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Assembly

# Committee for Communities

## Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 4 June 2026

**Meeting Location:** Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Library & Archive, Armagh

**Present:** Mr Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA  
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA  
Mr Maolfósa McHugh MLA  
Mrs Sian Mulholland MLA

**In Attendance:** Mrs Emer Boyle (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Chris McAfee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Katie Egan (Clerical Officer)  
Ms Patrice Morris (Senior Assistant Clerk)  
Ms Kathryn Black (Senior Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.47 a.m.



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### **1. Declarations of Interest**

The following interests were declared:

Maurice Bradley - Member of Harry Gregg Foundation, member of Coleraine and District League Management, member of North West Football Association, member of Irish Football Association Council.

Pam Cameron – Former Junior Minister with sight of Executive and cross-departmental policy, strategy and legislation; Director of a production company, family member is a member of the Arts Council.

Sian Mulholland – Family member is a member of the U3A in Ballycastle.

### **2. Apologies**

Mr Andy Allen MBE

Mrs Kellie Armstrong

Mr Mark Durkan

Mrs Cathy Mason

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson thanked Members for making the journey to the Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Library and Archive and reminded them that last year the Committee held meetings in both PRONI and the Ulster Folk Museum at Cultra.

The Chairperson then reminded Members that the Committee and Member Support office held a sign language drop in event on Tuesday 2 June to mark the passage of the Sign Language Bill through the Assembly with Members of the deaf community in attendance, discussing deaf culture and working with interpreters.

Finally, the Chairperson informed Members of an amendment to the agenda at item 9. The original scheduled oral briefing was to be from the Westenders Committee, however due to a bereavement they had to cancel. The Chairperson further advised that Dr Campbell from the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies agreed to brief the Committee instead.



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The Chairperson then proposed that the Committee writes to the Westenders Committee to thank them for their co-operation and to send condolences on behalf of the Committee.

**Agreed:** That a letter is sent to the Westenders Committee to thank them and to offer the condolences of the Committee.

The Chairperson brought forward Agenda Item 10.

#### 4. Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Library & Archive: Oral briefing

The Chairperson welcomed the following officials to the meeting:

Roddy Hegarty, Director, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Library & Archive

Colm Shannon, Trustee, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Library & Archive

A question-and-answer session followed the briefing and the main areas of discussion were:

- Visitor and Community Engagement
- USA 250 Funding & Project
- Museums Consultation
- Long-Term Sustainability
- Cost of Services
- Importance of Local Institutions and Museums

**Agreed:** That a letter is sent to the Department to highlight that groups applying for funding do not receive annual letters of offer until June and later and to further ask that, in the event of a budget not being agreed, when are groups likely to receive letters of offer or other support.

**Agreed:** That the Committee Secretariat draft a response for the Department for Communities on its “*Consultation on a Museums Policy for Northern Ireland*”, for review and consideration in the coming weeks.

The Chairperson brought forward Agenda Item 8.



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**5. University of Third Age: Oral briefing**

The Chairperson welcomed the following officials to the meeting:

Mary McVeigh, Chair, University of Third Age

Gregory Dunstan, Hon. Secretary, University of Third Age

Tim Hanna, Treasurer, University of Third Age

Pam Cameron left the meeting at 11.42a.m.

A question-and-answer session followed the briefing and the main areas of discussion were:

- Importance of the Group to the Community
- Impact of Covid on the Community
- Target Group and Encouragement to Join
- Sources of Funding
- Organisation of activities and speakers
- Practical Costs and affordability to Members
- Importance of Volunteering
- Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

Pam Cameron rejoined the meeting at 12.00p.m.

The Chairperson suspended the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 12.02 p.m.

The meeting resumed in open session at 12.12p.m. with all Members present.

The Chairperson brought forward Agenda Item 9.

**6. Mellon Centre for Migration Studies: Oral briefing**

The Chairperson welcomed the following official to the meeting:

Dr Liam Campbell, Mellon Centre for Migration Studies



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A question-and-answer session followed the briefing and the main areas of discussion were:

- Balance of Celebration and Hardship of Migration
- The History and its relevance of USA 250
- Presbyterian and Irish Immigration to USA

The Chairperson brought forward Agenda Item 11.

### **7. Armagh Robinson Library: Oral briefing**

The Chairperson welcomed the following official to the meeting:

Carol Conlin, Assistant Keeper, Armagh Robinson Library

A question-and-answer session followed the briefing and the main areas of discussion were:

- Importance of accessibility to libraries
- Ongoing projects

The Chairperson reverted to Agenda Items 4-7.

### **8. Draft Minutes**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a copy of draft minutes from the Committee meeting on 28 May 2026.

**Agreed:** That the minutes are agreed as drafted.

### **9. Matters Arising**

**Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People - Review of NICCY and COPNI**

**Agreed:** That a letter is sent to the Assembly Commission to ask for the rationale behind its decision to *not accept* that the Northern Ireland



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Commissioner for Children and Young People become an Arm's Length Body of the NI Assembly, like the NIPSO and the NIAO.

**Agreed:** That a letter is sent to The Executive Office to ask what consideration has been given to NICCY's sponsoring Department changing to The Executive Office.

**Committee for Communities - Draft Press Release - Communities Committee Stand Ready to Prevent further Anti-Poverty Strategy Delay**

**Agreed:** That the Draft Press Release is published, subject to the minor amendments agreed.

The Committee noted the following items:

Source	Subject Matter
Department for Communities	Veterans and Armed Forces Pathway
Department for Communities	Legal Proceedings and Financial Transaction Capital Funding
Department for Communities	Active Aging Strategy

**10. Correspondence**

**Housing Rights - Homelessness Prevention follow up**

**Agreed:** That a letter is sent to the Department to seek an update on its ongoing work in relation to a statutory duty and any information on emerging proposals in terms of a statutory duty on homelessness prevention.

**Department for Communities - Launch of Public Consultation on Liquor Licensing for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann**



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**Agreed:** That a briefing from DfC officials is scheduled for a future Committee meeting.

The Committee noted the following items:

<b>Source</b>	<b>Summary of content</b>
NI Assembly - Participation and Outreach Team	Carers Week 2026 event with South Eastern Carers' Hub  Thursday 11 June, Room 115, Parliament Buildings
Individual	Housing Conditions Issue
Executive Information Service	Press Release - Lyons launches public consultation on new Warm Healthy Homes Fund
Executive Information Service	Press Release - Future is bright for local cricket says Lyons as he attends Ireland v New Zealand test
Youth Assembly	May 2026 Update
Department for Communities	Update on the changes made to the Charities (Amendment) Bill following the Department's public consultation
Co-Ownership	News May 2026
Committee for Finance	Correspondence to DoF re Transformation T2 allocation to DfC of £16m
Committee for Finance	Department of Finance 2025-26 March Restated (R13) Outturn and Forecast Outturn - briefing paper
Committee for Finance	Department of Finance - National Population Projections



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Source	Summary of content
Executive Information Service	Press release - Lyons sees Olympic Legacy Fund delivering for the community
Assembly Business Office	Northern Ireland Audit Office - Tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud
Strategic Investment Board	Assembly Committee Report
Construction Employers Federation	Construction Manifesto 2027
Executive Information Service	Press release - Member Re-appointment to the Board of Sport Northern Ireland

The Committee further noted the following item of tabled correspondence:

Source	Summary of content
Department for Communities	Draft Housing Supply Strategy Action Plan

## 11. SR 2026/93 The Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Chairperson reminded Members that following consideration of the SL1 at the Committee Meetings on 23 April and 14 May 2026, the Committee had agreed that it was content for the Department to proceed to make the rule, in line with new scrutiny process for delegated legislation.

**Agreed:** That the Committee for Communities has considered SR 2026/93 The Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 and has no objection to the rule.



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The Chairperson reverted to Agenda running order for Items 12-14.

**12. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered a Clerk's Memo in relation to planning dates for both Ministerial and Financial Briefings during 2026/27.

**Agreed:** That the Committee is content with the proposed dates for Ministerial and Financial Briefings during 2026/27.

The Committee then noted a copy of the Forward Work Programme.

**13. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**14. Date, time and location of the next meeting**

The next meeting is at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 11 June 2026, in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.08 p.m.

**Colm Gildernew MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Communities**