

## **Northumberland Association of Local Councils**

**Minutes of an Annual General Meeting**  
**held on Saturday 19 October 2013 at 10.30am**  
**in Storey Park Community Centre, St Mary's Field, Morpeth**

**Present:** Mr J Rudd (President); Cllr A Wallace (Chairman of the County Committee); Miss G Turner (Treasurer); Ms J A Garrick (Guest Speaker); Dr D Francis (Secretary) and the representatives of 31 member councils.

1. **Introduction:** Jim Rudd welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited all present to introduce themselves. Apologies for absence had been received from Vice Presidents David Woodard and Norman Dunn, and from a number of councils.
2. **Minutes:** the minutes of the 2012 AGM, held on 20 October 2012, were agreed and signed as a correct record.
3. **Matters arising:** members noted the significant progress that had been made by the i-Northumberland partnership since last year, to put contracts in place for the extension of 'superfast' broadband across the county.
4. **Annual Report 2012-13:** Alex Wallace presented the Annual Report. He thanked the President for this work over many years, and he congratulated Morpeth Town council on their success in the Britain in Bloom competition. The meeting received the Annual Report.
5. **Accounts 2012-13:** Gillian Turner presented the audited accounts, drawing attention to the deficit of £405, but nevertheless a healthy general reserve. She gave particular thanks to the finance and administration staff in CAN. The meeting received the Accounts.
6. **Subscriptions 2014-15:** members discussed a proposed subscription formula for the next financial year, 2014-15, which involved a significant increase in the 'pence per elector' figure in order to compensate in part for the loss of County Council support. While stressing the importance of supporting NALC and its link with CAN, a number of members expressed concern about the affordability of the proposals, especially if local councils were not to receive any further element of Council Tax Benefits Compensation Grant, from DCLG via the principal authority. After some discussion it was agreed to refer the matter for re-consideration and decision by the County Committee, to include the possible change in the basis of the formula from electorate size to the Council Tax base.

7. Honorary Officers: it was agreed to appoint the following:
- (i) President: Cllr David Woodard
  - (ii) Vice Presidents: Norman Dunn and Alex Wallace
  - (iii) Treasurer: Gillian Turner
  - (iv) Auditor: Peter Basnett
8. County Committee: David Francis reported on the election of the following people to the County Committee: Colin Forster, David Parker, Tony Hood, George Askew, Ann Mitcheson, Keith Dalton and Alex Wallace.
9. Any other business: Keith Dalton raised a query concerning the arrangements for the supply for NALC papers in hard copy form, as he was currently not connected to email.
10. Presentation: the President welcomed and introduced Jo-Anne Garrick, the County Council's Spatial Policy and Deliver Manager, who was overseeing the compilation of the new county-wide Local Development Plan. The LDP would provide a wide range of policies on which to make planning decisions until 2031. Key policy topics for the Core Strategy included housing, employment/economic development and minerals, which would be accompanied by a Delivery Document and (where applicable) Neighbourhood Plans. Following the consultation earlier this year on 'Preferred Options', consultation on a further document was imminent, covering the Green Belt, Housing and Economic Development. A number of alternative assumptions and scenarii were being put-forward, linking new housing provision with economic growth.

Overall, a higher number of dwellings per year would be needed than had been built in recent times, but with a significant change in where new housing would be located. The public consultation would run from 31 October until 2 January. All local councils would receive a 'hard copy' of the consultation document, and there would be a series of drop-in events and discussion sessions throughout the county.

Following the presentation, there was a session of question and answers, covering a range of topics including pressures on Morpeth, second homes on the coast, the impact of green belt restrictions, the status of Tyneside and the strength of existing district-led plans.

The President thanked Ms Garrick and all those present, and closed the meeting at 12.20pm.