

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

**EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday 10th September 2008

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor F Robinson)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2008

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to you all to this Extraordinary Meeting. A reminder, of course, about mobile phones, if you will ensure that they are turned off - you know the usual penalties, don't you?

APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN

THE LORD MAYOR: Appointment of Honorary Aldermen. I call upon Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It gives me great pleasure to introduce the three people who are before us today.

Professor Bill Winlow was, as many people here will surely remember, the Liberal Democrat Leader of our Group before Mark Harris and he laid the basis for the Liberal Democrats' growth in this Chamber to be the second party here. I am told it was from eight members to 19.

In his early days as Leader there were some very lean times for our party nationally and his optimism, energy and good humour kept our spirits high. Bill was one of the key founders of the Liberal Democrats of Leeds and has made a huge contribution to residents both in Moortown and in the rest of Leeds.

I want to say a few brief words about the other two people before us, although others will, I am sure, add.

Liz Minkin has, as I am sure we are all well aware, worked hard for the people in Kirkstall and, of course, throughout Leeds. Her attention to detail in planning matters is legendary and at the risk of embarrassing her, I can say as a relatively new Councillor I was astonished to find that she was chasing officers on my behalf about a point I had made to Leeds Plans Central officers because Liz wanted to make sure that the right thing was done and that it was indeed actioned. That is absolutely typical of her.

Donald Townsley, like Bill and Liz, has been active in local politics in Leeds for many years and is the current Chairman of the Leeds East Conservatives. He too has a long record of service to the people of Halton and to Leeds.

It gives me very great pleasure to propose that Elizabeth Minkin, Donald Townsley and Professor Bill Winlow be Honorary Aldermen of the City of Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I just echo those sentiments, particularly about Bill and Don, who remind me of the good old days when we were in power, there was a small Tory Party and the Liberals *(laughter)* I am sure they will come back.

I want to concentrate most of the contribution inevitably on Liz Minkin, because she came on in 1988, which was a very good year and, as we all know, she served Kirkstall for 20 years with amazing dedication and commitment. I think one of her biggest challenges during that time was to try and civilise her ward Councillors, Bernard Atha and John Illingworth and as you can see as a result, they are a lot more urbane and sophisticated having worked with Liz for 20 years.

I think many of us will remember Liz for what has just been mentioned - her total dedication to Leeds in a number of roles - in planning, in development, in environment. I have to say I think she played a leading role on our side in transforming the city centre to be one of the most successful in the country.

I think it is appropriate that we open the Civic Museum this Friday and we should actually be mentioning Liz in this context, because she actually started that project, along with the Carriageworks, along with Millennium Square - all great civic projects that belong to the people of Leeds.

I actually remember a title for Liz which still sticks in my mind. I think it was Stewart Golton who mentioned it when he labelled her, because of her passion for planning - we used to sit there through hours of being lectured and told the virtues of planning being high quality. One of the titles she picked up was Queen Nefertiti. I was intrigued with this because she was married to a great Pharaoh years ago, 130 BC, to be precise, and she was known - one of the names translates into "The beautiful and perfect one". I thought that was really appropriate but she is also - I am glad Lucy is here - translated, one of her titles was, "The wife of the great Pharaoh whom he loves." It sounds like She Who Must Be Obeyed!

Whatever title she has got I think it is well deserved and today, given that Honorary Alderman title, it is extremely well deserved for her dedication to the people of Kirkstall and Leeds.

I know that when she retires - she has retired - she has got a thousand and one different hobbies in music and theatre and walking and so on, but above all - and I give a warning to Andrew, (he probably already knows), she will be back to keep her eye on the virtues of planning under your stewardship in the future.

Congratulations to Bill, Don and Liz and it is well deserved to all three of you. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I am delighted to support the three nominations. First of all, if I could comment on my old sparring partner Bill Winlow. As Leaders of the two opposition groups in the City Council we had cause to cross swords on numerous occasions but I always found Bill to be of unfailing good humour and he and I, I think it is fair to say, got on extremely well. I am delighted to see you back here today, Bill, and very pleased to support your nomination as an Honorary Alderman - it is richly deserved.

When we took over in 2004, Liz Minkin came to see me, being the immediate past Exec Board Member for City Development - I do not think it was called City Development then but it meant the same thing - and she gave me a lot of extremely good advice. I am not going to repeat it here because I do not want to embarrass her Labour colleagues but it has all proved to be very accurate and very helpful, so thank you very much Liz!

I would also like to pay tribute, Liz, to the work you have done in the city over very many years. Keith is absolutely right and I am delighted to endorse those comments.

When you came to see me after your short period of ill health - I am glad to see you have fully recovered - you said that you would want to stay involved (and I really hope you will), you said to me, "I shall be contacting you on all sorts of issues" and I said, "Please do. You can send me as many emails as you want." There is just one caveat on that. If you send me as many as Councillor Illingworth sends me, they will go to the same place! *(laughter)*

I am sure that you would not do that so once again, on behalf of the Conservative Group I am delighted to support your nomination to become an Honorary Alderman.

Don Townsley is a true Leeds lad - born in Leeds, lived in Leeds all his life - indeed I think lived in the same area of Leeds all his life representing Halton ward, now lives in Temple Newsam, all the same part of East Leeds. After his service on the Council in the late 1980s and early 1990s, he did not give up his involvement with the city - far from it, because he has been heavily involved with the museum societies, the four societies. He has been on the Steering Group of that group for the Leeds Museums and has constantly been in touch with me about what has been developing there on behalf of the four societies, and absolutely right too, maintaining his great interest in the city of his birth.

Also, like me, one of the few members of this Council, I regret to say, who worked for many years in manufacturing. For 40 years Don worked for perhaps the most famous Leeds engineering company selling their magnificent products to all parts of the world. Indeed, you would see Hunslet Engine Company engines in particular but other pieces of kit as well wherever you went in the world in the days when British manufacturing really stood for something. I think as one manufacturer to another I thank you for that as well. Don, I am delighted that the Conservative Group agreed to your nomination as an Honorary Alderman of the city of Leeds.

I am happy to support all three nominations, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley to support.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Morley Borough Independents I wish to welcome the three new members to the ranks of Honorary Aldermen of the City of Leeds. I have no knowledge of Mr Townsley's time in Council other than what I have heard today, so I can offer little more than our formal welcome.

Bill Winlow was the Leader of the Liberal Democrats during the 1990s during my time in the party, between Colin Campbell and Mark Harris. He had the distinction of becoming the first Lib Dem or Liberal Leader of the Opposition in Leeds since 1926 when his group overtook the Tories. Afterwards others built on his worth. We have since seen the first Liberal or Lib Dem Leaders of Council since 1912 - as then within a minority administration. The last time the Liberals won an outright majority in Leeds seems to have been in 1905. There is still time yet! *(laughter)*

For most of the time since Bill's incumbency the Lib Dems have kept their noses in front and been the second largest party, despite desperate tactics from the Tories *(laughter)* such as recruiting Brian Jennings. *(laughter)*

Liz Minkin has achieved instant canonisation, which I am sure all will agree is well deserved. Since my election in 2003 I have sat with her on a number of boards and panels and formed the opinion that during her 20 years on Council she may have been the best Leader the Labour Group never had, the best Leader the City Council never had and the best Lord Mayor the City Council never had. *(hear, hear)*

I do hope that none of her colleagues ever thought that she might have been too clever by half but that can never be so when dealing with the Terracotta Armies of developers and land speculators or the many large and complex non-planning matters which are found in a city the size of Leeds.

Her time on the council ended in a bit of an anti-climax when she missed her last few weeks of illness in contrast to her generally unfailing attendance at meetings and planning site visits. For what should have been her last Plans West meeting, chocolate cakes were bought and I confess they were eaten in her absence, though we did think about her! *(laughter)*

Once again, may I welcome our new Honorary Aldermen. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. What do you say after that? On behalf of the Green Group I would like to offer our support on the motion.

Again, as with Tom, I will concentrate on the two people I know, that is Bill and Liz. Bill, when I got elected, was Leader of the Liberal Democrats. In fact his office was my group office now and the first time I went in it I had my eye on it ever after that. The one thing, he was one of that small band of people - I remember when I got elected there were nine Conservatives, nine Liberal Democrats and me, the only Green, and the rest of them were Labour members. It was a bit lonely over there and I have got to say he was one of those people who said to me, "If you need any help you know where to come" and actually my first White Paper to this Council was prepared in the Liberal Democrat office and I thank Bill very much for his help.

Moving on to Liz. Liz, I have had the pleasure of serving on City Centre Plans with her, I think it is five years since it has been formed and it has been a great pleasure. There were other times when I was Scrutiny Chair when Keith appointed me to Scrutiny as Development Scrutiny Chair and I worked with Liz then who was an Exec member. I have always found her great to work with and I say on behalf of our colleagues on City Centre Plans, you are sorely missed. We do miss you and it is nice to see you again.

On behalf of my group I would like to support the motion and basically I think the three candidates are all well deserving of the nomination. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I shall now call for a vote on the appointment of the Honorary Aldermen. Those in favour please show. Against? That is CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. If the Honorary Aldermen would care to join me in the well of the Chamber.

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

(Photographs)

(The meeting was closed)
