

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 31 MARCH 2022 AT  
1000 HRS BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING:** Provost Barry Douglas and Councillors Ellen Freel, Gordon Jenkins, John McFadzean, John McGhee, Helen Coffey, Ian Grant, Maureen McKay, Tom Cook, Lilian Jones, Iain Linton, Douglas Reid, Fiona Campbell, John Campbell, Jon Herd, John Knapp, Clare Maitland, Jim Todd, Depute Provost Sally Cogley and Councillors George Mair, Claire Leitch, Neil McGhee, Jim Roberts, Alyson Simmons, Jim McMahon, Jacqui Todd, Walter Young, John Bell, Elaine Dinwoodie and Drew Filson.

**OFFICERS PARTICIPATING:** Eddie Fraser, Chief Executive; Katie Kelly, Depute Chief Executive; Craig McArthur, Director of Health and Social Care Partnership; Iain Tough, Head of Corporate Support; David McDowall, Head of Economic Growth; Kevin Braidwood, Head of Roads; Bob McCulloch, Interim Head of Housing and Communities; Blair Millar, Head of Housing and Communities; Stuart McCall, Legal Manager; Karl Doroszenko, Development, Planning and Regeneration Manager; Karen Purves, Principal Planning Officer; Julie Jamieson, Acting Corporate Accounting Manager; Aileen Hollywood, Programme Manager – Architecture and Asset Planning; David Wilson, Interim Operations Manager; Craig Young, Team Leader – Litigation and Advice; Mhairi Douglas, Acting Team Leader – Development Management; Clare Wilson, Senior Manager (Authority Wide Services); Alyia Zaheed, Corporate Officer (Equality and Diversity); Gordon Anderson, Assistant Team Leader; Alison O’Kane and Clare Laurenson, Senior Planning Officers; Peter Atkinson, Rachel Hall and Miguel Silva Barral, Planning Officers; Paul Outram, Mineral Project Officer; Catriona Cochrane and Julie Haig, Communications Officers; and Lynn Young, Democratic Services Officer.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Elena Whitham and Billy Crawford.

**CHAIR:** Provost Barry Douglas, Chair.

**PROVOST’S REMARKS**

The Provost began his remarks by extending best wishes to Councillors Jacqui Todd and Walter Young for continuing speedy recoveries following their recent respective illness and injury.

The Provost went on to advise that he had visited the Take a Bow Opportunity Centre on 4 March 2022, along with Depute Chief Executive Katie Kelly, and met with the organisation’s Joint Chief Executives Martyn Hay and Natalie Sneddon and Chair John McManus, who had shared their ambitions for the future. The Provost stated that what they had achieved over the years was truly amazing and remarked that this was a fantastic community facility with much more to come.

The Provost then expressed his pleasure to have attended the Take a Bow production of Shrek the Musical, at the Palace Theatre on Saturday 5 March 2022. After a two year absence from the Palace stage, the hard work and dedication from all the cast and crew had certainly paid off and it had been a most enjoyable show and the cast had been outstanding.

The Provost finally advised that he had attended the Kinship Carers coffee morning at Celebrate Kilmarnock on Saturday 12 March 2022 and had had the chance to discuss the issues faced by our local Kinship Carers and Kinship Kids. The Provost thanked Nancy Kershaw, Gillian Richmond, Anna Paton and all involved in organising the event and for ensuring the needs of Kinship Carers and Kinship Kids are kept on the agenda for us all.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. Provost Douglas and Councillors Roberts, McMahon and Jacqui Todd, having considered the terms of the objective test as outlined in Paragraph 5.5 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, each declared a non-financial interest with respect to the report submitted relative to Item 6, below, as follows, viz:-

Provost Douglas as an employee of a house builder, which, he did not consider to be significant given that his employer was not currently actively developing or promoting residential development within East Ayrshire and, accordingly, advised that he would participate in consideration and determination of that item;

Councillor Roberts in respect of his previously stated views on waste incineration and heat/energy from waste generally, including representations to the Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee, the management of waste within East Ayrshire, and his registered objections to the previous and current planning applications relating to waste gasification and waste incinerator proposals, respectively, at the Killoch site, near Ochiltree; which he considered to be significant, and advised that he would withdraw from the meeting during consideration and determination of that item; and

Councillors McMahon and Jacqui Todd as registered objectors to the current planning application relating to the waste incinerator proposal at the Killoch site, near Ochiltree, which they each considered to be significant and, accordingly, they each advised that they would withdraw from the meeting in the event that relevant specific aspects of the report were to be the subject of consideration, but otherwise would remain and participate in consideration and determination of that item.

### **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

2. There were submitted (circulated), and approved as a correct record, the Minutes of the Council meeting of 24 February 2022 (pages 3-11).
- 2.1 **Matter Arising: Ukraine Crisis** - The Chief Executive confirmed the forward thinking approach to the Council's response to the Ukraine crisis, involving the establishment of an officers' Resettlement Strategic Group, led by the Council Management Team, with senior officers from Housing and Communities taking the lead on practical implementation aspects. In co-operation with social landlords, local families and others, a range of potential living accommodations had been identified for Ukrainian refugees, including tenancies of Council and social rented houses; in that regard colleagues in Legal Services had achieved a 24 hour turnaround for preparation of the necessary data sharing agreements to allow required checks on individuals to be carried out, and further guidance on that was awaited from the Scottish Government; the Council and its officers stood ready to provide whatever practical support might be needed going forward for those refugees coming to East Ayrshire. Further briefings would be provided to Members as matters progress.

Council agreed to note the update provided by the Chief Executive.

### **CABINET/COMMITTEE MINUTES**

3. There were submitted (circulated), and approved as correct records (with the exception of the Ayrshire Shared Services Joint Committee, Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee, and the Governance and Scrutiny Committee and the Integration Joint Board, which were for noting only) the Minutes of the undernoted Meetings, viz:-
  - 3.1 **AYRSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE OF 5 NOVEMBER 2021 (pages 12-14)**
  - 3.2 **AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 29 NOVEMBER 2021 (pages 15-18).**
  - 3.3 **SPECIAL AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC JOINT COMMITTEE OF 10 JANUARY 2022 (pages 19-20).**
  - 3.4 **INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD OF 9 FEBRUARY 2022 (pages 21-45).**
  - 3.5 **CABINET OF 16 FEBRUARY 2022 (pages 46-49).**
  - 3.6 **GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 17 FEBRUARY 2022 (pages 50-54).**
  - 3.7 **PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 18 FEBRUARY 2022 (pages 55-57).**
  - 3.8 **CABINET OF 23 FEBRUARY 2022 (pages 58-65).**
  - 3.9 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT LICENSING PANEL OF 7 MARCH 2022 (pages 66-67).**
  - 3.10 **LOCAL REVIEW BODY OF 10 MARCH 2022 (pages 68-70).**
  - 3.11 **CABINET OF 16 MARCH 2022 (pages 71-77).**
  - 3.12 **GRANTS COMMITTEE OF 16 MARCH 2022 (pages 78-83).**
  - 3.13 **PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 18 MARCH 2022 (pages 84-87).**

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021**

4. There was submitted and noted a report dated 7 March 2022 (circulated) by the Chair of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee which provided an overview of the activities of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee during the 2021 calendar year, with a focus on key areas of work, and highlighting any particular aspects over the period.

Councillor Mair took the opportunity to thank members of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee, officers and partner colleagues for all of the support which he had received during his time as Chair.

Councillor McFadzean joined the meeting during consideration, and prior to determination, of this item.

**EAST AYRSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP: 2021-22  
ANNUAL REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND  
SUPPORT PLAN; COMMUNICATION STRATEGY; AND PROPERTY AND ASSET  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

5. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Health and Social Care which presented the outcomes from the East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership 2021-22 Annual Review of the Strategic Plan; Interim Workforce Development and Support Plan; Communications Strategy; and Property and Asset Management Strategy, for endorsement.

It was agreed:

- (i) to endorse the findings from the 2021-22 Annual Review of the Strategic Plan; Interim Workforce Development and Support Plan; Communications Strategy; and Property and Asset Management Strategy;
- (ii) to endorse the six Strategic Commissioning Intentions and the longer term approach to collaborative commissioning set out in the Strategic Plan 2021-30;
- (iii) to note that the report had been approved by the Integration Joint Board at the meeting on 23 March 2022;
- (iv) to note that the report would be presented to NHS Ayrshire and Arran Board on 23 May 2022;
- (v) to implement the Direction in respect of commissioning services by East Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire & Arran in line with the Strategic Plan, as refreshed by the Annual Review, and within the allocated budget for 2022-23; and
- (vi) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2: PROPOSED PLAN, ACTION PROGRAMME,  
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT, KILMARNOCK TOWN CENTRE AND SOUTH  
CENTRAL KILMARNOCK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SUPPLEMENTARY  
GUIDANCE AND SUMMARY RESPONSES TO THE MAIN ISSUES REPORT  
(Item 13 of Cabinet meeting of 30 March 2022)**

6. There was submitted a report dated 17 March 2022 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive which presented to Council for consideration and approval, the East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 Proposed Plan (PLDP2), Action Programme, the Environmental Report and the Kilmarnock Town Centre and South Central Kilmarnock Development Framework; and sought authorisation from Council to advertise and invite representations on all of these documents.

With the acquiescence of the Provost, Councillor Roberts, as Chair of the Member Officer Working Group: Local Development Plan 2, took the opportunity to emphasise the comprehensive scope and depth of the proposed Plan and associated documents, and the very significant amount of work that had gone into preparation of same; and in that regard acknowledged the tremendous effort and commitment made by Members and officers serving on the Working Group over the last two years and more in taking forward the process for development of the proposed Plan which was before Council today.

Councillor Roberts then withdrew from the meeting.

Following discussion, Councillor Maitland, seconded by Councillor Cook, moved:-

- (i) to approve the Proposed Plan, Environmental Report and Action Programme;
- (ii) to approve the Kilmarnock Town Centre and South Central Kilmarnock Development Framework as draft supplementary guidance;
- (iii) to note the risk, and policy implications of non-approval or a delay in approval of the Proposed Plan and related documents as set out in paragraphs 11-12 and 66-68 of the report;
- (iv) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth to advertise and publicise all of the documents;
- (v) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth to publish background papers relating to the development of the Plan;
- (vi) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth to make any non-substantive changes or alterations/amendments of a technical or drafting nature as may be considered necessary prior to the Proposed Plan, Environmental Report, Action Plan and supporting documents being printed and advertised;
- (vii) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth and the Chief Governance Officer to treat the Proposed Plan, Environmental Report and Action Programme as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in line with the advice detailed in paragraphs 53-57 of the report; and
- (viii) otherwise, to note contents of the report.

Councillor Jenkins, seconded by Councillor Freel, moved as an amendment:-

- (i) to approve the Proposed Plan, Environmental Report and Action Programme, subject to deletion of those potential housing development sites at Kilwinning Road, Stewarton referenced ST-H2 (PROP 11) and ST-F1(H), and any consequential implications of that in respect of (iv) to (vii), below;
- (ii) to approve the Kilmarnock Town Centre and South Central Kilmarnock Development Framework as draft supplementary guidance;
- (iii) to note the risk, and policy implications of non-approval or a delay in approval of the Proposed Plan and related documents as set out in paragraphs 11-12 and 66-68 of the report;
- (iv) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth to advertise and publicise all of the documents;
- (v) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth to publish background papers relating to the development of the Plan;
- (vi) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth to make any non-substantive changes or alterations/amendments of a technical or drafting nature as may be considered necessary prior to the Proposed Plan, Environmental Report, Action Plan and supporting documents being printed and advertised;
- (vii) to authorise the Head of Economic Growth and the Chief Governance Officer to treat the Proposed Plan, Environmental Report and Action Programme as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in line with the advice detailed in paragraphs 53-57 of the report; and

(viii) otherwise, to note contents of the report.

On the vote having been taken by calling the roll, the motion was carried by 26 votes to 3.

### **ADJOURNMENT/RECONVENTION**

7. The meeting adjourned at 1218hrs and re-convened at 1228hrs with the same Members participating. Councillor Roberts re-joined the meeting at this point.

### **OPENCAST COAL MINING IN EAST AYRSHIRE - COMPLETION OF RESTORATION AND RECOVERY ACTIVITY**

8. There was submitted a joint report (circulated) by the Chief Governance Officer and the Head of Economic Growth which updated Council on the position with respect to the conclusion of restoration works at East Ayrshire's former opencast coal complexes, activity which had begun in 2013 following the closure and subsequent liquidation of two significant operators in the local industry. The report set out in summary form a site by site analysis of progress and the current position; and during the meeting Members were able to view aerial drone footage of the results of opencast restoration works carried out.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the efforts which had been made over the last nine years to respond to the multi-faceted challenges faced as a result of the liquidations which had taken place in 2013;
- (ii) to note that restoration of the major open cast complexes was now nearing completion;
- (iii) to note the progress which had been made since 2013 and the current position in respect of the 10 main former opencast coal complexes;
- (iv) to note that the Council had strengthened its procedures in a range of key areas, including its compliance monitoring procedures and the corporate management of financial guarantee schemes (bonds) across all major environmental projects;
- (v) to note the ongoing requirement for aftercare works at various sites for fixed time periods; and
- (vi) otherwise, note the content of this report.

### **UK ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP - DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA**

9. There was submitted a report dated March 2022 (circulated) by the Chief Executive which asked Council to consider adopting the UK All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) definition of Islamophobia.

It was agreed:

- (i) to adopt the terms of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) definition of Islamophobia; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

## VALEDICTORY SPEECHES

### 10. Eddie Fraser, Chief Executive

The Chief Executive took the opportunity to address the Provost and Elected Members, stating that today marks the last meeting in the life of this Council, and that on behalf of the Council Management Team and all of the Council's employees, he was pleased to have the chance to say thank you to all of the Elected Members for the constructive way in which we have been able to work together for the benefit of East Ayrshire's communities throughout the past five years.

The Chief Executive commented that when we look outwith East Ayrshire, we can see how strong and positive the relationships we have here are, and even disagreements are dealt with in a dignified manner. We can all be very proud of the excellent Member/Officer relationships that we have within East Ayrshire Council, underpinned by mutual trust, respect, courtesy, and most of all that shared sense of purpose to deliver the best possible outcomes for those in our communities.

This has never been more true than in the last two years, as, together, we sought to respond to and mitigate against the impact of the Pandemic. Over 360 people with a diagnosis of Covid, had died in East Ayrshire, and that could never have been imagined two years ago. In a very short period of time, and in order to maintain essential services, we had to rapidly transform the way the Council works. This included changing how the Council delivered some services and making difficult decisions in respect of standing down others, but officers were able to do so knowing that they had the full support of Elected Members. Everything, from how the Council delivered Health and Social Care to Waste Management services to things normally regarded as background services which became essential, such as issuing Covid related grants to businesses and individuals, benefitted from the positive relationships between Elected Members and officers.

The Chief Executive observed that Elected Members have had to adapt too. Online and hybrid meetings are now common place and the Council as an organisation is much better at that now than we were two years ago. A big thanks is due to the IT teams for everything that they had done to make things happen.

The Chief Executive stated that it is on days like this that you of course reflect on all that has gone before. But you also start to look to the future. The Council Elections are coming up in May and some of our Elected Members had decided not to stand for re-election, and they will be missed. Leaving us, with our thanks and our very best wishes for the future are Councillors Fiona Campbell, John Campbell, Helen Coffey, Elaine Dinwoodie, Tom Cook, Gordon Jenkins, John Knapp, George Mair, Neil McGhee, Jim Roberts, Elena Whitham and Walter Young. The Chief Executive noted that, together, they take with them a staggering 173 years of service as Councillors, and extended a huge thank you to all of them for all that they had done for the people of East Ayrshire, and remarked that it really had been an honour and a pleasure to work for and with each of them.

The Chief Executive concluded by saying that this is the end of an era, and to mark the occasion, arrangements had been made for a photo to be taken of all Members following today's Council meeting; stating that he looked forward in the weeks before the election to having the opportunity to say a more personal farewell to those who will be leaving the Council; and, in the meantime offered his thanks and good wishes.

### Councillor John McGhee, Leader of the Labour Group

Councillor McGhee echoed the comments made by the Chief Executive with regard to the impact of the Covid pandemic over the last two years, particularly the sad loss of lives.

Councillor McGhee went on to say, “We come to the last Council meeting of a five year term, a strange term, with the pandemic taking up these last two years changing the known landscape, and forcing us all to re-think how we do things; and thanks to some great innovation and endeavours by officers of the Council at all levels, we have managed to ensure some very good outcomes for our residents.

A number of Councillors are standing down across parties and I wish Gordon Jenkins, Helen Coffey, Tom Cook, Fiona Campbell, John Campbell, Jim Roberts, Walter Young and Elena Whitham all the very best for the future, and “lang may yer lum reek”!

Whilst this farewell may not be the life or death or emotional or national occasion of La Pasionaria’s speech at the farewell to the International Brigades on the 28 October 1938 in Barcelona, it is nonetheless a fond farewell to John Knapp, Elaine Dinwoodie, Neil McGhee and George Mair.

John Knapp, previously Councillor with Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Council, John was elected at a By-election in Onthank, I believe in 1987, and retained the seat later on; and since 1995 has been re-elected on six occasions. I have known John Knapp for many years. In fact, one night the only way I could get him to leave my house was to agree to stand as a Labour candidate for Ward 3, Kilmaurs and Stewarton South. Among the many key positions John held was Depute Leader of East Ayrshire Council, and along with former Labour Councillor Gordon Cree, they were almost part of the furniture, or as some would say, the Statler and Waldorf of London Road!

Elaine Dinwoodie was first elected in 1999 and re-elected on four further occasions. I know Elaine was very proud of the work done to have the St Xavier and Patna Primary Schools on the one campus. A good colleague who knows her own mind and calls it as she sees it.

Neil McGhee was elected in 2003, and, as he would say himself, immersed in the Third Sector, and if you have never heard of the Auchinleck Community Development Initiative, or ACDI, then you haven’t heard Neil McGhee. Always talking up his community, a lover of music, fantastic bowler, gardener and a good colleague, and a fabulous Deputy Leader of the Labour Group.

George Mair, 39 years with the Council in Environmental Health, first elected in 2012 and a fine Group Secretary and Chair of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee. Like myself, a big Killie fan.

All four of you will be a sair miss, and to quote Dolores Ibarruri, forever known as La Pasionaria -“You are history. You are legend.” I wish you all good health and happiness for the future”.

### Councillor Tom Cook, Leader of the Conservative Group

Councillor Cook stated: “Provost, Chief Executive, Elected Members, officers, friends. Well, that’s it then, we got there!

As we rapidly approach the end of another Council term, and what will be my last one, I cannot help but think back over my years as a Councillor – 15, in fact.

In each of my three terms there has been a defining moment when things suddenly changed. During my first term all was going well until the announcement in 2009 that the Johnnie Walker bottling plant was closing, then in my second term we had the liquidation of the opencast coal companies in 2013, the restoration of which, as we have just heard, is just finishing. Both of these events focussed all our minds, to protect jobs and support people.

However, these pale into insignificance compared to what hit us in 2020. The Covid Pandemic has had a major impact, not only on this Council but on the world in general. There can be no-one in this room today who has not been affected by it, losing a friend, work colleague or family member and our thoughts are with all of them. But what impressed me was the way this Council and our communities rallied round to support each other, barriers were broken down, job descriptions put aside and everyone pulled together to continue to deliver services and ensure people were supported, cared for and provided with food and medicine.

If the past two years have taught us anything it is that in East Ayrshire we have a strong community spirit and can adapt to whatever obstacles we come across. Much of what we learned as a Council during this time has become embedded in the way we now work, through the transformation strategy working practices have changed, service improvements have been made, and our workforce has been empowered.

I believe that this Council is in a much stronger position than it was when I was first elected and I would like to think that in some way I have contributed to that change.

But enough of the past, it is time to look forward, forward to a life where we learn to live with and adapt to Covid, a life with a new group of Councillors and an updated Corporate and Strategic Plan.

I, of course, will not be part of that new Council, having decided that it is time pursue other interests. But before I go there are a number of people I would like to thank. Firstly, my entire group of Conservative Councillors for their support throughout the past five years. They have stuck by me through thick and thin and I much appreciate their endeavours. Secondly, the Members' Services Team, particularly my Secretary, Susan Downie, for making sure that my diary is kept up to date and that I was always in the right place at the right time with the right papers, and that sometimes wasn't easy for her! Not to forget, of course, Robert Watters and his team for actually getting me to the right place and back again. I would also like to thank all members and officers of the numerous committees I have chaired for their respect, support and advice.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my fellow Group Leaders who have shown respect and worked in the spirit of co-operation to ensure that as a Council we deliver a first class service to the people who elected us. That is not to say that we do not have our political differences but we all, and I am sure I speak for all Councillors, wish to improve the lives of the people we serve.

Turning now to officers, our Chief Executive, Eddie Fraser has had a baptism of fire, coming into post midway through the Pandemic but has risen to the challenge that he was presented with admirably. Eddie, thanks for your leadership and support. Then there is the irrepressible Deputy Chief Executive Katie Kelly, whose drive and enthusiasm never ceases to amaze. Katie always seems to pop up everywhere with new ideas and initiatives to drive the Council forward. She is always on hand to provide advice and support to elected members to help them carry out their duties. Thank you, Katie.

I am not going to try to name all the officers who have helped and advised me through the years, I would be here all day, but one I do want to mention is Joe McLachlan who has picked up where Alex McPhee left off, keeping a tight rein on the Council money and advising elected members, including myself, at Budget times on how to get the best value for the money we have. Thanks Joe and all the other officers and staff I have been involved with throughout the years.

I would also like to thank both Provost Douglas and his predecessor Councillor Jim Todd for the way they have handled Council meetings, ensuring that everyone gets a fair chance to express their views, and that has been demonstrated this morning.

There is one further person I need to mention, that is my wife Janice, for her support over the past 15 years, putting up with phone calls and the door bell ringing at all times of the day and me being out on several nights each week on Council business.

So finally, many of you I know, like me, are not seeking re-election and I wish you well in whatever you may do in the future. To those of you who are standing again, I wish you good luck, but some more than others, on the 5th of May. Whatever the outcome of the election, and I know what I would like to happen but am making no predictions, I am sure that East Ayrshire Council will continue to deliver a first class service to all the residents within its boundary”.

#### Councillor Douglas Reid, Leader of the Council

Councillor Reid stated: “Thanks Provost, thanks Members, thanks everyone.

Just to go over the last five years, I’ll try to be brief but the major events that we faced, one very local, as we’ve seen coal just smouldering out, and then getting hit by Covid and the challenges that had. Who would have thought that was going to be taking over our lives and the way we did things and now we’ve got this conflict in Ukraine which is concentrating the minds of everybody. With all the global powers stepping up and the horrors that we see on TV, we can see a terrifying repeat of what has been described as a war of autocracy. For me, local government is the true sense of democracy and it is important that local government represents democracy across the planet, wherever we serve it, and that we continue to represent our people and listen to people as best that we can. For someone who was born during the Cuban missile crisis 60 years ago, who would have thought that a nuclear war would be something that people were seriously talking about. So these are some really frightening and unprecedented times.

But as with Covid when we saw communities deliver and step up, we’re seeing it again as we did during the pandemic. Once again, in discussions with Eddie yesterday, we’ve heard that 21 families are looking to take in refugees from Ukraine. I even had a phone call, at 5 to 10 at night, from the Knockentiber Residents Association saying that the village wanted to take and adopt a family of their own, so we can see out there that our communities are really stepping up. Our faith groups and non-faith groups are looking to see what they can do to help those vulnerable Ukrainian families and once again, if evidence was needed, local government is the key to service delivery and to democracy itself.

As Tom, John and others have said, the Council has worked well when we work together to support our communities. Community empowerment isn’t just lip service as the 60 or so community asset transfers absolutely show. The Provost mentioned Take A Bow right at the start, we’ve seen the opening of Centrestage, Netherthird Community Garden. There are so many projects out there where citizens so active are putting something back into their communities and that’s something this Council has

led and been a leading authority right across Scotland in doing that and rightly so in being recognised for such.

We've seen a lot of changes internally in the last five years, none more so than the Chief Executive who filled the previous Chief Executive's shoes quite comfortably. It has been suggested that Eddie has learned quite quickly that the Devil does wear Prada but even that wouldn't surpass the colourful attitude that our vibrant Depute Chief Executive has, as well as being at Eddie's hand. We have also seen major changes in the management team - Tom mentioned Joe McLachlan who's absolutely led on from Alex McPhee in keeping us in good financial stewardship, but we've also seen Craig McArthur, who I would say is going to hopefully help Ayrshire and Arran Health Board in good financial stewardship. So some good appointments there, and we saw David McDowall who did a great job in terms of the coal but has stepped up too. We have almost a new management team. Most of them are our own talent and it's great to see them come through but we'll miss some of these people that we've seen - Karl, Bob - just too many - Kerr, we know who they are - the people who are the "go to" people in this authority and they will be missed.

The new Council faces vast challenges - the economy, the consequences of Brexit, rising fuel costs and for a country that exports over 40% of its energy has the highest tariffs, the worst weather, it's completely unacceptable and once again our Council is trying to help the people who have the dire choice of heat or eat. That to me is unacceptable and hopefully something that the new Council will continue to drive changes to mitigate where we can for the members of our communities.

Members, just allow me to mention as others have mentioned, the dozen Councillors who are retiring, a dozen Councillors who I would say are "good eggs", just going through them down the Wards - just a wee word about them all.

We've got Gordon Jenkins - as an academic, someone who's used to logic, he must have really wondered what he's walked into sometimes, with some of the decisions we make here in the Council just defy logic.

Helen Coffey has been the last of the Coffey Dynasty from her two brothers, which has been here since, I think, 1986 or 87, but were certainly missed; and Helen, with challenges faced by many of us with huge caring responsibilities and my goodness, Helen has had to come across and challenge those massive caring responsibilities that she had and has been an active member of this Council and we're glad to see that.

Next we go on to, I'm just doing them in order, so Tom - you've been Depute Leader of the Council, Chair of the Licensing Board since I can remember and also the Chair of Police and Fire and, of course, Leader of the Conservative Group for, I think, 15 years. It's been great to work with you Tom, and he puts East Ayrshire and community first, and I think you've served this Council and community well and just, when you're retiring, and maybe not a lot of people know, Tom and I share a passion - we were previously disc jockeys and maybe there's an opportunity now that plastic has made its return, that Janice can dust down the old LPs, you can get out the deck set and go round the community and re-ignite your career as a disc jockey after you finish.

Next is the two Campbells. We mentioned the Coffey Dynasty, it's maybe not as long but just as active - the Campbells are not coming, the Campbells are leaving for a', for a', as the song says. John who's been with us nearly 20 years, a great representative of his community and a great exponent of Johnnie Walker, no Johnnie Walker's left but John continues to stride on and he'll be striding on I'm quite sure for many years to

come. And Fiona will be enjoying her retirement with her dog, Teddy, and he'll be kept busy - I'm not sure if that's a good thing for Teddy or not but he'll be going out for more walks with his owner. Fiona has contributed a lot in Education and just another wee word for the members of Ward 4 who may remain or who may not be, you better get that Grougar Road junction done or else you'll have ex-Councillor Campbell on your back!

John Knapp, who I've known for years, has been a great servant to local government, almost 40 years a member, and I think that's a great effort John, and we know that, whether it was Northwest or Southeast you've represented your community of Kilmarnock very well and I'd like to add my personal thanks to that. I think that's worth a wee round of applause.

Elena Whitham, our colleague from the Irvine Valley, she's stepped up well, she's already gained Vice-Chair of the Local Government Committee and we hope she doesn't forget us in the Local Government Committee when it comes to budgets and I'm quite sure we'll be reminding her of some of the challenges local governments face as well.

I'm trying to get through everybody, and I'm sorry I'm taking too much time but there are so many people that I've known here and want to say just a wee bit of a mention.

George Mair - who would have thought that when I was a boy just starting in Local Government in NALGO, going about in George's rat catcher van when he was an Environmental Health Officer going to union meetings that we'd still be going some 40 odd years later, in the Council Chambers discussing trying to improve local government. Great Killie fan, I hope you have a great retirement George. I know you'll not be very far from Galston, probably the only time you leave will be when you go to Rugby Park but I hope you will be happy in your retirement.

Jim Roberts - what can I say about Jim Roberts. He's represented minorities well - that'll be Ayr Utd! Who would have believed when he started in the Council as a real anti-establishment type, he would be a bastion of the establishment as he leaves. Jim - we know that you will continue to have an active life, whether it's skiing or scuba diving, things that I wouldn't be very good at but I know you'll be continuing to do that and keep us all in check from afar, and we wish you all the best Jim.

Neil McGhee - Another one of the Prestwick Mafia like Jim Roberts, we know that you're heart's totally in Auchinleck and I think with the number of things you're involved with in Auchinleck, you'll have plenty of work to do with ACDI and all the other things, and looking at the Talbot going from strength to strength as well.

Also Elaine Dinwoodie, you've served quite a few years as well Elaine and so has your husband, and together with Bob McCulloch, who we know is leaving, I think Patna is now going to become Ayrshire's No 1 retirement village but Lynn will keep you in check.

Last but not least - Walter. Walter, you're going but I think in the words of Sir Elton John in his song Goodbye Yellow Brick Road "you can't keep me in your penthouse, I'm going back to my plough", I think that's very much appropriate for Walter, taking the advice of Sir Elton.

Members, can I just thank everybody, all parties, I'll not prolong this any further, you've all been a great support personally and politically and make me absolutely proud to be the Leader of this Council and thank you all very much indeed and hopefully the new Council, whoever it may be, can go from strength to strength and well done to you all".

### Provost Barry Douglas

Provost Douglas stated: "Members, as we bring this Council term to a close I would like to thank you all for your support during my time as Provost. It may have been a short time but I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as Provost and getting to meet the amazing groups, communities and people who make-up East Ayrshire.

This Council is made up of very many diverse communities and I would argue that myself and especially my predecessor Jim Todd, represent that diversity, in different ways, but with a commitment to always have the people of East Ayrshire at our heart and it is in that spirit I have tried to carry out the role.

With a significant number of members choosing not to seek re-election I thought I would say a few words about each of those members and their contribution to this Council.

In Ward 1, I note Gordon Jenkins is not returning and I got to know Gordon better through his role as Chair of No-One Dies Alone Ayrshire, an amazing Charity who give support and care to those who would otherwise die alone. To ensure someone can pass safe in the knowledge they have someone with them in their final hours is an incredibly selfless act of kindness and I know how much this means to families who cannot be with their loved ones. I look forward to hearing more about how the Charity grows going forward. Gordon, I know your Ward colleagues will certainly miss you as the Annick Ward Councillors are certainly quite a close team.

In Ward 2, Helen Coffey is standing down and for the first time since 1984 there won't be a Coffey on the ballot paper at a local election in North Kilmarnock. I have known Helen since before she joined the Council in 2006 but I need to let you all into a secret. When I was elected in 2017 and found myself as Chair of G&S I used Helen as a barometer of Members' patience during meetings. Helen, like me, your facial expressions give you away. If things were taking too long you would know by the look on Helen's face. I have missed not having this barometer of Members' patience in the era of remote and hybrid meetings! I wish you a long and happy retirement and send my love and best wishes to Kerri too and I look forward to hearing how you are both doing in life after East Ayrshire.

In Ward 3, Tom Cook retires after serving for 15 years and having been Conservative Group Leader, Deputy Leader of the Council for 5 years during the SNP/Conservative Coalition administration from 2012-2017 and as past Chair of G&S and current Police Fire and Rescue Committee Chair whilst also serving on the Cabinet for 15 years. Always a gentleman with an inquisitive mind, I know you will be genuinely missed across the political spectrum on this Council.

In Ward 4, the formidable Campbell duo are leaving us to enjoy retirement. I'm thinking of the Billy Connelly sketch where he mentions musical appreciation and the Campbells' farewell to the red castle, which seems quite fitting! I have known John Campbell for more years than I can remember, and he is definitely a "weel kent face" throughout Kilmarnock. As a former publican and Johnnie Walker's employee it is no wonder John knows everyone and everyone knows John. John, like Councillor Coffey, also has a "face" that makes it clear when things have gone on for too long! I will miss your wise counsel and maybe we will finally get round to having a hauf at "the Club" now you are retired and I am sure Marie will be delighted to have you around the house a wee bit more!

Fiona, I will miss our chats putting the world to rights and working together to be the bane of many an Officer in East Ayrshire when they realise that “Team Ward 4” are united on an issue. I don’t think any other Education Spokesperson on this authority will have interviewed as many potential Head Teachers in their time in office so rest assured your legacy will be longstanding.....along with the fountain in the Kay Park pond. Many have believed that the term “Fiona’s Fountain” related to our former Chief Executive Fiona Lees, but I can exclusively reveal it is definitely named after Councillor Fiona Campbell!

In Ward 5 my friend and Comrade John Knapp is retiring after serving this Council since its inception, having served on Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Council since 1987 representing Onthank for a term before re-gaining his seat in the 1995 East Ayrshire Council election. John then went on to represent Bellfield in 1999 and latterly Kilmarnock South since 2007. With a total of 32 years’ service to the people of Kilmarnock his length of service is unmatched by any other member in the Chamber, albeit Councillor Reid is catching up! John is another incredibly “weel kent” face and I wish him a long and happy retirement with Margaret and the grandkids. I am sure that Margaret will love having you about the house, John, lots of odd jobs to do and grand weans to watch.

Ward 6, sees two Members leaving us, with Cllr Elena Whitham on to pastures new at Holyrood representing the Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley Constituency since last May. I am confident Elena will remain a Champion for this Council and for local government in general in the Scottish Parliament, because we will all be reminding her, if not. George Mair, leaves us after 10 years’ service to the Irvine Valley but a lifetime of public service throughout his working life. Many of you will know George is a keen Killie fan and often found at Rugby Park, but he is also known to frequent another legendary Kilmarnock establishment.....Cafe Da Vinci! And I am sure I will bump into George and Nancy on a Friday night, usually followed by Cllr John McGhee.....

Talking of McGhees, Auchinleck will surely miss their man on the Council when Cllr Neil McGhee retires at the election. Having served Auchinleck since 2003 and the wider Ballochmyle ward since 2007, I am sure meetings of this Council won’t be the same without a mention of the third sector, or ACIDI, from someone who is the biggest champion for the Third Sector and that will be missed. Neil, I look forward to seeing you at Blair Park where hopefully my beloved Hurlford United will beat the Talbot on home turf, but we’ll see!

Ward 7, is also seeing two sitting Councillors retire, with Councillor Jim Roberts also standing down. In my opinion Jim asks some of the best questions and has made some of the best interventions in debate of any elected member in this term. Not afraid to criticise or ask searching questions Jim is also good humoured and loves a joke and to give folk nicknames, Jim, I can assure you “Oor Baz” and the Depute Provost “Diamond Sal”, wish you a very long and happy retirement.

In Ward 8, Walter Young is returning to the family business farming full-time after 5 years serving the Cumnock and New Cumnock Ward. Between Council meetings Walter is often found knee deep in cows and sheep, so I am sure retiring from the Council will give you a wee bit more time to work on your collection of vintage cars, and I look forward to perhaps coming down and seeing some of them.

Last, but by no means least is Elaine Dinwoodie who has served Patna and Dalrymple since 1999 and the wider Doon Valley Ward since 2007. After nearly a quarter of a century Elaine is retiring from the Council and I am sure a few holidays and spending

time with the grandkids will be on the agenda! Elaine is a passionate defender of the Doon Valley communities and I know her passion for the communities she serves will last long into retirement.

Members, it now leaves me to thank the Chief Executive and his fantastic team of Officers who make sure East Ayrshire Council runs as smoothly as possible, there are too many to name individually but please know we all appreciate your efforts and the often un-seen work that goes on, on our behalf and on behalf of our communities.

Finally as we bring this session of East Ayrshire Council to a close, my last as your Provost, can I wish all those members seeking re-election the very best of luck, we have our own political differences but I have no doubt whatsoever that every single one of us is here because we are trying to do the best for our communities.

With that, I wish you all the very best of luck”.

### **COUNCILLOR NEIL MCGHEE – RENDITION OF “THE PUDDOCK”**

11. With the indulgence of the Provost, Councillor Neil McGhee provided the meeting with a rendition of the old Scots poem “The Puddock”; useful, he suggested, in maintaining a sense of perspective!

### **PRESENTATION OF COMMEMORATIVE CURLING STONES TO RETIRING COUNCILLORS**

12. The Provost presented, in turn, a commemorative Curling Stone to each of the retiring Members who were present in the Council Chambers, being Councillors Gordon Jenkins, Tom Cook, John Campbell, John Knapp, George Mair, Neil McGhee, Jim Roberts and Elaine Dinwoodie; and advised that a Curling Stone would also be passed to each of Councillors Helen Coffey, Fiona Campbell and Walter Young who were participating remotely, and to Councillor Elena Whitham who did not participate in the meeting.

The meeting terminated at 1345 hrs.