

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

**EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 12th November 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, 12th NOVEMBER 2014

APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to this Extraordinary Council Meeting. Can I ask Members to ensure that mobile phones are switched to silent and remind Members that the meeting is on the Webcam.

We are here to appoint five Honorary Aldermen and I ask Councillor Wakefield to propose that.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given that we have five names to put forward today, which actually represent 104 years of public service, I think it is going to be extremely difficult for all of us to do justice to those years of service within the time constraints, so it has been agreed that the Leaders will focus on their Party nominations and pass comment on others.

Of course, I can start off with Bernard Atha, who has actually done well over half of those 104 years – indeed, 56 years, clearly extraordinary service and very unlikely, with every due respect here, that many of us will get anywhere near those 56 years, but I look forward to it.

While I was coming in this morning I was reflecting; in 2023 when Leeds becomes the European Capital of Culture, we will be able to look back and reflect on the enormous contribution Bernard has made to the cultural assets of this city.

If you look at the things that we treasure and have become a national icon, Opera North, Northern Ballet, the Grand, City Varieties, Hyde Park (which is getting its proper recognition), I think we can put a lot of those successes down to Bernard's role in being a very determined and a very passionate person for the culture and arts in this city.

For me, one of his more understated assets has been his role in, often quietly and behind the scenes when it was not popular to do so, raising the recognition and status of Paralympians, and I think 2012 when they finally got the equal status and recognition they deserved, I think you can think back for years and years of Bernard's service there, so I think it is an incredible tribute to Bernard's contribution for that particular debate.

I know he is still active and passionate and I think it was Barry Anderson who said to me on Sunday, "I saw Bernard on Sherlock Holmes on TV" and please do not ask me in what role, but apparently you must be still getting the royalties, Bernard! On behalf of this Council I am sure we would like to give you our full appreciation for the years of service you have given to the people of Holbeck and Kirkstall and, of course, of this city.

My other colleague and friend, of course, is Tom Murray, who was a Garforth and Swillington Councillor for 22 years, and extremely popular. As you probably

know, I think he will find this Alderman's role a little bit more peaceful than his last year where he was Lord Mayor of Leeds and a great ambassador for the city as well.

What sums up Tom and Edna is today, this afternoon, they have invited their son and daughter, Colin and Helen, to come along to this occasion. I think that sums up both Edna and Tom's professional and political commitment to the family in this city.

It did not matter what role you gave Tom, you could give him a role on thermodynamics or the environment, he would always find an opportunity to talk about the importance of children's education, as we often heard in this Chamber.

On behalf of the Council, I just want to finish Tom's little bit on one little thing. In 1968, he often used to tell us, he came to Leeds and that was the start of his conversion. He has got an ally in this Council with Alan Gay, who are both Newcastle fans. I just want to remind Tom, on this probably last Civic occasion I can address him, that in 1968 Leeds did the double over Newcastle and went on to win the league and that is why I think you came to Leeds, Tom, to get out of the way.

As I say, I am delighted you are a member of the Aldermen and look forward to meeting you again in some role, I am sure, because I know you are still active around children's issues, around education and so on.

Brenda Lancaster, if I can pass a brief comment about that because huge respect from all of us, Brenda, for your role, twelve years in Moortown, but I thought it was so timely that you should be getting the Alderman's title here given all the work that you have done around the Armed Forces, Veterans, Leeds Pals and so on, so congratulations to you.

Matthew Loble, of course, we miss his blond hair! He must be the youngest Alderman in the universe! *(laughter)* Congratulations to you, Matt.

I know that Gerard Francis, known as Mr Otley, on behalf of our Group as well I would like to congratulate you both on the title of Alderman for this city.

I move those five names, Lord Mayor. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. On behalf of the Conservative Group I would like to associate ourselves with the words of the Leader of Council.

Just briefly to touch on Bernard, Tom and Brenda, I actually have worked with all of them whilst I was Executive Member for Culture and Leisure and, of course, Tom had the combined role of Learning and Leisure Exec Member at one point, and of course no-one can forget Bernard's role in the cultural life of this city.

Bernard very kindly invited me to become a member of the Board of Northern Ballet and, I have to say, I think that is one of my prized roles that I still keep today. It is a fascinating company and it shows the region and the city at its absolute best. There is no doubt whatsoever that that company and many other arts organisations

would not be here in this city if it was not for Bernard's input and also, shall we say, his strong arm with varying Leaders of Council for those arts organisations to have some latitude and to grow and flourish in the city.

Brenda, of course, I too worked with in terms of her dealing with the Veterans and various activities that she did in our time of joint administration together.

If I can now pass on to the Conservative nominees for Alderman, and it is not lost on me or my colleague to my left, Councillor J L Carter, who did say, "Well, it is to be hoped that we do actually vote for all of these people today because the names have been put on the wall already!" (*laughter*) If we have got second doubts about any of them, someone had better have a large eraser to bring out one of the names!

Firstly, Gerard. I think Gerard is probably one of the first people I actually came into within politics way, way, way back in the North-West Leeds days when I was the Chairman of Headingley Young Conservatives, which I know to some of you may seem in the dim and distant past (it does to me too). North-West Leeds, certainly back in those days, some, what, 25-odd years ago, was a big, strong organisation and one that certainly taught me an awful lot in political life.

As many of you know, Gerard served for many years, 25 years, on Otley Town Council, three times having been Mayor. He also served on the old Otley Urban District Council as well. In his professional life, Gerard worked for the Ministry of Defence in Leeds. We are told he signed the Official Secrets Act so we never actually knew what he did there, but a valuable contribution nonetheless and, of course, more recently he was a Member of Leeds City Council as well.

Matthew is someone who I have known for a long, long time, someone who is a friend of mine; born in Leeds, educated in my ward in Boston Spa. Again, many of you know much about Matthew because he has only recently departed from the Council. He worked for BT for many, many a year and he served on the Council for ten years, which seems like only a moment but ten years of service for the Roundhay ward.

Most notably, he actually took over from me as Chief Whip of the Conservative Group, a much honoured and prized title as Councillor Latty, Matthew I and also Councillor Gruen (*laughter*) can attest to; also Councillor J L Carter, I might add. I was trying to add up the combined service of all of those Chief Whips from the Conservative Group. There is one that got away, as it were, but it is heading towards 30-odd years' worth of service.

Lord Mayor, our congratulations to all of the five nominees and we are delighted to see their names joining the Alderman Wall here in the Council Chamber. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As my two other colleagues have mentioned, everyone on the list today for our Aldermanships are outstanding individuals. I like to think if we were all a bit of a wine cellar and instead of lining up as people we were all bottles, these would be good, fine vintages. (*laughter*)

I am sure we all appreciate it, occasionally you come across when you uncork one a bit of a *vin ordinaire* amongst some of our colleagues, but these definitely stand out and deserve our appreciation to be given the title of Alderman.

I will make reference to some of the others because I think they are all outstanding in their own areas. We have already had Tom Murray mentioned as having that commitment to young people significantly through whatever office he held within the Council and latterly as Lord Mayor made sure that his charity was something which gave something back to the young people of the city and left a legacy for himself.

Matthew Lobley, himself, of course, was an outstanding young person and rejuvenated, along with his other brat pack colleagues (*laughter*) the Conservative benches and actually made it a little more relevant to the point where they were even worth going into administration with! (*laughter*)

Of course, Bernard Atha – a legend in his own lifetime. I do not really need to do anything other than just put our backing to what Keith Wakefield said in terms of this is a man who will have a lasting legacy on this city for many years to come.

Of course, Gerard Francis, who did not spend a long time in this particular Chamber but got here through his commitment to real true localism through service on his Town Council and that is something which we should always respect because it is at the grass roots where things actually get done and sorted.

On to Brenda Lancaster. Brenda followed me into the Council Chamber about a year or so afterwards, and I can remember a very nervous individual who had stood for the party under duress and felt insecure about her own qualities and what she could bring to this august Chamber but throughout her time on the Council she has actually demonstrated that everyone of us in the city has something to offer and through whatever humble background or interests that we have, we can turn it into something extraordinary.

We all know that Brenda, of course, through her own personal involvement, has had a real commitment to working with Veterans and the armed forces in the city and developed the Armed Forces Day for the Council to a degree to which it had never been done before, and that was through personal commitment and personal hard work.

She also, of course, was very big in a significant time for us as a city in terms of looking into and looking after our children who are looked after by the Authority and making sure that those children who were adopted had some proper input from elected Members and that is a legacy that she will leave behind in terms of that commitment. She showed we all grew as corporate parents through that example.

What people might not know is, even down to her needlework Brenda made a contribution. This is why I say everybody in the city has something to offer. Through her interest in that Brenda was behind the Leeds Tapestry project, which is something which also leaves a very visible legacy and a snapshot of what this city is and its history in living format in terms of that tapestry which any of you can go and see to

this day. Brenda, you have left a real legacy for the city in all those three areas and congratulations on your Aldermanship. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The MBI Group are delighted to support this particular motion and we will try and be as brief as we can; people will be pleased to hear that I am not speaking for long.

Bernard Atha is an absolute legend, of that there is absolutely no doubt, and that is a phrase that is over used – in Bernard's case it can never be over used. His contribution to the cultural dimension in Leeds is massive and I think the city is a better place for all of his works and all of his efforts. Me and Bernard agree on a lot of things, and it just shows what an awkward cuss he is, as well as myself! We are entirely and utterly supportive of his particular elevation.

Gerard Francis, we are keen Town Councillors, people will know that, we are committed in terms of localism and we do understand and respect Gerard's efforts at Town Council level, my colleague, Councillor Leadley, confirming that he sat on a Scrutiny Board with Gerard and found him effective and very vigorous in his views.

Brenda Lancaster, again a similar legend, her commitment to the Armed Forces is recognised in Morley and wider.

Matthew Loble – I remember Matthew and me going to the Elections Office in 2005 and putting our deposits down in the General Election, as far I remember neither of us actually won that election but we both saved our deposits and that is probably a positive. Matthew is somebody who we do recognise is committed to his community – certainly he turned up on planning issues on a regular basis and spoke with passion and with knowledge and commitment to his communities.

Tom Murray – Tom and I had a mutual friend, I first met Tom over 25 years ago and again it is commitment to education and providing the best quality of education for all of our students and all of our young people, all of our children that he is recognised.

So, as I say, Lord Mayor, the MBI Group are absolutely delighted to support this motion for Aldermanships for all of these Councillors who have got a long and passionate commitment to public service. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak on behalf of the Green Group in support of the motion for the five Aldermen. I have got to say something about Bernard. Bernard is different. *(laughter)* There will be nobody like Bernard. I would say there was a special thing that we allow one Honorary Alderman to speak and that is Bernard, because whatever he says is always entertaining. Keith, it was me that mentioned Sherlock Holmes on Sunday. I am somewhat of a fan of Bernard. The Beiderbecke Affair, which I have got on tape, he is the Returning Officer on that, a wonderful Returning Officer where unfortunately the equivalent of my Party get no votes! As I say, Bernard is something different and there will never be another Bernard, I do not think.

Brenda, I think I can call Brenda a friend. Many years ago we decided – well, she got me over in that corner and persuaded me to come out of retirement and do the Great North Run with her. Ryk here, Brenda and myself went up together to Newcastle. What a great day that was. We got lost in Sunderland on the way back! *(laughter)* Brenda has done lots and lots for charity. We raised lots of money that day for Children in Need and she has done loads of other things.

Tom, my dealings with Tom mainly was when he had the Environment portfolio and we were doing – I am not going to take no credit from you but we were doing the spadework for Wrap Up Leeds – we did not call it Wrap Up Leeds then. We had loads and loads of meetings and you know how he does it, he does all these diagrams and what have you. You are right in saying it always comes down to children, even if you are talking about insulation. A great guy and, as I say, when he was Lord Mayor I really got on with Tom and he deserves it.

Matt, I have to say, you are too young for this! I expected you coming back here. I never agreed with your policies but you have always been a good guy and I thought you would come back here. It seems to me it is a bit early for it *(laughter)* but you are still worthy of it as well.

Gerard, I think for a short period our lives crossed but not very much so we do not know each other very well, but another deserving person to get this award.

As I say, on behalf of the Green Group, all five deserve what they are going to get now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

Can I now invite the Honorary Aldermen into the well of the Chamber to sign the Honorary Scroll.

The Lord Mayor, Chief Executive and Honorary Aldermen proceeded to the well of the Chamber.

The Roll of Honorary Aldermen was signed.

(Photographs and applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, that concludes that meeting.
