

Northumberland Association of Local Councils

Minutes of an Annual General Meeting
held on Saturday 20 October 2012 at 10.30am
in Storey Park Community Centre, St Mary's Field, Morpeth

Present: Mr J Rudd (President); Ms G Turner (Treasurer); Cllr A Wallace (Chairman of the County Committee); Dr D Francis (Secretary); Mr J Cooper (guest speaker); and the representatives of 22 member councils.

1. Introduction: The President welcomed all present, and thanked the member-councils, the NALC County Committee and CAN staff for their work over the year. All those present introduced themselves.
2. Minutes: the minutes of the 2011 AGM, held on 22 October 2011, were agreed and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.
3. Annual Report 2011-12: Alex Wallace presented the annual report, drawing upon the highlights of the past year. He drew particular attention to the important services provided by Community Action Northumberland, and expressed strong concern for the County Council's withdrawal of support for CAN and its sector-organisations in Wansbeck and Blyth Valley.
4. Finance:
 - (i) Accounts 2011-12: Gillian Turner presented the audited accounts for 2011-12, drawing attention to the change in the funding arrangements between NALC, CAN and NCC, and noting overall a modest deficit of £19. The meeting agreed to receive the accounts.
 - (ii) Subscriptions 2013-14: Gillian Turner presented the County Committee's recommendation for a near-balanced budget for the forthcoming year, based on a slight increase of 0.5p per elector at the top-end of the subscription formula scale. The meeting agreed the proposals.
5. Appointment of Honorary Officers: the meeting agreed the following appointments for the year:
 - (i) President: Mr Jim Rudd
 - (ii) Vice Presidents: Cllrs David Woodard and Norman Dunn
 - (iii) Treasurer: Ms Gillian Turner
 - (iv) Auditor: Mr Peter Basnett.

6. County Committee: David Francis presented the nominations for vacancies on the County Committee, which the meeting agreed:

Berwick and Islandshire	Alan Bowlas
Blyth	John Potts
Newbiggin	Will Rogers
Seaton Valley	Bob Watson
Ponteland and Rural West (South)	Peter Cowey
Ellington and Lynemouth	Vince Dudley
Haltwhistle and West Tyne	Mike Wood.

7. Any other business: members welcomed the efforts and success of Paddy Gascoigne, the County Council's Democratic Services Manager, to reduce the charges for the administration of parish elections in Northumberland. It was regretted that it would not be possible to waive the charges. David Francis would commend the arrangements to the City Council.
8. Presentation: the President welcomed and introduced the guest speaker, John Cooper, from the County Council's 'i-Northumberland' Broadband team. John highlighted the challenges ahead, to improve superfast Broadband provision in Northumberland. He noted that this was a challenge for most of rural Northumberland, and also for some local areas within Northumberland's towns. The funding allocated so far would not meet all needs, and so the level of community demand would help influence both the ability to attract external investment and to determine geographical priorities within the county. The formal procurement process was in-hand, and work should start early in 2013. With the withdrawal of Fujitsu from Northumberland and elsewhere, it was likely that British Telecom would be the sole bidder, to provide the new infrastructure. Further grant opportunities were likely, but ultimately some provision would need to relay on community initiatives, including civil engineering work, as well as the use of other technologies such as wireless and satellite.

Following a question-and-answer session, the President thanked John for his contribution, and closed the meeting.