

PRESENT

Members of the Council

THE MAYOR, CLLR WILL LANE
THE DEPUTY MAYOR, CLLR LAURA BURNS

CLLR MONA ADAM	CLLR LUCY KNIGHT
CLLR SARAH ADDENBROOKE	CLLR SINA LARI
CLLR KASIM ALI	CLLR DAVID LINDSAY
CLLR AARIEN ARETI	CLLR SAM MACKOVER
CLLR MOHAMMED BAKHTIAR	CLLR SOF MCVEIGH
CLLR TOBY BENTON	CLLR LLOYD NORTH
CLLR ELIZABETH CAMPBELL	CLLR ABDULLAHI NUR
CLLR ANNE CYRON	CLLR WILL PASCALL
CLLR EMMA DENT COAD	CLLR STÉPHANIE PETIT
CLLR MARWAN ELNAGHI	CLLR JOSH RENDALL
CLLR JANET EVANS	CLLR MARIE-THERESE ROSSI
CLLR CATHERINE FAULKS	CLLR DORI SCHMETTERLING
CLLR JOANNA GARDNER	CLLR CLAIRE SIMMONS
CLLR GREGORY HAMMOND	CLLR KIM TAYLOR-SMITH
CLLR GERARD HARGREAVES	CLLR JOHNNY THALASSITES
CLLR PREETY HUDD	CLLR PORTIA THAXTER
CLLR JAMES HUSBAND	CLLR LINDA WADE
CLLR DAHABO ISSE	CLLR ROBERTO WEEDEN-SANZ
CLLR EVA JEDUT	CLLR EMMA WILL
CLLR CEM KEMAHLI	CLLR SONIA ZVEDENIUUK

72 Seconds' Silence

The Mayor invited those present to stand in silence for 72 seconds to remember all those who lost their lives in the Grenfell tragedy.

1 ELECTION OF MAYOR

Councillor Mackover moved, Councillor Hargreaves seconded, and Council RESOLVED that:

Councillor Will Lane be elected Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea for the ensuing year.

The elected Mayor made and signed the statutory declaration of acceptance of Office and was invested with the Chain and Badge of Office.

The Mayor, Councillor Lane, in the chair.

The Mayor gave a short speech of thanks to Full Council and announced that his mother, Ms Jennie Lane, had agreed to serve as his Mayoress.

2 APPOINTMENT AND INVESTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR

The Mayor appointed Councillor Laura Burns as his Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Burns addressed Full Council.

3 APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN

The Mayor appointed Reverend Brian Elficke as his Chaplain.

4 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

Councillor North moved, and Councillor Areti seconded, a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Councillor Lari also spoke.

Council RESOLVED:

That the Council gives its thanks to Councillor Preety Hudd and Councillor Dori Schmetterling for the year they served as the Royal Borough's Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively.

Councillors Hudd and Schmetterling responded.

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 28 February 2024 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Mayor.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Members made any declaration of interest.

7 SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor announced that Councillor Emma Dent Coad had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

8 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S COMMUNICATIONS

Councillors Adourian, Ahmed, Bennett, Idris, Verboven, Weale, and Yankson submitted apologies for their absence.

9 STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND RESPONSE BY THE LEADER OF THE MINORITY PARTY (STANDING ITEM)

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council to address the meeting. The Leader then rose to speak:

Good evening and welcome, Mr Mayor! I hope tonight marks the start of a fantastic year for you and your deputy. As you take office, we all wish you well in raising money for your nominated charities and in representing this borough on a national and, at times, international stage, as well as meeting our residents and businesses. You provide a vital connection between the council and the people who live and work in our borough.

I know you have a hard act to follow in Cllr Hudd, who took the Mayoralty around the entire borough and even abroad, celebrating the strong links we have with communities around the world. Thank you to Preeti and Dori for all their hard work throughout the year.

Mr Mayor, I also want to say a big welcome and congratulations to the newest councillor in the chamber tonight. In these times of political upheaval, turmoil, and uncertainty, it just goes to show that there is absolutely no substitute for good old-fashioned hard work, strong values, and speaking to residents on the doorstep and listening to them.

Councillor Stéphanie Petit, Conservative member for Norland Ward, doesn't that sound great. Stéphanie will know more than most of us that the message on the doorstep is clear: this council is doing a great job and getting the basics right. We must continue to double down on what we are doing and how we are doing it. Congratulations to Cllr Petit and the team for running a great campaign and increasing our share of the vote in the ward.

Mr Mayor, We are becoming the best, honouring commitments made in recent years and in our Council Plan. Only yesterday I attended the opening of the award-winning Kelso Cochrane house, with members here on the front bench. It is difficult to describe the sense of achievement in seeing new housing being completed in the borough, the nod to the unique history of this borough, but also seeing the pride of Kelso's family as they helped us to open the new block in North Kensington and put his name to the building – a real, lasting legacy. We promised to build homes, quality homes, and safe homes in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy seven years ago. So every step we take on this front is an important one.

Mr Mayor, my final remarks tonight centre around the infected blood inquiry, which delivered a withering verdict on public sector services and culture on Monday afternoon. The events that happened over many years were not only a scandal; they were avoidable. It was impossible to watch on Monday and not think about Grenfell and the coming inquiry report that will involve us, alongside many other private and public sector participants. I was drawn to the verdict that the Civil Service and governments, over many years, ignored people, covered up details, and failed to act. It isn't good enough. It serves as a reminder to this organisation about what is important. It isn't about what you say; it is about what you do. I am thankful to the Mayor for his own words on this topic earlier this evening.

And my promise continues to be that we will always ask ourselves the tough exam questions. Do we care about people, and have we changed the culture

here in the organisation? Are we meeting the standards and service levels people expect from us? Are we listening to people and working hard on their behalf, tackling the issues that matter the most to them?

Mr Mayor, we will soon move into June and the Grenfell anniversary. I just want to say once again our thoughts will be with all the families and our communities during this time. We hope soon to see certainty on the future of the tower and a fitting memorial which has the support of the community. We hope the inquiry report comes swiftly, and we hope it provides the answers many want to see. But we also know the road to justice will go on, and what we do in this organisation in the future will continue to be of utmost importance to the legacy of 14 June 2017. Thank you.

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Opposition to address the meeting. I Ali then rose to speak:

Thank you, Mr Mayor; many congratulations for the role that you have been elected to this evening. The Kensington and Chelsea Labour Group that I lead are looking forward to working with you. Could I also take this opportunity to thank Mr Mayor for reaching out to me, and I look forward meeting with you next week. Equally, I wish to congratulate the Deputy Mayor for her election this evening. I look forward to working with her as the Deputy Mayor.

Mr Mayor, I wish to thank the former Mayor, Councillor Preety Hudd, for her excellent Mayoral term 2023/24 as the Mayor of our Borough. There were times that council meeting was adjourned as local residents were demonstrating at the council due to the war in Gaza and the increasing losses of innocent Palestinian Civilian lives. The Labour Party leadership nationally, and I as the Leader of Kensington and Chelsea Labour, will continue to call for a permanent ceasefire and the release of hostages to get a long-lasting peace in the region. Once again, thank you, Madam Mayor, for working with the Labour Group during the difficult times.

I wish to thank the Deputy Mayor, I Dori Schmetterling, who spoke at the British-Somali Graduation Ceremony last year. – The Deputy Mayor represented our Council well and he welcomed the British-Somali Graduates across the UK to Kensington and Chelsea. The Deputy Mayor also thanked the event sponsors – Hormud Telecom, for sponsoring, and he asked them to keep coming back to Kensington and Chelsea to celebrate the educational success of British-Somali communities in the UK. You made it clear that our borough is a borough for all communities, all faiths and no faiths. We will not allow those who want to divide our communities to succeed. Thank you, I Dori.

Mr Mayor, this is an election year, and we already had the Mayoral and GLA election as well as a local by-election. I congratulate Stéphanie for winning the by-election in Norland. I would like to thank our Labour candidate, the former Councillor Monica Press, for running a heroic campaign and increasing the Labour votes by 9%, which we will build on. Thank you, Monica, for your fearless campaign, and I look forward to welcoming you back to the Council Chamber in due course.

What an election we had earlier this month, Mr Mayor. I understand the party opposite likes to hear numbers, so let me mention a few significant facts about the election we had this month. It is the first time a Labour Mayoral candidate has

won West Central. This is the first time a Labour Assembly Member has been elected, I James Small-Edward. Previously, Sadiq lost in the first round by 2,205 votes. Sadiq won this time by 11,076 votes. Previously, Labour lost the Assembly by 2,225 votes in 2021. Labour won the Assembly seat by 4,253 votes in 2024. Across the UK, Labour continues to be the largest Party in the UK.

Mr Mayor, as you may know, I was elected as year as the first British-Somali to become the Leader of a UK Major Political Party at council and this year. I am re-elected again to lead my Labour Party in Kensington and Chelsea. Last year was not an easy year so I want to thank the Labour Party leadership, especially the Chairman of my Party, Anneliese Dodds MP, for her continued support and chairmanship.

Finally, I also wish to thank our Council officers, and above all, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Labour Party Councillors for electing me again and for their ongoing support. I will continue to lead them and, together, will serve our communities in Kensington and Chelsea to the best of our abilities. We were looking forward to working with the Council Leadership and with all the residents in our borough.

Mr Mayor, Many congratulations again on your election tonight.

10 REVIEW OF REPRESENTATION AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Councillor Campbell moved, and Councillor Taylor-Smith moved the report's reception. Councillors Addenbrooke, Dent Coad, Lari, and Wade moved the appointments, standing their names.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the political balance be noted.
- (ii) That the ratios on committees be agreed.
- (iii) That the appointments be agreed.

11 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Councillors Addenbrooke and Lari moved the appointments standing in their names.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments be agreed.

12 ANY OTHER ORAL OR WRITTEN ITEMS WHICH THE MAYOR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no other items.

The meeting ended at 7.44 pm

Mayor

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