party? First of all, Richard Manning. I am delighted to see Richard here today. Many members of the Council, newer members, will not remember Richard but he was one of my very small band of colleagues and supporters when our group was at a very low ebb indeed, and I valued greatly his advice and his incisive brain being brought to bear on a lot of issues when we were very short of members indeed. It always struck me as a great pity that we were not able to keep Richard with us on the Council through business reasons and business commitments, and to often people have come and served on the Council who I think would have made an even greater contribution had they been able to mix the business that they were in with the work of this Council. I think it is a great loss to the City Council that too often we lose people of Richard's talents and ability but he has gone on continuing to serve his city, serving in various capacities on a number of Jewish charities in the city and, of course, is well known as one of our leading solicitors in the city of Leeds and has handled very many high profile cases.

That brings me on to Frank Robinson, who was a ward colleague of mine, as you all know, and was much looking forward to being here today but unfortunately on Monday evening he suffered a stroke and is currently in the Bradford Royal Infirmary. What I am able to tell members is that I visited Sheila yesterday and we have been in touch again from the office today and he is comfortable and, whilst he has got a loss of feeling in the left-hand side, he is able to speak quite coherently and converse and so we all hope he will make a speedy and full recovery. *(hear, hear)* He is obviously very disappointed he is not here today and I will pass on the good wishes, my Lord Mayor, of you and the whole Council.

Frank was Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor of the city and in both capacities did a great job. As a Ward colleague he was exceptional and I have to say, he is somebody with whom I do not think I have ever had a wrong word. He is one of life's true gentleman, he treats everybody with courtesy and treats everybody and judges everybody by their own values and by their contributions to society and I am sure once again he will also be an excellent Honorary Alderman.

Can I conclude by saying again that we want to associate ourselves with the nomination put forward by Councillor Atha of all the people nominated today. Thank you, Lord Mayor, I second. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter. Can I call on Councillor Golton now to support, please?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would also like to associate my group with the comments that have been made by my two colleagues from the Labour and the Conservative groups. One thing that does join all of the nominees today for Alderman is that they have a commitment to the city which was there a long time before they became elected and they have shown a commitment to it after they have been elected as well and as such I think they do deserve that recognition of being an Alderman.

We usually associate ourselves with the nominees who come from our own parties and I shall do so again. I have to say, as a Councillor I missed out on Miles Compton but he had a very big reputation within the party before I came on to the Council, knowing that he was very hard working in terms of getting Moor Town on to the map as Liberal Democrat stronghold and also for his charity work where he did

an annual walk on the Leeds Liverpool Canal in aid of the Shelter charity, which he was also very proud of.

As with many of us, of course, as a politician, it is sometimes very hard to balance the commitment that you need to show for work and that commitment which you need to show towards your community and sometimes it is better to actually let one of them go and concentrate on the other and unfortunately for us Miles had to choose his career over the people of Leeds but, of course, he has been back to campaign with us many a time in Leeds North East and for that we are always grateful.

Jonathan Brown also comes from the north-east of the city. Jonathan was around when I was a councillor to begin with and he always stood out to me as – well, we are a bit of a bunch of eccentric here on the Lib Dem benches, I have to say (*laughter*) but Jonathan did stand out rather a lot. He always reminded me of a bit player from Dallas because every time I went to his house it was gleaming with glass and chrome and he always had a bit of showbiz about him which always worked very well.

What was most outstanding about Jonathan Brown, of course, was his commitment not only to the North Ward which he represented for eight years, but to the Jewish community in Leeds which he was proud to serve and, of course, his father, who was a rabbi, was also very proud to see him serve the city. Also, of course, because his professional acumen which he was able to bring to many a Council debate in terms of keeping us up to date in terms of social services which he was really committed to, the health debate and, of course, he has tackled Ann Blackburn – either of the Blackburns who were around at the time – on the fluoridation debate, which might not have been core Council business but certainly made us think. What I can say is that Jonathan Brown has left a real mark within the Liberal Democrat party, even though he has left.

As for the other candidates I have to confess for many of them I do not know them personally again but I would need to make special comment first of all for Frank Robinson, being a fellow member of Leeds green fingered cult. The commitment that he put into Leeds in Bloom is something which is recognised throughout the city and as an In Bloom member I would just like to honour him for that.

For Jean White, as a new Councillor on the Council Jean White made sure that, even though she came from a different party, I was looked after in the motherly way that she has and I have to say I am really glad to see that hat back on the benches because I always used to look forward to it. (*laughter*) She has remained, as I said before and after being elected, a very good ambassador not just for the Caribbean community, not just for Chapeltown and for Roundhay where she represented, but also, of course, for the city as well and I am glad to see Jean here today. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Golton. Can I call on Councillor Finnigan now to support, please?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Morley Borough Independent Group are absolutely delighted to support the motion and to support all of the particular individuals being admitted as Honorary Aldermen of the city. I happen to know quite a few of them, certainly I worked with Jonathan and Mike and Jean in a previous existence that people may vaguely remember.

Frank we have worked very hard with in terms of Morley in Bloom and we really have valued his support and certainly Bill has been very helpful in looking at what we can do to make sure that the Neighbourhood Networks work well.

It will not have escaped anybody's attention that none of these are from the Morley Borough Independent Party but we are open to take applications if people are keen and we would like to conclude by saying that we fully support all these people who have had an absolute commitment to the city and have worked hard to make the city a better place, that they should be admitted as Honorary Aldermen of the City of Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Finnigan. Can I call on Ann Blackburn now, please, to support.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. On behalf of the Green group I am delighted to support the motion. I must too say that there are some names that obviously were on the Council before myself. I am sure, though, that they did excellent work when they were Councillors. Some others on this list I do know and though Jonathan has been mentioned by the Lib Dem benches there, about his views about fluoride were opposite to my group's, but nevertheless what I will say about Jonathan was that he did excellent work while he was on what was then Social Services. He was on Social Services Scrutiny the same time as myself and also we were on the Children's Appeals Panels together and I know that Jonathan used to visit regularly the children's home in his ward and he did some excellent work with me there.

Mike Davey, as has been said, spent a lot of time working for the Transport and General Workers Union and many years ago I was a secretary of the office section of the Transport and General Workers Union so I did come across Mike on a few occasions there and again, I found yes, an excellent person, a very good person on the trade union side of things.

Frank Robinson, of course, I know because he is on the same Area Committee as myself and, as has already been said, Frank is a gentleman and it is true, I think he does look for the best in everybody, but also he did have an interest in green and ecological matters, so that was something where we could agree. I am sorry to hear that he is in hospital and I do wish him all the best.

Of course, Bill Kilgallon, he did the recent work on Neighbourhood Networks and I think he did a good job with that.

Just to wind up, as I said I am delighted that all these people have come forward today and they very much deserve the recognition that they are now going to get. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Blackburn. Could I now call for the vote, please? (*A vote was taken*) Thank you, I think that is unanimous.

I shall leave the chair now and with the Chief Executive, we will be going to the well to invite the new Aldermen to sign the Roll of Honour. I can remember my old friend Annie Moxon who would have had a dispute with that one, but never mind! (*laughter*)

We will go to the well and we will invite you in the following order, please, if I tell you now – Jonathan Brown, Miles Crompton, Michael Davey, William Kilgallon, Richard Manning, Jean White in that order, please.

(The Lord Mayor, Chief Executive and Honorary Aldermen signed the Roll of Honorary Aldermen)

THE LORD MAYOR: That concludes the Extraordinary Meeting. We are adjourning for five minutes so I think the Whips would like members to stay in their seats but it will allow guests of the new Honorary Aldermen to retire. Thank you.

(The meeting closed at 2.07 pm)