

East Lothian: Councillors back call for ceasefire in Gaza

Motion calling for a ceasefire in Gaza was backed by East Lothian councillors – as they rejected move to boycott companies linked to Israel

A motion brought to a meeting of the council on Tue (Mar 27) by Councillor Shona McIntosh, Scottish Greens, called for a ceasefire. While her initial motion also called for the public sector to boycott companies linked to Israel and the reinstatement of UN relief agency funding, it was an amended version produced by East Lothian Provost John McMillan which was approved.

Councillor McIntosh welcomed the amended version, which it was revealed had been drawn up after cross party talks over the weekend describing it as a more 'tempered' version of her initial motion.

The amended motion did not specifically call for the boycott or reintroduction of relief agency funding as it was suggested people could make decisions to act individually or donate to agencies providing help in Gaza.

Councillor McIntosh told the meeting that she was moved to call for action, particularly as a mother of young children, as she watched the harrowing scenes coming from Gaza.

She said: "There is much I can say about the genocide which is being live streamed every day to anyone with social media accounts but what I will say is that 29,000 lives have been lost and 70 per cent of them are women and children.

"One of the things which really affected me early on was a quote from a mother of three who, talking about her every day life, said the first thing she did in the morning was checking that her children are still alive.

"What happened on October 7 was horrific and a war crime but none of the actions now will make Israel safer, it will not bring the hostages home or bring any of those people who died back.

"This is not self defence it is the eradication of a people or the attempted eradication of a people."

Councillor Lee-Ann Menzies seconded the motion and welcomed the amendment from the Provost John McMillan.

She said the collaboration between councillors across parties to create a motion which could be supported had been welcome.

And Councillor McMillan said the amended motion was something which could be supported by all sides taking the politics out of the issue.

His amended motion which was approved called for the Provost to write to the First Minister and Foreign Secretary on behalf of the council calling on them to "act upon the call of both parliaments to call for a ceasefire and build a lasting peace process; do all within their diplomatic powers to contribute to the call from around the international community for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire; urge the international community to reinstate humanitarian aid to be allowed into all affected areas and work together to rebuild and restore communities; and call for a two-state solution, including security for Israel and justice for Palestine, recognising the

statehood of both and the desire for long-lasting peace and understanding in the region.”

Councillor McIntosh said: “I am grateful to everyone who has supported my motion today and sent a clear message on behalf of the people of East Lothian.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter



John Muir House