



**MINUTES OF MEMBERS' MEETING & SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023
MID & EAST ANTRIM COUNCIL CHAMBER THE BRAID, BALLYMENA & BY ZOOM**

ATTENDEES

Aldermen

Frazer Agnew
Bill Keery

David Drysdale
Alan McDowell

Michael Henderson
Tommy Nicholl

Councillors

Beth Adger
Joe Boyle
Hazel Legge

Terry Andrews
Robert Burgess
Billy Webb

Alison Bennington
Dermot Curran

Kate Wilson (Admin Assistant)

ZOOM ATTENDEES

Aldermen

Angus Carson

Keith Kerrigan

Jim Speers

Councillors

Michael Goodman
Christine McFlynn
Eddie Thompson

Valerie Harte
Margaret Anne McKillop
Errol Thompson

Noreen McClelland
Vera McWilliam
Victor Warrington

APOLOGIES

Aldermen

Derek Hussey

Jim Rodgers

Tommy Sandford

Councillors

Beth Adger
Errol Thompson

Terry Andrews
Hon Nicholas Trimble

Diana Armstrong

1. Welcome

The NAC Chair, Cllr Terry Andrews opened the meeting and handed over to the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Deputy Mayor, Cllr Beth Adger who welcomed the NAC Members to Ballymena “the centre of the universe,” on behalf of the Mayor, Ald Noel Williams who was unable to attend due to a prior engagement.

Cllr Adger advised that former councillor Samuel Hamilton had passed away and Cllr Andrews asked for a minute silence to be observed as a mark of respect.

Following this, Cllr Andrews spoke about the PSNI DCI John Caldwell who was seriously injured in an attack in Omagh saying he wished DCI Caldwell a speedy recovery and "our thoughts are with his wife and family."

Cllr Andrews then spoke of an accident that Ald Kerrigan's father had been involved in just last night and said that a card would be sent to him on behalf of the NAC.

Following discussion, it was agreed by those present that Cllr Andrews should proceed with the Members' Meeting Agenda and the Special General Meeting will be held following this.

2. Minutes of last Meeting held on 25 January 2023

The minutes of the last Members' Meeting were proposed as a true and accurate record by Cllr Burgess, seconded by Cllr Curran, and agreed by all.

3. Officers Reports – Treasurer, Secretary and National President

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Ald Carson started off by saying that this is his, and some other members, last meeting as they will be retiring. Ald Carson talked about his time as a councillor, saying he had a good number of years but that he has been in and out of hospital over the past while. He wished everyone "all the best" and said that he hopes the new councillors will invigorate the NAC.

Ald Carson then provided details of the organisation's current financial position from the bank statement dated 13 March 2023.

The Treasurer's report was approved as proposed by Ald Henderson and seconded by Cllr Errol Thompson.

The meeting attendees then heard from other retiring councillors at the meeting as follows:

Ald Jim Speers talked about being at the first meeting of the NAC in Belfast City Hall (30 years ago), he commended the NAC saying that the team has been very diligent in getting a review for councillors. He thanked the Chair and Executive Committee and particularly Cllr Joe Boyle for the work has been done over recent years.

Cllr Dermot Curran, stepping down after 50 years and being the longest serving councillor, said that he too was at the first NAC meeting at City Hall and explained that the NAC was setup for the wellbeing of councillors and that it has done a lot of work and will continue to do so. Cllr Curran spoke of his fondness for the people he has worked with at the NAC and said he is going to be sad not to be working with them but wished everyone well.

Cllr Adger then spoke on behalf of Ald Tommy Nicholl, stating that he is on dialysis this morning but will be joining the meeting later, she said that Ald Nicholl had asked her to pass his thanks on to everyone on the NAC mentioning Joe, Terry, and Kate specifically and saying that Cllr Nicholl also wishes everyone well.

Ald Frazer Agnew said thank you very much to everyone and highlighted that through the NAC he had got to know many people and made many friends. He wished everyone "all the best."

Cllr Boyle thanked all elected representatives that are stepping down for setting up the NAC and for their many years commitment and support of the NAC, saying there were too many names to list them all personally.

Ald Drysdale added his thanks to all the councillors that have given their time to the NAC and their respective councils, saying he wishes everyone well and pointing out that he is sad that they are going as it is their experience that everyone will miss, adding that it takes a while for new councillors to be trained.

Ald Carson went back to his report and asked Cllr Boyle to provide an update on the status of Annual Subscriptions on his behalf. Cllr Boyle informed the amounts that have been invoiced to each council and the fee structure. He was asked if there were any increases in the rates as these have remained unchanged since 2014, he advised that was not deemed necessary as the core organisation can be sustained on the current income.

Secretary's Report

Cllr Boyle delivered his report as follows (*added comments/discussion points are in italics*):

Last Members Meeting Decisions

Decisions and actions taken as agreed at our last Members Meeting on 25 January are complete, and other activities that have been carried out are as follows:

Circulations to Members

- 01/02/23 – the Consolidated Councillor Allowances Circular which was received from the DfC.
 - 07/02/23 – NAC NI February 2023 Newsletter.
 - 13/02/23 – sent on behalf of NILGA - details of the Local Government Conference taking place on 23/02/23 in Omagh.
 - 14/02/23 - details of a *Public Consultation on The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services A&ND area* was sent to all Ards & North Down Members.
 - 15/02/23 - details of the NAC NI Leadership & Change in Local Enterprise Workshop taking place on 23/03/23 in Craigavon.
 - 07/03/23 – notice of the Special General Meeting re: Amended NAC Constitution and Members Meeting.
 - 08/03/23 - details of the NAC UK Conference on 14-16 April in Scarborough.
- a. Councillor Equality Meeting with DfC on 13 February 2023

Myself, Cllr Andrews, Ald McDowell, Cllr Adger, Cllr Burgess, and Cllr Harte met with the DfC officials, Anthony Carleton, and Jeff Glass on Monday 13th February at Causeway Exchange. It was a positive meeting where we were provided with a timeline for the processes in relation to the review for councillors. The DfC officials have offered further meetings to provide updates on this process, with the next one possibly taking place in June.

Cllr Boyle asked Ald McDowell, as Chair of the sub-committee working with the DfC, to comment. Ald McDowell spoke about the positivity of having a timeline for moving the review

forward, he said that unfortunately it is a bit late for those stepping down but that the NAC members will not forget the good work done by them.

It was raised that a lot more work is going on now with 11 councils than there was with the 26 councils and the remuneration does not reflect that, also that the special responsibility allowances need reviewed.

In reply to this Ald McDowell said that an overall review of how councils are performing may be for NILGA but that the NAC representatives have highlighted that a small core of councillors do a lot of work than others and do not get extra remuneration or thanks.

Cllr Boyle added that the review will take everything into consideration, and it is positive that the process is in place.

b. NILGA/SOLACE Local Government Conference on 23 February 2023

This event was promoted to all NAC Members by email on 13 February 2023 as requested by NILGA and agreed by the EC.

Several NAC members attended the event in the Silverbirch Hotel in Omagh where Cllr Andrews and I participated in a workshop for Elected Members at the end of the event with the PSNI and Inspire.

We received a thank-you email from Alison Allen suggesting a chat over the next few weeks about an offer she has had from both organisations to support further, and the NAC will attend a meeting with the PSNI and Inspire when this comes up.

We have written to the NILGA, CE Ms Alison Allen providing feedback on the event from an NAC and Elected Member point of view.

c. Local Enterprise Training Workshop – 23 March 2023 in Craigavon

Following discussions at our last Members Meeting, this event has now been arranged with a revised date of Thursday 23rd March 2023 to allow Councils more advance notice to bring it to the attention of Councillors and approve attendance. We have been co-ordinating with Derek McCallan on the event planning and are currently following up with Councils and Members to finalise numbers. I would encourage you to register to attend if you have not already done so.

Cllr Boyle then read out the Agenda for the Workshop and said that the NAC were keen to get this event in before the end of this term of office.

End of Secretary's Report

National President's Report

Cllr Adger, in her role as NAC National President, provided an overview of the latest NAC UK Conference which took place from 24 to 26 February in Carlisle. She said that there were five NI representatives at this conference and explained how attending the national conferences is beneficial as it provides a great opportunity to meet up with councillors from the other UK regions, and exchange information on various topics of common concern. Also, the workshops are very productive and relevant to the councillor role. The next conference will be held in Scarborough from the 14 to 16 April and will cover Mental Health & Wellbeing.

Cllr Adger finished her report by wishing everyone well for the upcoming election.

4. Any Other Business

Ald Drysdale raised the issue of NI councils Environmental Services using landfill and not having a plan for when this may be disallowed from 2030, as a directive from Westminster. He advised that Scotland have a plan in place saying that he wants to flag this with the NAC members and requested that this is recorded on the minutes so that it can be taken back to councils for discussion, and for councillors to exchange information on what is happening in relation to this on their respective councils.

(Ald Speers advised that he had to leave the meeting at 11.35am.)

Cllr Andrews closed the Members Meeting at 11.49am and moved on to the Special General Meeting from 11.50am.

Decisions/Actions Summary from the Members Meeting and Special General Meeting is at the end of this document.

Special General Meeting

This meeting is solely for Approval of amendments made to the NAC NI Region Constitution and Cllr Webb, who led the Constitution Review group was asked to address the meeting.

Cllr Webb said it was a long journey carrying out the review and amendments to the current NAC Constitution, but he feels that the NAC now has a strong Constitution and thanked everyone that had been involved and contributed to the process.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Ald Henderson that the first sentence of Point 3 on the Amended Constitution should be amended to read as follows:

Membership shall be open to all councils in Northern Ireland as corporate members.

Other comments were made in relation to Point 21, and Cllr Webb explained that this was set when the NAC was formed and has not changed. Cllr Boyle added that Point 22 allowed for future changes to be made to the document.

It was agreed by all that the document, with the added change above should be sent to all councils with a request for them to bring it to the attention of their members and respond by a date to be set by the Secretary, Cllr Boyle. This was proposed by Cllr Webb and seconded by Ald Carson.

(Ald Nicholl joined the meeting at 12.10pm)

5. Next Meeting Date and Meeting End

The Chair said that subject to confirmation, the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 19 July 2023 in the Newry & Mourne District Council area, he then brought the Special General Meeting and the Members Meeting to a close with his speech as recorded overleaf on Page 6.

NAC Chair, Cllr Andrews, summing up message:

“This is the last meeting of this mandate and at this juncture I would like to pay gratitude to Cllr Dermot Curan, Ald Tommy Nicholl, Ald Jim Dillon, Ald Jim Speers, and Ald Frazer Agnew, and anyone else I may have missed. I salute each and every one of you for your years of service as a Councillor through hard and difficult times, and for your contributions and representation to other organisations and bodies to which you were appointed, especially the NAC. You have done so much and are leaving a legacy and laid the foundations that will be built upon come post May the work goes on.

On behalf of the NAC, I pay tribute to Councillors who are standing down, thank you.

Also, to those contesting the elections, wishing you all the best, good luck.

All being well, see you at our next Members Meeting in Newry, Mourne and Down in July 2023.

Finally, thanks to the Mid & East Antrim Mayor, Ald Noel Williams and Deputy Mayor, Cllr Beth Adger for their welcome and kind hospitality today and to my Executive Committee colleagues and Kate for all their help and support”

Cllr Terry Andrews, NAC Chair

Decisions/Actions Summary	By
Send a card to Ald Kerrigan's father on behalf of the NAC wishing him well and a speedy recovery following his accident.	JB/KW
Amend the NAC Constitution document as agreed and circulate to councils asking them to raise with elected members and respond by a date to be decided.	JB/KW