

Northumberland Association of Local Councils

Minutes of an Annual General Meeting
held on Saturday 22 October 2011 at 10.30am
in Storey Park Community Centre, St Mary's Field, Morpeth

Present: Mr J Rudd (President); Ms G Turner (Treasurer), Dr D Francis (Secretary), Peter Biggers (guest speaker) and the representatives of 29 member councils.

1. Introduction: The President opened the meeting, welcomed all present, and thanked the member-councils, committee and staff for their work over the year.
2. Minutes: the minutes of the 2010 AGM were agreed and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.
3. Annual Report 2010-11: A Wallace presented the annual report, drawing particular attention to:
 - the contrasts within different parts of Northumberland
 - developments over the last two years
 - the value of the close link between NALC and CAN
 - the importance of 'buy-in' by councils to the revised Charter
 - the opportunities for Neighbourhood Planning, and Planning Champions
 - the geographical 'spread' of the committee's membership.

The meeting agreed to receive the Annual Report.

4. Accounts 2010-11: Gillian Turner presented the audited accounts. Although the income and the expenditure had increased as a result of the new member-councils, the overall pattern of financial activity had remained much as before. The meeting agreed to receive the accounts.
5. Honorary Officers of the Association: it was agreed to re-elect as follows:
 - President: Mr Jim Rudd
 - Vice Presidents: Cllrs Norman Dunn and David Woodard
 - Treasurer: Ms Gillian Turner
 - Auditor: Mr Richard Slater

6. County Committee: David Francis presented the nominations which had been received to fill the one-third of vacancies which became vacant at this years' AGM:

R Thompson	Newcastle
C Weir	Amble
J McCormack	Ashington
R Butler	Choppington
M Anderton	East Tynedale
E Burt	Prudhoe

and Malcolm Douglas would fill the casual vacancy for Newcastle, until the AGM 2012.

The meeting approved the appointments.

7. Subscriptions 2012-13: the meeting considered a proposal from the County Committee to increase subscriptions, particularly from the larger councils, to meet a reduction in support from the County Council for Community Action Northumberland's services for NALC. A final decision would be made at a Special General Meeting in November. Those present were supportive of the proposal, but were concerned to ensure that member-councils were aware that this had been caused by NCC.
8. Any other business: Colin Forster (Woolsington) raised a concern about the very limited 'consultation window' relating to the Newcastle Local Development Framework draft core strategy. A substantial number of potential development sites had been identified, which had created anxiety. Following some discussion, it was agreed to raise this with the City Council at the forthcoming twice-yearly officers' meeting.
9. Presentation: David Francis introduced Peter Biggers, who gave a talk on the new Neighbourhood Planning process, with particular reference to the Alnwick/Denwick 'front-runner- initiative. This presented the opportunity for local communities to develop their own planning policies which would add detail to the provisions of the LDF (local development framework, possibly to be re-named as Local Plan). He stressed the main purpose was to encourage, not stifle, new development. Therefore, not all communities would be interested. There was scope for a cluster of parishes to prepare a single Plan. In Northumberland, there is not a 'policy vacuum': a number of planning partners have been 'saved' from the predecessor district authorities. However, it was understood that planning officers would devote most of their attention to compiling a new LDF, leaving relatively limited staff capacity for supporting individual plans.

Following a question-and-answer session, the President closed the meeting at 12.20pm