



NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the County Committee held at 10am on Saturday 27th January 2024 at Stakeford and Bomarsund Social Welfare Centre. Stakeford. Northumberland NE62 5UD

Present in person: Cllrs:, John Potts, David Francis, Colin Wakeling, Paul Dancer, Mike Wood, Alan Sambrook, Alan Taylor, David Nicholson. Monica Anderton, David Woodard, Paul Vaughan, Gwen Woodman, John Tully.

Present online: Cllrs: Alex Wallace, Liz Dunn, Sylvia Hillan, Simon Taylor, Violet Rook, Sue Bowman.

Also Present

Mr Graeme Popay – Chief Officer [Actions marked as GP]

1: Welcome.

Cllr John Potts welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs: Karen Overbury, David Hughes, Adam Hogg, Victoria Thompson.

3: Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th November 2023

All agreed to accept the minute as a true record.

4: Matters arising

Item 10 - a meeting is required with Rob Mufin **ACTION** GP to Contact Rob Murfin

County Training Working Group – a paper was circulated. It was agreed to continue with this work even though National were now looking at the same topic. The NALC A5 handbooks were discussed – these are out of print but several are still available to download via NALC under the Development Tools section of the website.

Suggested subjects for Training Courses were:

- Induction
- A Guide to Parish & Town Councils
- Role of a Councillor
- Role of the Chair
- Finance for Cllrs

The CO was talking to NCC regarding access to training. Cllr D Francis to investigate what we had previously delivered on Finance and report back.

County Committee Working Group – to be discussed in item 8



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5: Finance

The Financial report was tabled showing the current position. Query over the use of negative symbol – All agreed to accept the report.

6: National Issues

David Francis gave a verbal report on recent national issues including:

- Pre Application submissions
- Battery storage and the involvement of Emergency services.
- Street Votes
- Model Contract of Employment produced by NALC & SLCC
- A New NALC Website is under development
- Direct Access to Government funding by T&P Councils.
- Star Awards – his Council were runners up
- David is now the Vice Chair of the National Association.

7: Issues raised by Committee members

Bus Stops – A paper written by Cllr Colin Wakeling was circulated. Colin explained the costs involved to create an accessible bus stop and the increasing reluctance by drivers to acknowledge hail and ride stops, both of these obstacles were hindering members of the public accessing public transport in rural areas. After a very informative discussion, with a drivers point of view provided by Paul Vaughan, it was agreed to approach Neil Easton to see if he would be willing to run a briefing session – **ACTION GP**

A request to move County meetings around the County – Cllr Colin Wakeling. The pros and cons of moving to various locations were discussed. It was agreed that it was impossible to keep everyone happy and that a single consistent venue was probably better than a moving one. County Hall was suggested as being probably the best location due to the facilities, parking, accessibility and transport links.

Action GP to contact Glen Sanderson re using County Hall.

8: Larger Council Forum

Proposal by David Nicholson – *to support in principle the establishment of a larger Councils forum and the Introduction of locality based meetings throughout rural Northumberland to enable greater participation by member councils.*

After discussion it was agreed that a small working group would look into setting up a larger Councils forum and a smaller/rural Councils forum.

David Nicholson, John Tully, Paul Vaughan, David Francis to form a working group with CO

It was agreed to raise this with NCC to gauge support in the first instance.

9: County Conference



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The CO had proposed a similar format to the October 2023 Conference - a dozen market place style stalls representing departments within NCC, ideally departments that were not represented at the October Conference, this would be supplemented by two breakout sessions led by NCC. Iain had taken this proposal to Glen Sanderson who has now approved the format. Iain & NALC would jointly promote the event to P&TC with two places being made available to each Council.

10:Town & Parish Council Liaison Group.

Discussion over topics of recent meetings – it was agreed that the T&PCLG has the potential of being a useful committee but of late it seems to be losing its focus and turning into a reporting back device for NCC. Whilst the reports from Paul Jones are always very good and very informative the Committee felt that the group had lost its focus and it was hoped the forming of a larger Council forum and smaller/rural forums would generate topics that would lead to better discussion at the T&PCLG. Cllr Paul Vaughan was concerned that of late decisions were being made without consultation with T&PC – the T&PCLG should be the ideal format for this type of discussion.

14: Any Other Urgent Business

Working with the New Mayor – topic for a future meeting.

13: Future Meeting of the Committee

Saturday 23rd March – 10am - Venue Stakeford and Bomarsund Social Welfare Centre.
Stakeford. Northumberland NE62 5UD

Meeting Closed at 12.00