



NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the County Committee at 10am on Saturday 12th April 2025, held at County Hall Morpeth.

Online: Cllrs: Liz Dunn, Matthew Cuthbert, Sylvia Hillan,

Attendance: Colin Wakeling, Alan Sambrook, John Potts, David Francis, Monica Anderton, David Nicholson, Alex Wallace, David Woodard

Also Present

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

1: Welcome.

Cllr John Potts welcomed everyone.

2: Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs: Paul Claridge, David Hughes, Karen Overbury, Alan Taylor

3: Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st March 2025

All agreed to accept the minute as a true record.

4: Matters arising

None

5: Finance

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

6: National Issues

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

- The latest 2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide is out now, bringing important updates for authorities preparing Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) for financial years starting on or after 1 April 2025.
- ICO Fee – David reported that the annual ICO fee may not be necessary – he would report back to the next meeting once he had more information.
- Reform of the Audit system – white paper - Whilst the proposals mainly cover audits for principal authorities, they may have implications for the hugely different limited assurance regime for smaller authorities, currently overseen by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA).
- Job Evaluation Scheme - this document was last updated in 2009 and long overdue a review. NALC & SLCC would be revisiting this in the coming months.
- Government Standards – NALC have urged the government to implement a robust new standards regime for local government



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7: Issues raised by County Committee members.

Cllr Colin Wakeling – There needs to be joined up thinking with the NCC Transport Policy and the Mayors Transport Policy – no real understanding how the Environmental or sustainable transport plans will work in practice.

It was noted that the new train link was working above and beyond expectation and the Bedlington Active Travel Corridor will connect the west of Bedlington to the east of the town.

8: Elections

The process was working , but it was noted that NCC staff were very stretched. The recent online meeting delivered by the Elections team was very well attended.

It was noted that some Parishes were struggling to see a copy of the Electoral register.

9: Training

The CO would be delivering training face to face to PC's that requested it – he already had several booking for May and June.

It was noted that there would be a need to deliver a session for Parish/Town Council Chairs

10: County and Parish Website

The CO gave the background on the Website and its present position, it was recognised that we need to move to a new provider and if possible include a .gov website address and .gov email address for Clerks. We presently support 66 Parish websites

With this remit in mind the CO had been in discussion with a provider who is presently supporting over 400 Parish websites.

After discussion on the way forward, it was agreed that a paper should be written containing the position and a proposal which would be tabled and discussed at the June meeting.

The CO would contact NCC to see if they could support .gov emails addresses for all Parishes in the County.

11: Next Meeting of the Committee – Saturday 7th June County Hall & Hybrid

12: Any Other Urgent Business – The Chair wished everyone good luck with the upcoming elections

Meeting Closed at 12.00