

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

**EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 2nd July 2014

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR D CONGREVE)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2nd JULY 2014

THE LORD MAYOR: Members of Council, distinguished guests and members of the public, can I welcome you to this Extraordinary Council Meeting. Can I ask all Members to ensure that their mobile phones are switched on to silent. If not you will incur the wrath of the Lord Mayor and you will be fined and the proceeds will go to my charity.

I would like to welcome Christian Prudhomme to this Extraordinary Meeting of the Council today. Christian studied at the ESJ School of Journalism in our twin city of Lille and, after years as a journalist with obviously a keen interest in cycling, he became the Director of the Tour de France in 2007.

I am delighted to welcome Christian to the Council Chamber today and I am sure you will all join me in giving him a true Yorkshire welcome. (*Applause*)

M CHRISTIAN PRUDHOMME (Director of the Tour de France): Thank you so much. I am really happy to be here with you. It is a great honour for me to be in front of you, to be in front of the Leeds City Council.

If I did not know what Welcome to Yorkshire means I think I would have understood these last two days. You are kind people. We come with Le Tour de France. Le Tour is the world's greatest cycling event but it is much more than just a great bike race. You know, we say in France everything ends with songs but for us, the Tour de France, everything begins with a letter. We got a few letters from you and I have one from 24th May 2012. With my colleagues when we got this letter, we saw one thing – not one but three signatures; your signatures, dear Keith, the Leader, but also the signatures of the Leaders of the other main parties. That is something quite unique. When we got this letter we realised Leeds really wanted to welcome the Tour.

This morning I had a short walk in the streets of the city. I saw the giant banner, Leeds Welcomes the Tour de France, on the Town Hall, I saw many, many bicycles painted yellow, even on the big crane just next to the building, 20 or 30 metres high. I am really impressed and thrilled at what you have done for us, for the Tour. I want to thank you all for the trust you have in us, for the trust you have in the Tour.

I want to thank you for writing that “Bringing the Tour de France to Leeds will provide the catalyst we need to move to the next stage of cycling in the city.” I think it is true. I read everywhere in the streets, “Cycling starts here.” You are right.

The Tour de France was born in 1903, it is 111 years old, but it is only the second time it has started from the UK, 2007 from London, 2014 (in three days) from Leeds in Yorkshire. It does not happen just like that, out of the blue. The grass roots of road cycling are here - Brian Robinson, Beryl Burton, Barry Hoban. You have all the venues we need for the tour. You have an outstanding landscape and, more than that, you have passion – passion for cycling and love for Le Tour.

All we imagine will be better tomorrow, the day after, on Saturday, on Sunday. I have dreams of the Grand Départ in Leeds, in Yorkshire. I feel it will be even bigger. You are proud to be from Leeds, you are proud to be from Yorkshire. I

believe that in three days, in four days, in five days, in the future you will be even prouder to be from Leeds, you will be even prouder to be from Yorkshire and if it is thanks to the Tour de France, I will be really happy. *Merci beaucoup. (Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just prior, before we started this, I said to Christian that there are only three people ever stood in this Chamber to address the Council. One is the Queen, who stood there but did not address the Council; the second one, of course, was Nelson Mandela; and, years ago, as Jim McKenna reminded me rightly, it was John Hulme, so this is a very special occasion and on behalf of the Council, Christian, you said no pressure then at all but you did remarkably well. On behalf, welcome to Leeds.

I would also like to welcome Beryl Burton's daughter, Denise, who has come along to observe the occasion and I will say a few words later. *(Applause)*

Of course, the man had the vision and the passion for this whole event, Gary Verity from Welcome to Yorkshire, so welcome to Gary. *(Applause)*

As we all know now, Christian Prudhomme is the wisest Frenchman ever to walk. *(laughter)* There is nobody who has been as wise or as clever as Christian and the reason is simple. When that letter went off, at that time we were competing with other European cities. We were competing with Utrecht, Florence, Edinburgh and Barcelona. Christian, because he is a professional judge had to come over and look at Yorkshire and I am delighted that you were able to choose Leeds and Yorkshire out of that competition for the Grand Départ, because what you have done is give us a real opportunity that I think people in the North, and particularly Yorkshire, have been waiting for.

Firstly, because it is watched by three billion people in 190 countries, we get to showcase how beautiful and stunning Leeds and Yorkshire is, particularly with its history. I know that when you first saw that you were bowled over by the history of Yorkshire as well with its castles and its walls and its villages. I think when you think that if three billion people will be watching this, frankly it is the best marketing opportunity this Council and this city has had, and this region, for a very long time.

The second thing, which I think is dear to all our hearts, it has actually demonstrated that not only do we work across parties, we have worked across Local Authorities and the public sector has been able to demonstrate they can organise and host world class global events. I think this is a good opportunity to thank officers from the Chief Executive downwards who have kept our streets clean, who have done the extra mile, the police as well, to make this event look what it should be, world class.

I know one thing that is dear to your heart. We could not have won this bid without saying that we were passionate about leaving a legacy for future generations. I have not got time to go into the physical side of this in terms of the extra roads and so on, but yesterday we witnessed a magnificent event at Temple Newsam when 50 schools, five special school, 50 primary schools, 550 children took part in a mini Le Tour at Temple Newsam. Truly, to see the passion, the crying, the laughing, the effort, determination, the enjoyment in that day, it was truly magnificent. It was really inspirational to all of us so again I would like to thank the officers from Highways and Education involved in that because it was a huge success. I think it is something we should reflect on. It was so good, but maybe if we can organise Le Tour every year from there that would be great, Christian!

Of course, this also a special occasion for Beryl Burton's daughter and husband because we are doing it in September but I thought it was a great opportunity to pull the two events together to say that in September we will be giving the greatest female cyclist and athlete in this country the Freedom of the City and I hope, Denise, that you will be able to come along in September because we will talk more about her achievements.

Just to say that she won seven World Cup Gold medals, 25 nationals, held the twelve hour record which beat men – no woman has actually managed to beat it – and was truly a remarkable athlete and very down to earth and modest.

I did have the experience of being on a bike in the 1990s and some woman coming up to me and I thought, my God, she is a bit competitive, and she asked me where I had been and how many miles and somebody came over to me, "Do you realise who that is?" I said no, I had not, really, to be honest – it was Beryl Burton and, frankly, she was down to earth, modest and a person who had great passion and ability to go. I have had the privilege of that.

I think it is long overdue. Probably if we had done it years ago it would have not had the profile. Cycling has got a massive profile now thanks to the Olympic gold medals, thanks to the success we have had in the Tour and I think it is appropriate that we recognise somebody who has been forgotten for many years, probably, outside of the cycling fraternity and we do that in September, so I am looking forward to that.

Once again, Christian, thank you for coming along and addressing the Council. It really has been a privilege. We will promise you the welcome you have just had now out in the streets on Saturday and give you a great Yorkshire send off for the greatest cycle race in the world annually. Thank you again and I move the vote of thanks. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted, Christian, to join with the comments made by the Leader of the Council and thank you, sir, very much for your joint comments about the joint letter that all the Party Leaders sent to you.

I am sure you will not be disappointed by the event that will start here in Leeds and carry on throughout Yorkshire. It is a great opportunity, as Keith has said, for us to promote not just our wonderful city but our wonderful county and we are going to take every opportunity to do just that. Without you agreeing to bring the Tour here that could not be so, on behalf of all my colleagues, thank you very much indeed and I look forward to a very successful weekend.

We should get some good publicity because I see from your biographical details you are a professional journalist, so let us hope you can bring that to bear and I am sure we will get plenty of good publicity in any event.

You have been quoted as saying that cycling is an extraordinary sport, a legend of a sport, a sport of legends. That, therefore, brings me on to my comments about Beryl Burton. For my generation, as a Leeds lad and a Yorkshire lad, Beryl Burton was a sporting icon, a sporting heroine. I well remember the feats that she performed in cycling and I am delighted that as a Council we have decided to bestow this honour belatedly but at this particular time because it could not be more appropriate.

It also, to generations now, gives an opportunity for them to realise what a wonderful sportswoman Beryl Burton was. I was absolutely delighted and thrilled to be able to support the suggestion that in September we make Beryl Burton a Freeman of the City of Leeds and I am delighted to see her daughter and son-in-law here today and I look forward to seeing them again in September. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Beryl Burton was an inspirational woman and I think it is ironic, really, that one of the drawbacks about the Tour de France is that it is an all male competition, so I think it is only fitting that we should be celebrating the female success that this city has had thanks to the efforts of Beryl Burton.

I was just thinking about how her story has reflections on how the Tour de France came to this city. I was just thinking about the people that we have given the Freedom of the City to. We are going to give it posthumously to Beryl Burton and before that we have, of course, Fanny Waterman, a self-starting believer in something who achieved international acclaim for this city through her own gumption and her own belief; Jane Tomlinson, who turned adversity again into something amazing in terms of what she could achieve with her own effort; and, of course, we have Beryl Burton who took on the world which was male dominated, the world of cycling, but actually produced an achievement which was not just the best for her sex but the best overall.

The reason why the Tour is here in Yorkshire in the first place is not because we did what we do a lot in local politics which is to go to Government and we bid for something and it is like a municipal beauty contest. What actually happened was, we decided locally that we were going to reach out to Le Tour and to say "Will you please have a relationship with us?" and our confidence in ourselves and our determination to make it happen I think was very attractive. I have to say, that was also down very much to the singular determination of Gary Verity and I am really glad that we are able to celebrate the fact that our region set the pace, we set the agenda and it was the Government that was catching up with us to actually help this event to happen. Let us not forget, it was our effort in true partnership across the Channel with Le Tour that has actually made this happen and I am very proud and very grateful that M Prudhomme has come today to talk to us but obviously to bring the entire entourage of Le Tour here to Leeds. We promise you, you will get the reward back in terms of the participation of the city and of the region. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Elliott.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. There has been great excitement throughout Leeds and Yorkshire since the announcement that the Tour de France was coming to us and I would like to thank you on behalf of the Morley Borough Independents, Mr Prudhomme, for being here today and for allowing the Tour to come to Leeds for the beginning.

I was with Gary Verity way back in January when we were at an event in Leeds Town Hall for the Chinese New Year celebrations and when he spoke to the whole gathering there with great enthusiasm about the forthcoming event being held in Leeds and I think everybody took such a lot home with them from Gary's words then.

A plaque to celebrate Beryl Burton's achievements was unveiled in Morley Town Hall by Councillor Terry Grayshon on 10th September 2011 when Beryl's

husband, Charlie, daughter Denise, along with invited family and friends were present. This was followed by a reception in the Banqueting Suite in the Town Hall. On 8th June this year Maxine Peake unveiled a blue plaque provided in partnership with the Leeds Civic Trust and Morley Town Council at the entrance to the Beryl Burton gardens. Morley in Bloom helped with the upkeep of the gardens and recently the wonderful mural depicting Beryl cycling round Morley and painted by a group of artists fronted by Les Packham MBE had some restoration work done for the event by Morley Town Council. Supporters in their hundreds came to honour their hero.

What a marvellous sportswoman Beryl Burton has been, winning 19 championships and seven world titles throughout her career. It seems obvious to me she has been one of the best sportswomen or sportsmen that this country has produced. For many, many years she has been an inspirational example for youngsters from our area and has helped build their aspirations to succeed. Her remarkable achievements have served to put Morley and Leeds on the national and, in many cases, international maps. Never have we heard of any unpleasantness, unsporting attitudes or complaining in regard to Beryl and it is worth remembering that Beryl's achievements were realised without financial support from outside bodies. She and Charlie had to find their way by working hard to fund the entering of competitions.

This has shown the rest of us the fortitude, dedication to the sport of cycling and the brilliance in Beryl which is rarely seen. How fitting that in this very week when Leeds City Council are proposing to honour Beryl, Maxine Peake's play about Beryl's life is being performed at the Playhouse in Leeds and also for the very first time the Tour de France is starting from Leeds.

We Morley Borough Independents wholeheartedly support this proposal for the posthumous award to Beryl Burton of the Freedom of the City of Leeds. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wilford and, Members, Councillor Wilford is making his maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR WILFORD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. On behalf of the Green Group we would like to welcome the Tour de France Grand Départ to the City of Leeds and the County of Yorkshire. We are pleased that the City of Leeds has made provision for people with disability and people living with dementia to fully engage with the Tour. I am sure the Tour will leave a lasting legacy for cyclists not only in our city but the villages, towns and breathtaking countryside that is Yorkshire.

We also welcome that a Special Council Meeting is to be held in September to bestow a civic award to the late Beryl Burton in recognition of her outstanding achievements in cycling. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I will put the motion to the vote. *(A vote was taken)*
The vote is CARRIED unanimously.

Thank you all for attending this Extraordinary Meeting. I declare the meeting now closed. Can we assemble back at 1.30 for the main meeting of Council. Thank you.

(The meeting closed at 1.25pm)