

Northumberland Association of Local Councils

County Committee

23 April 2021

NALC Chief Officer's Report

Agenda Item 4: Coronavirus

Confusion remains as to whether councils at all levels of local govt. can continue to hold digital meetings. At the time of writing the court case, seeking a declaration that digital meetings are allowed, is due to be heard on Wednesday 21 April 2021. There may be an indication from the judge as to his thinking, but formal judgement is not expected until the following week. Local govt. media reports that the MHCLG is not opposing the application and may in fact be supporting it.

Agenda Item 5: Northumberland Elections – May 2021

Nominations closed at 4.00 pm on Thursday 8 April 2021.

Initial analysis shows

- There are contests in 19 councils covering 48 wards or whole councils with 275 candidates
- 823 parish, town and community councillors will be returned as unopposed
- 33 Councils have a full complement of councillors who were all returned as unopposed
- 211 vacancies in active parish councils

The comparison with 2017 is shown in the table below

	2017	2021
Unopposed Cllrs	857	823
Number of Contests (Councils) / (Whole Councils or Wards)	19/41	19/48
Number of candidates for contested seats	277	275
Number of vacancies	198	211

Four active councils will be inquorate and I have already been in contact with them. An update will be given at the meeting.

It is pleasing to note that Duddo PC has a full complement of Councillors after being dormant for some years. I am assisting them with their first meeting.

Agenda Item 6 The LGA Model Code of Conduct

Following the discussion at the previous meeting I again emailed both the City and County Councils to ask about their stance, no replies have yet been received.

Agenda item 7: The AGM

I hope to circulate the first draft of the annual report ahead of the meeting, but it is likely to be indicative rather than complete.

Agenda Item 8: The Briefing Programme for 2021

Date	Event	Numbers Booked	Numbers attended
8 February	Social Media	18	17
11 February	Safeguarding	7	7
17 February	General Introduction	11	11
11 March	Preparing for Audit	5	4
7 April	The Annual Meetings	14	12 (one was a double booking made in error)

Agenda Item 10: Death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

An Enews was dispatched on Friday 9 April following the announcement and the following message of sympathy placed on the Association's website

"The Association was saddened to hear of the death of Prince Philip. Our thoughts and prayers are with HM The Queen and The Royal Family.

The Enews dispatched to Member Council today has guidance on how flags should be flown at half-mast."

Further guidance was included in the Election Update sent to Member Councils on Sunday 11 April.

There has been some confusion as the national NALC's Legal Dept. advised that meetings should not be held during the period of national mourning, nor would days during that period count as the "clear days"

Agenda Item 10 – Finance

The invoices for the 2021/2022 subscriptions were emailed to Member Councils on 12 April. An update will be given at the meeting.

Stephen Rickitt

NALC Chief Officer

15 April 2021`

Northumberland ALC Co C'tee Chief Officer Report March 2021

<https://northumberlandalc.uk/>