

Minutes of the 70th Annual General Meeting of the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils

Held at Moulton Community Centre, Moulton, Northampton on
Saturday 7 October 2017

Item

1. Welcome & housekeeping.

Northants CALC Vice Chairman, Mike Scott opened the meeting and welcomed delegates. There were 160 attendees in total, including 130 councillors and clerks representing over eighty member councils.

2. Local Councils' Question Time (LCQT)

The AGM opened with a BBC Question Time-style panel comprising the MP for Daventry, Chris Heaton-Harris, the Chief Constable for Northamptonshire, Simon Edens, the Chairman of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Sue Baxter, and the Deputy Leader of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), Matt Golby.

The first question was put by Kevin Nichols of Everdon Parish Council who asked "Does the panel know what happened to Localism?" The panellists gave their perspective on how local services are delivered and whether or not there are opportunities for parish and town councils to be part of the solution. The consensus appeared to be that some progress on Localism had been made but that much more needed to be done to drive the delivery of services down to the most local level possible.

The second question was from Stephen Hiscock of Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council: "With continuing reductions in the number and visibility of local police, are low crime areas now being ignored?" The question sparked a good discussion that addressed the reality of reducing resources and increasing demands, particularly in new areas such as cyber-crime and online safety and child exploitation.

Sam Dobbs of Harlestone Parish Council asked the third and final substantive question: "With cuts in virtually all public services in the county, there is growing opportunity for parish councils to fill in the gaps. What services could be devolved to us and will finance follow function?" Every panellist said they could see opportunities for parish and town councils to be part of the solution, whether it be sponsoring a PCSO or taking over grass cutting. However, in answer to the second part of the question it was clear that it will be up to parish and town councils to fund such services from the precept or from raising income from other sources.

The "and finally..." question went to Sara Homer of Wootton Parish Council who asked "In your role, what one thing would cause you to have a coughing fit?" in a reference to Theresa May's infamous speech at the Conservative Party Conference earlier in the week. The panel gave suitably light-hearted answers and the session ended on a high note with warm applause from the audience.

3. Election of Honorary Officers of the Association for the year 2016/2017.

- a) With the recent resignation of Dr Paul Blantern from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), the AGM resolved to delegate the appointment of a new President of the Association to the board of directors.

The following honorary offers were nominated and duly elected:

b) Vice Presidents	Cllr Catherine Lomax Mr Jeffrey Greenwell Mr Gordon Shorley Mrs Gwen Radcliffe
c) Auditor	Kate Brown Accountants

4. To receive the recommendations of the Appointments Panel on persons to be appointed to the board of directors for 2017/18.

The Appointments Panel recommended the following for appointment at the AGM:

No.	Name	Qualifying Council
1.	Peter Allen	Towcester Town Council
2.	Fiona Baker	Brackley Town Council
3.	Sara Homer	Wootton Parish Council
4.	Lynn Lavender	Litchborough Parish Council
5.	Richard Lewis	Rushden Town Council
6.	Mike Scott	Great Addington Parish Council
7.	Lynne Taylor	Daventry Town Council
8.	Gill Wells	West Haddon and Upton Parish Councils

RESOLVED: That the eight candidates be appointed en bloc as directors for the year 2017/18.

5. President's Address.

In the absence of the President, NALC Chairman Sue Baxter made a short presentation giving an overview of national issues and outlining the NALC Prospectus to government. She called for local councils to be fiscally responsible and stressed that where precepts are significantly increased the council must be able to demonstrate that it has engaged with its electorate. She urged councils to be flexible in funding and to look for diverse income sources, such as Community Share Schemes. Sue acknowledged that much needs to be done to build the capacity of the sector but nevertheless encouraged councils to be confident and not afraid to rise to new challenges. Sue took questions from the floor and concluded by thanking delegates for all they do for their communities.

6. Confirmation of the minutes of the 69th AGM held on 8 October 2016.

The minutes were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

7. To receive the Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2017 including the Annual Statement of Accounts and balance sheet for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Northants CALC Chairman, Lynne Taylor presented the Annual Report and Accounts. Danny Moody answered questions from the floor on audit fees, reserve levels and Transparency Fund monies.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report & Accounts be received and noted.

8. To determine subscription levels for the year 2018/2019.

The board of directors recommended that the per council element of the Northants CALC membership fee for the year starting 1 April 2018 and ending 31 March 2019 be increased by inflation (CPI July 2017 – 2.6%) from £150.90 to £154.82 and that the per elector element of the Northants CALC membership fee be increased by inflation (CPI July 2017 – 2.6%) from 22.64 pence to 23.23 pence.

Larger councils (>10,000 electorate) are charged a fixed fee for membership of Northants CALC. The board of directors recommended that the fixed fee per council for the year ending 31 March 2019 be increased by inflation (CPI July 2017 – 2.6%) from £2,414.40 to £2,477.17 per council.

Danny Moody responded to a question from the floor regarding the basis for the increase (this year it was CPI July whereas last year it was CPI August) by saying that the board of directors intended to review the basis on which ordinary increases are determined but that whatever method was chosen would be standardised.

RESOLVED: That the board's recommendation be approved.

9. To consider motions put by member councils.

DM reported that two draft motions had been received but had subsequently been withdrawn pending further detail being worked up.

DM reported that the motion passed at the 2016 AGM regarding the inclusion of parish and town councils in the unitary debate had been useful and had led to NCC Leader, Heather Smith, attending a meeting of the Northamptonshire Larger Councils Partnership (NLCP) in Raunds earlier in the year. The unitary debate is ongoing and Northants CALC is in regular dialogue with principal councils.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

10. Presentations: Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS), CiLCA & Council of the Year

The AGM recognised those clerks that had achieved the sector qualification, the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) since the last AGM:

Josie Flavell	Crick Parish Council
Geoffrey Gill	Yardley Hastings parish Council
Shirley Wong	Overstone Parish Council

The AGM recognised the councils that had achieved accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS):

Council	Award Level
Raunds Town Council	Quality Gold

Danny Moody read out the commendation for the Northamptonshire Council of the Year Award, which went to Weedon Bec Parish Council in recognition of the courage, fortitude and leadership of the clerk and councillors in very difficult circumstances. The award was collected by the chairman of Weedon Bec Parish Council, Zoe O'Toole.

The prize draw was won by Nicki Phillips, Clerk to Lilford cum Wigsthorpe & Thorpe Achurch Parish Council. The prize of £300 in vouchers and a bottle of champagne was generously donated by Wicksteed Playgrounds and was presented by Wicksteed Areas Sales Manager, Jodie Midlane.

11. Close.

Jeffrey Greenwell concluded the meeting by offering thanks to all the sponsors and exhibitors, to Anne Kirkland and her team, to Moulton Parish Council for hosting and to the four guest speakers for their input and insight. Jeffrey thanked all the delegates for their attendance and participation, and Danny Moody for his diligent and excellent administration of proceedings.

The meeting closed at 12:53 p.m.

Signed: _____

Date: _____