

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL (SPECIAL)

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting
on 20 May 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

Present in County Buildings: Councillors Iain Campbell (Provost), Kenneth Bell, Laura Brennan-Whitefield, Ian Cavana, Alec Clark, Brian Connolly, Ian Davis, Julie Dettbarn, Mark Dixon, Stephen Ferry, William Grant, Hugh Hunter, Martin Kilbride, Mary Kilpatrick, Alan Lamont, Brian McGinley, Bob Pollock, Cameron Ramsay, Philip Saxton, Gavin Scott, Bob Shields, Duncan Townson; and George Weir.

Present Remotely: Councillors Ian Cochrane, Chris Cullen, Martin Dowey, Lee Lyons and Craig Mackay.

Attending in County Buildings: M. Newall, Chief Executive; C. Caves, Chief Governance Officer; T. Baulk, Chief Financial Officer; L. McRoberts, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education; J. Bradley, Director of Strategic Change and Communities; K. Braidwood, Director of Housing, Operations and Development; J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer; A. Gibson, Committee Services Officer; J. Chapman, Committee Services Officer; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

Attending Remotely: T. Eltringham, Director of Health and Social Care; M. Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services; and C. McGhee, Chief Internal Auditor.

1. Depute Provost.

The Depute Provost

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live;
- (2) intimated that no apologies had been received; and
- (3) advised that, in terms of Standing Order no. 13.1(2), she had agreed that, should there be a subsequent vacancy in the position of Depute Leader following the appointment of the Leader, this matter should be considered at this meeting, as this was a matter of urgency.

2. Sederunt and Declarations of Interest.

The Chief Executive called the Sederunt for the meeting and having called the roll, confirmed that there were no declarations of interest by Members of the Council in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. Appointment of Provost and Leader

There was submitted a [report](#) (issued) of 13 May 2025 by the Chief Governance Officer advising of the intimation of resignation by the Provost and the Leader from their appointed posts and inviting the Council to nominate and appoint replacement Members as Provost and Leader of the Council; and requesting officers to make appropriate changes to Elected Member remuneration.

The Chief Governance Officer introduced the report and advised that the posts of Provost and Leader required to be filled as soon as possible as these were key posts; and that a report seeking approval of any consequential vacancies would be considered at a Special Meeting of South Ayrshire Council of 23 May 2025.

Following a question from a Member, the Chief Governance Officer advised that nominations for Provost would be sought first and then for Leader of the Council.

Appointment of Provost

The Depute Provost invited nominations for the appointment of Provost of South Ayrshire Council.

Councillor Julie Dettbarn, seconded by Councillor Duncan Townson, moved that Councillor Ian Cavana be appointed Provost. Councillor Townson then spoke in support of Councillor Cavana.

By way of Amendment, Councillor Brian Connolly, seconded by Councillor Hugh Hunter, moved that Councillor Iain Campbell be appointed Provost. Councillor Hunter then spoke in support of Councillor Campbell.

Comments were made and questions raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) the former Provost resigning very publicly at the meeting of South Ayrshire Council of 1 May 2025 describing the Administration at that time in less than complimentary language and he was now being proposed as Provost again;
- (2) this being one of the most important decisions Members would ever take as the reputation of the Council was at stake; that Members should place their vote as a matter of principle and conscience; that the reputation of the Council was not good at present and there was an opportunity to rectify this; that this appointment was not about allegiances, the Provost was an all-Council post; and that this was an opportunity to send a message to the people of South Ayrshire that this Council was putting the people first;
- (3) the current Administration being on its knees, that the morale of staff was at its lowest and the general public were disgusted at the behaviour of some of the Members of the Administration; emails being received from disgruntled members of the public; outlining that Members should be mindful that they represented the people of South Ayrshire; and requesting that Members consider a change of Administration;
- (4) Councillor Cavana having a good record and had integrity, however, Councillor Campbell had done an excellent job as Provost over the past three years; and that Councillor Campbell had been under significant pressure at the meeting of 1 May 2025; and
- (5) requesting that Councillor Campbell explain what had changed in his position in the past three weeks since his public resignation for him to put himself forward as Provost again; and Councillor Campbell advised that he had now declared himself as an Independent Councillor and was at arms length from where he stood on 1 May 2025; that over the previous two weeks he had been approached by Members of the Administration and the Opposition urging him to stand as Provost and that, if Members were happy to nominate him, he was happy to carry out the role; and that, should he be re-elected as Provost, he hoped to carry this out as a non-political role and hoped that all Members could join together to do the best for the people of South Ayrshire.

Following a request for a roll-call vote, the Chief Governance Officer called the roll in terms of Standing Order No. 24.1, for the Motion or Amendment as follows:

Kenneth Bell	Amendment
Laura Brennan-Whitefield	Motion
Ian Campbell	Amendment
Ian Cavana	Motion
Alec Clark	Amendment
Ian Cochrane	Motion
Brian Connolly	Amendment
Chris Cullen	Amendment
Ian Davis	Amendment
Julie Dettbarn	Motion
Mark Dixon	Amendment
Martin Dowey	Amendment
Stephen Ferry	Motion
William Grant	Amendment
Hugh Hunter	Amendment
Martin Kilbride	Amendment
Mary Kilpatrick	Amendment
Alan Lamont	Amendment
Lee Lyons	Amendment
Craig Mackay	Motion
Brian McGinley	Motion
Bob Pollock	Motion
Cameron Ramsay	Motion
Philip Saxton	Motion
Gavin Scott	Amendment
Bob Shields	Amendment
Duncan Townson	Motion
George Weir	Motion

Sixteen Members voted for the Amendment and twelve Members voted for the Motion which was accordingly declared carried, therefore, the Council

Decided: to appoint Councillor Iain Campbell as Provost.

Provost Campbell then took the Chair.

Adjournment

The time being 10.20 a.m., the Council adjourned for five minutes.

Resumption of Meeting

The Council resumed at 10.25 a.m.

Acceptance of Office as Provost.

Councillor Campbell thanked Members for re-electing him as Provost.

Appointment of Leader

Provost invited nominations for the appointment of Leader of South Ayrshire Council.

Councillor William Grant, seconded by Councillor Bob Shields, moved that Councillor Brian Connolly be appointed Leader of South Ayrshire Council.

By way of Amendment, Councillor Duncan Townson, seconded by Councillor George Weir, moved that Councillor Julie Dettbarn be appointed Leader of South Ayrshire Council.

Comments were made and questions raised by Members in relation to:

- (1) should the Council not vote for change today, it was showing the public that there were no consequences to bringing the Council into disrepute; that Members were public servants who had been given the authority to guide this Council in the best direction for the residents of South Ayrshire and to secure its future for future Members; should the Council not vote for change today, it would be the continuation of what had come before and that there was the opportunity to restore the reputation of the Council with a single vote and rebuild the damaged reputation of the Council for Members in attendance and for those who followed them;
- (2) the position of Leader being an important one and it was important that the people of South Ayrshire realised that the Council was serious about representing them in a different way; that it was not credible to continue to support the previous Administration in any shape or form as it was clear it was the same Administration with Members in different positions with the same loyalties; and that Members should vote for change as the Council required stability;
- (3) over the previous year incidents had taken place that had gone beyond petty political bickering and were nothing short of an unedifying spectacle to watch chairs being rearranged and the same Members remaining within the Administration with different titles hoping the public would not notice; that the public had voted all Members in to Council and deserved better; and that it was hoped that better days were ahead for this Council moving ahead and a more conducive working environment for Members and Senior Officers;
- (4) should the same Members remain in the Administration the public would notice; that recent events had been very unsavoury; and that a roll call vote was requested to enable the public to see who was supporting the Administration;
- (5) the Administration had been brought into utter disrepute with the public by the actions of the former Leader and those who had supported him; that with regards to integrity, this proposed Administration was purported to be an Independent Administration, however, it was anything but Independent as the Provost, Depute Provost and Councillor Scott had all resigned from the Conservative Party to become Independent Councillors, however, they continued to vote with the Administration; and that certain Members were not facing up to the consequences of what they were doing and effect the changes desperately required;
- (6) in electing the new Leader, what looked better to the people of South Ayrshire, in this case, was better for the people of South Ayrshire;

- (7) certain members of the Council had brought the Council into disrepute; and that all Members could only work together to a certain extent, an opposition was always required in politics;
- (8) speaking in favour of Councillor Connolly being elected as Leader of the Council;
- (9) Councillor Connolly's integrity never being in question, however, should he be appointed Leader, his Administration colleagues were a concern;
- (10) the very lengthy debate for these appointments; supporting Councillor Connolly's nomination, however, all Members should work together in whatever position; that there were some Councillors in the Administration who had carried out good work but not all of them; and
- (11) as the Leader had a big responsibility in setting the tone and culture of the organisation, had any of the Members supporting him been promised positions to vote for him. Provost ruled this was not an appropriate question.

Following a request for a roll-call vote, the Chief Governance Officer called the roll in terms of Standing Order No. 24.1, for the Motion or Amendment as follows:

Kenneth Bell	Motion
Laura Brennan-Whitefield	Amendment
Ian Campbell	Motion
Ian Cavana	Amendment
Alec Clark	Motion
Ian Cochrane	Amendment
Brian Connolly	Motion
Chris Cullen	Motion
Ian Davis	Motion
Julie Dettbarn	Amendment
Mark Dixon	Motion
Martin Dowey	Motion
Stephen Ferry	Amendment
William Grant	Motion
Hugh Hunter	Motion
Martin Kilbride	Motion
Mary Kilpatrick	Motion
Alan Lamont	Motion
Lee Lyons	Motion
Craig Mackay	Amendment
Brian McGinley	Amendment
Bob Pollock	Amendment
Cameron Ramsay	Amendment
Philip Saxton	Amendment
Gavin Scott	Motion
Bob Shields	Motion
Duncan Townson	Amendment
George Weir	Amendment

Twelve Members voted for the Amendment and sixteen Members voted for the Motion. The Motion was accordingly declared carried, therefore, the Council

Decided: to appoint Councillor Brian Connolly as Leader of the Council.

Provost congratulated Councillor Connolly on his appointment.

Appointment of Depute Leader

Provost invited nominations for the appointment of Depute Leader of South Ayrshire Council.

Councillor Hugh Hunter, seconded by Councillor Bob Shields, moved that Councillor Alec Clark be appointed Depute Leader of South Ayrshire Council.

By way of Amendment, Councillor Julie Dettbarn, seconded by Councillor Ian Cavana, moved that Councillor Duncan Townson be appointed Depute Leader of South Ayrshire Council.

Following a request for a roll-call vote, the Chief Governance Officer called the roll in terms of Standing Order No. 24.1, for the Motion or Amendment as follows:

Kenneth Bell	Motion
Laura Brennan-Whitefield	Amendment
Ian Campbell	Motion
Ian Cavana	Amendment
Alec Clark	Motion
Ian Cochrane	Amendment
Brian Connolly	Motion
Chris Cullen	Motion
Ian Davis	Motion
Julie Dettbarn	Amendment
Mark Dixon	Motion
Martin Dowey	Motion
Stephen Ferry	Amendment
William Grant	Motion
Hugh Hunter	Motion
Martin Kilbride	Motion
Mary Kilpatrick	Motion
Alan Lamont	Motion
Lee Lyons	Motion
Craig Mackay	Amendment
Brian McGinley	Amendment
Bob Pollock	Amendment
Cameron Ramsay	Amendment
Philip Saxton	Amendment
Gavin Scott	Abstain
Bob Shields	Motion
Duncan Townson	Amendment
George Weir	Amendment

Twelve Members voted for the Amendment, fifteen Members voted for the Motion and one Member abstained. The Motion was accordingly declared carried, therefore, the Council

Decided: to appoint Councillor Alec Clark as Depute Leader of the Council.

Provost congratulated Councillor Clark on his appointment.

The meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.