

NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the digital meeting of the County Committee held on Friday 22 October 2021 starting at 10.00 am.

Present:

Councillors David Bewley, Peter Coates, Graham Curry, Chris Cuthbert, Martin Dixon-Green, Christine Greenwell, Sylvia Hillan, Tony Hood, John Potts, Violet Rook, Paul Vaughan, Colin Wakeling, Alex Wallace (Chairman in the chair), Debs Wilson, Mike Wood and Gwen Woodman

Also Present

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

Northumberland County Council

Cllr Glen Sanderson (part only)
Cllr Isabel Hunter
Mr Iain Hedley

1: Welcome

1.1 The Chairman welcomed all present and with the agreement of the meeting invited Cllr Sanderson to address the meeting and take questions.

1.2 Cllr Sanderson updated the Committee on various re-cycling initiatives including seeking a bid for funding to extend the kerbside collection of glass for recycling within Northumberland.

1.3 In response to questions he said

- Potholes remain a major problem. In some cases temporary emergency repairs are made but the preference is for more permanent repairs
- The County Council is investigating methods of funding the landslip on the Rothbury – Wheldon Bridge Road
- He is part of the LA7 group of North East Council Leaders all of whom are very concerned about the rise in Covid cases
- He was aware of rumours etc about the financial state of Advance Northumberland, but these did not reflect the reality. The Chief Officer will endeavour to set up an informal meeting for the County Committee on this topic. **Action SER**

1.4 Cllr Sanderson was thanked for his attendance which was much appreciated.

2: Committee Membership and Appointments

2.1 The Committee noted the Membership as elected at the AGM.

2.2 There were no candidates for co-option

3: Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from

Cllr David Francis
Cllr Liz Dunn
Cllr Graham Eastwood
Cllr Simon Taylor
Mrs Monica Anderton
Mr David Woodard

Mr Tony Kirsop – Northumberland County Council

4: Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen for the forthcoming year

4.1 Cllr Wallace was elected as Chairman for a further year, as were Cllrs Tony Hood, John Potts and Mike Wood to the positions of Vice-Chairmen.

4.2 Cllr Wallace informed the Committee that he was standing down in 2022 but serving in office would enable new Members of the Committee to gain experience.

5: Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 September 2021

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

6: Matters arising, (if not otherwise on the agenda) including

- Election Recharges in Northumberland – The Chief Officer reported that a response had been promised by the end of the month.
- The Northumberland Charter - Responses were awaited from the County Council
- Dormant Councils - Responses were awaited from the County Council

7: The AGM

The Committee noted the draft minutes.

8: The Northumberland & Newcastle Local Council Census 2021

8.1 The Committee received the results and the analysis. [Copies are attached to the signed minutes]

8.2 During the course of discussion the following points were made

- Like all voluntary organisations, Councils are finding it difficult to attract younger members
- Younger members tend to join because of single issues and the task is to retain their interest to deal with other Local Council matters

- The Chief Officer was asked to organise a workshop for existing younger councillors to discuss how the Association could do more to engage with younger Councillors and members of our communities. **Action SER**
- The benefits of potential hybrid meetings allowing a greater range of parishioners to attend meetings, provided the technological hurdles can be overcome.
- The use of mentors for both new Councillors and Clerks

8.3 The Committee agreed the census should be repeated in 2023 following the elections in Newcastle upon Tyne

9: The Briefing Programme September 2021 – January 2022

9.1 The outcomes as shown in the table below were noted.

Ref	Date	Title	Presenter	Bookings	Attendance
1	Thurs 23 Sept	General Introduction to Local Councils	NALC / SER	5	5
2	Tues 5 Oct	Finance and Budgeting for Local Councils	NALC / SER	10	10
3	Thurs 14 Oct	Planning – Permitted Development and Prior Notification	NCC	10	10
4	Tues 26 Oct	Planning – Highway and Rights of Way Issues	NCC	4	
5	Mon 8 Nov	Common Land and Village Greens	NALC / SER	3	
6	Mon 22 Nov	Planning -Section 106s and Developer Contributions	NCC	6	
7	Thurs 25 Nov	Chairing a Local Council	NALC / SER	2	
8	Wed 8 Dec	Planning - Neighbourhood Plans – Lessons Learnt	NCC	6	
9	Tues 14 Dec	Planning – Conservation Areas	NCC	4	
10	Thurs 13 Jan	<i>Standards & Codes of Conduct – not yet finalised</i>	NALC / SER		
11	Monday 24 January	Planning - Enforcement	NCC	4	

9.2 The Chief Officer informed the Committee that the County Council were prepared to share the costs of an external provider for a briefing on Standards. Three Members of the Committee, in different capacities, had already attended sessions given by the proposed provider and gave favorable reports. The Chief Officer was authorised to arrange a standards briefing on this basis. **Action SER**

10: Finance

The finance report was approved [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]. Efforts are continuing to chase up the five outstanding subscriptions.

11: Issues raised by Committee Members

11.1 The Chief Officer reported that a digital meeting of the six Newcastle Member Councils had been arranged for 1 December 2021 at 7.00 pm.

11.2 The Committee were pleased to note that the County Council will consult Town, Parish & Community Councils on proposed street names. **Action SER**

11.3 Concern was expressed at the continuing problem of digital exclusion. Cllr Rook asked for examples to be sent to her for feeding into a regional working group. **Action All County Committee Members**

11.4 The Chief Officer was asked to clarify with the County Council whether non-consultation with Local Councils for Temporary Event Notices is based on national legislation/guidance or is local decision based on available resources. **Action SER**

11.5 The Chief Officer will press the County Council to arrange the discussion on cycle routes raised at the June meeting of the Town & Parish Liaison Working Group. **Action SER**

12: National Issues

In the absence of Cllr Francis, the Chief Officer updated the Committee on the forthcoming national AGM.

13: Any Other Urgent Business

None, not noted above

14: Future Meetings of the Committee

The next formal meeting is held on Friday 10 December 2021 at 1000 by Zoom.

It was hoped that single-issue meetings will also be arranged on a number of topics. **Action SER**

Confirmed as a true record

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