



Northumberland Association
of Local Councils

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held digitally at 10.00 am on Saturday 3 October 2020

Present:

Mr D Woodard (President in the Chair), Cllr A Wallace (Chair of the County Committee), Ms G Turner (Honorary Treasurer) and representatives of 45 Member Councils.

Police & Crime Commissioner Kim McGuinness
Stephen Rickitt (Chief Officer)

1: Welcome and apologies for absence

The President welcomed all to the first digital Annual General Meeting.

2: Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

2.1 The President was pleased to welcome Kim McGuinness, the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner (the Commissioner).

2.2 The Commissioner opened by thanking the Association for inviting her as parish and town councils are a very important part of their communities. The timing of the AGM was especially welcome as on the previous Thursday she had launched the consultation into the Police & Crime Plan. This plan is the way in which the Commissioner will judge the Police Force and is at least refreshed every four years.

2.3 The Commissioner was aware of the Association's concerns about anti-social behaviour and was able to advise the meeting that new police operating methods will assist in targeting this type of behaviour by having neighbourhood police officers who can be the eyes and ears of the community. This new approach means that 40% of officers in Northumberland deal with rural crime issues, including theft and poaching. She described the work of Operation Checkpoint which is an initiative across the northern police forces to tackle rural crime and she had met volunteers in Hexham who assist this operation.

2.4 Her aim is not only for criminals to be detected and prosecuted but also to stress the importance of crime prevention for the families who would otherwise be affected

by crime or anti-social behaviour and is encouraging all the agencies to work together.

2.5 The Commissioner has established a violence reduction unit aimed to prevent violent crime and was pleased to be able to inform the meeting that statistically the police area was the safest area in England.

2.6 She concluded by reiterating her three aims

- Preventing Crime
- Fighting Crime
- Improving Lives

2.7 The Commissioner then invited questions and comments from those present. The discussion included

- The concerns about closure of smaller police stations which led to a perception of there being less officers on the streets. The Commissioner wants to explore greater opportunities to base police or alongside other community services which has occurred in some parts of the region.
- The frequency of changes of staff leading to the loss of personal contact by Parish Councils and Councillors. Whilst this is an operational matter for the Force, the Commissioner knows that the Force is committed to resume neighbourhood policing at the earliest opportunity.
- Issues were raised about the 101 service which can have long delays in calls being answered. The Commissioner explained that the call handlers deal both with the 999 and the 101 calls and therefore a 999 call must take priority. There is a national issue in the service as it was initially was meant to be for several organisations but now is only manned by the police. The Commissioner asked that the Association circulate details of the online form for reporting 101 incidents.
- Concern was also expressed about the increasing the number of internet and telephone scams targeting vulnerable people. The Commissioner reported that, whilst this was a national problem, she was also aware that young people regard this as a high priority for the police. Whilst an officer might not be able to visit victims of such crimes in person, the Commissioner is firmly of the view that the Police need to develop a more phone-friendly approach when speaking to vulnerable victims of such crimes.
- Concerns were raised about the volume of the anti-social behaviour in hotspots area the area. The Commissioner reinforced her advice that such incidents must be reported so that the police can build up a picture of incidents and allocate resources accordingly.

- A further concern raised was the delay in Councils receiving feedback when issues are reported.
- Comments were made about the Force's community engagement van which is staffed by the neighbourhood teams. This was generally welcomed although there had been a specific issue in one area.

2.8 In conclusion the Commissioner emphasised and reiterated the need for all communities to respond to the consultation on the police and crime plan and urged including the post code so that it was clear that the views of all communities were being expressed.

2.9 The President thanked the Commissioner for her address and for participating in the discussion which followed, echoed by the County Committee Chairman and all present.

3: Minutes of the 2019 AGM

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2019 were agreed as a true record and will be signed by the President.

4: Matters arising

None not noted elsewhere

5: Annual Report 2019-2020

In moving the Annual Report as previously circulated, Cllr Wallace paid tribute to his colleagues on the County Committee, CAN for their assistance and the staff. The report was approved. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]

6: Finance

6.1 The Accounts 2019-2020 (as shown in the Annual Report) were considered and approved. The Honorary Treasurer gave her thanks to Margaret Tweddell for her continuing work handling the Association's Finances.

6.2 Subscription formula for 2021-22

On the recommendation of the Honorary Treasurer, the Meeting resolved that this Association increases both the standard amount and the variable element based on the Band D equivalent by the 3% being the same increase as are being imposed by the national NALC.

Both are subject to caps for larger Councils.

7: Honorary Officers

The following were elected as the Honorary Officers:

President – David Woodard

Vice Presidents – David Francis and Alex Wallace

Treasurer – Gillian Turner

Auditor – Peter Basnett

8: Review of County Committee Constituencies

The last AGM resolved for a review of the system to appointment for County Committee Members. The Chief Officer explained that the Coronavirus Emergency has meant this work has not been progressed yet. The same applied to the intended review of the Business Plan.

9: Appointment of County Committee Members

The following seats fell vacant due to rotation and the further vacancies as shown. The Meeting resolved to elect the Councillors as shown in the table below for three-year terms.

Constituency	Current Councillor
Amble	David Bewley
Glendale	David Hughes
Ellington	Liz Dunn
Seaton Valley	Stephen Stanners

10: Urgent Business

At the suggestion of Cllr Wallace, as Chairman of the County Committee, the Meeting noted their thanks and appreciation to the front-line workers, local councillors and their staff and the Association's Chief Officer for all the work done and being done during the pandemic, all going above and beyond expectations.

The President declared the meeting closed at 11.15 am.

Confirmed as a true record
and signed by the President..... Date.....