

NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

**Minutes of the digital meeting of the County Committee held on Friday 22 April 2022
starting at 10.00 am.**

Present:

Councillors Paul Claridge, Peter Coates, Graham Curry, Chris Cuthbert, Martin Dixon-Green, Liz Dunn, Graham Eastwood, David Francis, Christine Greenwell, Lynne Grimshaw, Sylvia Hillan, David Hughes, John Potts, Violet Rook, Alan Taylor, Simon Taylor, Paul Vaughan, Colin Wakeling, Alex Wallace (Chairman in the chair), Debs Wilson and Mike Wood

Also Present

Mr David Woodard – President

Ms Gillian Turner - Treasurer

Mr Stephen Rickitt – Chief Officer [Actions marked as SER]

The national NALC

Justin Griggs – Head of Policy and Communications

1: Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all present.

2: Committee Membership and Appointments

There were no candidates for co-option.

3: Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from

Councillors David Bewley, Matthew Cuthbert, Tony Hood and Keith Grimes

Mrs Monica Anderton

Cllr Isabel Hunter – Northumberland County Council

4: Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 February 2022

These were agreed as a true record and will be signed by the Chairman.

5: Matters arising, (if not otherwise on the agenda) included

- Dormant Councils - It was suggested that an approach be made to the County Council to see if they would be prepared for an omnibus Community Governance Review formally dissolving all the dormant councils. **Action SER**
- Digital Meetings & Lobby Day – A suggestion was made that consideration should be given to producing a quarterly bulleting for all MPs in our area, including those on Tyneside with no local councils. **Action SER**

- Election Recharges – a first draft of a note to Northumberland's Member Councils was noted although detailed comments from the Elections Team were awaited.

Action SER6: Coronavirus

Members of the Committee were expressed concerns about the Govt.'s decision to cease providing free tests.

7: Storm Arwen

Members noted that the County Council's Review is due to be discussed at the County Council on 6 July 2022.

8: The Northumberland Local Council Charter

Members commented on the draft Charter which was to be the subject of further discussion at the County Council's Town & Parish Liaison Working Group on 5 May 2022.

9: The Armed Forces Covenant

The Committee noted that a briefing had been held on 6 April and that promotional material was awaited from the MoD.

10: The County Council's Inequalities Summit 25 March 2022

Cllr Wood and the Chief Officer had been invited to attend. Both had taken the opportunity to highlight the potential existing in our Member Councils, a concept which seemed to be of some surprise to many of the health professionals present. Papers from the summit will be distributed by the Chief Officer when received. **Action SER**

11: Finance

The report was agreed, and a copy is attached to the signed minutes

12: A return to Physical Meetings of the Committee

The Committee resolved to hold a face-to-face meeting in June/July in Choppington, subject to venue availability. **Action SER**

13: Election Costs

A first draft of a note to Northumberland's Member Councils was noted and commented upon although detailed comments from the Elections Team were awaited. **Action SER**

14: The Annual Report

The Committee approved the draft report, subject to final proof-reading. **Action SER**

15: National Issues

Justin Griggs had contributed to the Committee's discussions on other items of business. He and Cllr Francis (as the Association's national representative) commented on a number of issues including

- The recent positive profile in the Financial Times

- The national Conference on 7 November 2022, which was to be a hybrid event
- The disappointment at the Govt.'s eventual response to the report on local govt. standards published in 2029 by the Committee for Standards in Public Life
- Work being undertaken by the national NALC to enable our sector to obtain direct funding from central funds such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- The forthcoming elections to the new unitary council areas in Cumbria and North Yorkshire
- Encouragement for our Member Councils, Councillors and Staff to enter the national Star Council awards,
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16: Issues raised by Committee Members

None, not included in other discussions

17: The Briefing Programme April 2022 as at 14 April 2022

The Chief Officer updated the committee on the outcomes of the briefing sessions as shown below

Ref	Date	Title	Presenter	Bookings	Attendance
1	12 April	Preparing for Audit	SER	17	17
2	7 June	General Introduction to Parish Town & Community Councils	SER	2	
3	15 June	Finance for Parish Town & Community Councils	SER	3	
4	11 July	Public Rights of Way	SER	1	
5	26 July	Workshop – Climate Change & Parish Town & Community Councils	N'land CC Officers	To be published	

18: Any Other Urgent Business

Issues raised are noted above.

19: Future Meetings of the Committee

See item 12 above.

The Chief Officer is endeavouring to arrange further informal meetings of the Committee on a range of topics.

Confirmed as a true record

and signed by the Chairman..... Date.....