



NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the County Committee at 10am on Saturday 25th November 2023 at Stakeford and Bomarsund Social Welfare Centre. Stakeford. Northumberland NE62 5UD

Present in person: Cllrs: Alex Wallace, John Potts, David Francis, Paul Dancer, Mike Wood, Alan Sambrook, Alan Taylor, David Nicholson. Monica Anderton, Liz Dunn

Present online: Cllrs: Colin Wakeling, Graham Curry, Victoria Thompson, Gwen Woodman, Mike Greener, Tony Stewart.

Also Present

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

1: Welcome.

Cllr Alex Wallace welcomed everyone to his last meeting as Chair of the County Committee. Alex thanked all members for their support over the years. A small presentation was made to Alex from members.

A minutes silence was observed for Alan Varley former Mayor of Ponteland who passed away suddenly on 30th October.

2. Committee Membership

Paper circulated and noted.

3: Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs: Paul Vaughan, Sylvia Hill, Adam Hogg, Paul Claridge.

4: To elect a Chairman and Vice Chairmen for the forthcoming year.

- Chairman – John Potts
- Vice Chairman -David Francis
- Vice Chairman – David Nicholson
- Vice Chairman – Mike Wood

Proposed by Liz Dunn to accept all nominations. All agreed.

Cllr Alex Wallace the outgoing Chair retired and Cllr John Potts took the chair.

5: Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th September 2023

All agreed to accept the minute as a true record.

6: Matters arising

None



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7: Minutes of the AGM meeting held on 28th October 2023

All agreed to accept the minute as a true record.

8: Finance

David Nicholson offered to stand in as acting Hon treasurer. – all agreed.

8.1 - The Financial report was tabled showing the current position. All agreed to accept the report.

8.2 – 3% rise in 2023/24 Northumberland ALC subscription was agreed at the AGM – noted.

9: National Issues

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

- Levelling up – some success at the House of Lords with amendments
- Lobbying for dependent carers allowance for Town & parish Councillors
- No success with Lords amendment giving councils the flexibility to hold remote council meetings
- The government made an amendment to the Local Government Act 1894 with the aim of clarifying that there is nothing to prevent local councils from funding churches and other places of worship
- Star Awards winners would be announced at a parliamentary reception in the House of Lords on Wednesday 29th November 2023

10: Issues raised by Committee members

Cllr David Francis – Planning – New Pre application protocol will significantly change and reduce the role and rights of parish and town councils in this part of the planning process. According to the NALC/NCC Charter T&P Councils should have been consulted. Rob Murfin has promised a response. Glen Sanderson had been copied into the email and had asked for a briefing paper from Planning as he was unaware.

Cllr Alex Wallace – strategic planning Committee members no longer visit sites, it is all recorded on video and played back.

Cllr Monica Anderton – Fix my Street seems to be overloaded – is this just in her area or a wider issue?

Alan Sambrook – reports made 4 months ago are still waiting for repair.

Liz Dunn – reports seem to be closed before they are resolved.

Overall members welcomed the new reporting process and acknowledged that the system would no doubt have initial teething problems and would probably be overloaded in the first few months.

Review in 12 months.

Cllr Alex Wallace, at the recent Cramlington elections the £3k (approx.) costs were passed to the Town Council, this is a to cover nationally set pay scales (fees) for returning officers,



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presiding officers and polling clerks involved with principal local authority elections. This was just a reminder to budget for this possibility.

11: Training

The CO circulated a summary of training that had been delivered in 2023.

44 places had been booked by Cllrs & Clerks had attended Parkinson Partnership training, 39 places had booked onto Co Durham & Cleveland Training courses and 57 had attended Northumberland ALC online briefings.

A report was given on the recent meeting of the Training Sub Group, in preparation for the 2025 elections it was agreed that the following areas would be investigated further:

- Induction packs for new Councillors
- Modular training covering the basics of being a Councillor
- Specific training for roles and responsibilities within a Council, face to face and online.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert & Cllr Paul Dancer – both had an induction pack that they would pass onto the group via the CO

The group aimed to present a paper at the March meeting

The CO had reached out to every County Association, the majority of replies suggested most are in the same position as ourselves and would welcome online modular training.

12: Purpose of the Committee

The group had met and a paper would be presented to the next meeting for further discussion.

13: 2024 County meetings.

It was agreed to delegate this to the Sub Group and dates to be circulated ASAP.

14: Any Other Urgent Business

None – please contact GP if you have a topic for discussion.

13: Future Meeting of the Committee

The date for the next meeting would be agreed by the subgroup and circulated ASAP –
Venue Stakeford and Bomarsund Social Welfare Centre. Stakeford. Northumberland NE62 5UD

Meeting Closed at 12.00