

Town Hall Ballymena

Arrive 11.00

Secretary of State will introduce : -

Councillor Robert Coulter (Mayor)

Mrs Elizabeth Coulter (Mayoress)

Mr Mervyn Rankin (Chief Executive & Town Clerk)

Rev Dr Ian Paisley MP

There will be an opportunity to speak to the Press outside the Town Hall

11.05

The Mayor will escort the party to the Mayor's Parlour where he will introduce the Party Leaders on Ballymena Borough Council - Coffee will be served

11.10

The Mayor and Party will join children's Christmas Carol singing in the Minor Hall. School children from the local Controlled and Maintained Schools will participate.

11.30

Farewell to Mayor , there will be an opportunity to greet local people outside the Town hall

SILMAIL 50391

SECRET & PERSONAL-VISITS

REV ROBERT COULTER

UUP MAYOR OF BALLYMENA BOROUGH COUNCIL 1993-96

BACKGROUND

Rev Robert Coulter is an ordained Presbyterian Minister who preaches in various churches on a freelance basis. He took early retirement from his post as a lecturer in Ballymena College of Further Education so that he could concentrate on the duties of First Citizen of the Borough. His election as Mayor was viewed as a fitting reward for leading the UUP to gain 4 extra seats and wrest the overall party majority from the DUP within the Council.

PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL VIEWS

He is known to be close to Mr Molyneaux, through their common membership of the Royal Black Institution (Rev Coulter is the Institution's Deputy Grand Chaplain). A reasonable man, whose ambitions politically do not seem to extend beyond Council work at present, (although an Assembly seat would be a temptation he would find difficult to resist). Small, portly and humorous, he has made a very significant contribution to promoting a positive image of Ballymena, both domestically and in Europe during his period in office. He is keen to work with Government Ministers and officials. His critics (comparatively few) see him as a political manipulator who has a natural talent for intrigue; but few would argue that his drive and energy have been responsible for transforming the outlook of Ballymena and its Council.

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JAMES CURIE

UUP DEPUTY MAYOR OF BALLYMENA BOROUGH COUNCIL 1994-96

Elected Deputy Mayor of Ballymena Borough Council in June 1994. A Council member since 1989, and leader of the UUP group on the Council. Took early retirement from teaching in order to concentrate on politics. Represents new school of UUP politicians, keen to work co-operatively with the SDLP. A reputation for being somewhat long-winded, but generally well respected by his colleagues.

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MERVYN RANKIN

TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BALLYMENA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Rankin was formerly Clerk and Chief Executive of Cookstown District Council prior to his appointment in 1991 as Chief Executive of Ballymena Borough Council. He is the Society of Local Authority Chief Executive's (SOLACE) representative on the Local Government Training Body, and the convenor for SOLACE on the NI Environmental Panel.

Born in 1948, he is married with 2 children. His interests include rugby, walking, swimming, gardening and reading.

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