



---

**MINUTES OF MEMBERS' MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022 HELD AT  
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ENNISKILLEN TOWNHALL & BY ZOOM**

**ATTENDEES**

Aldermen

Michael Henderson  
Derek Hussey (Guest)

Alan McDowell

Stephen Moutray

Councillors

Beth Adger  
Alison Bennington  
Charlie Casey  
Errol Thompson

Terry Andrews  
Joe Boyle  
Dermot Curran  
Victor Warrington

Diana Armstrong  
Robert Burgess  
Hazel Legge

Council Guests

Chair Cllr Barry McElduff

Vice-Chair Cllr Allan Rainey

Kate Wilson (Admin Assistant)

**ZOOM ATTENDEES**

Aldermen

Allan Bresland  
Stephen Martin

Maurice Devenney

Keith Kerrigan

Councillors

Christine McFlynn

Derek McKinney

Drew Thompson

**APOLOGIES**

Aldermen

Frazer Agnew  
Bill Keery

Angus Carson  
Tommy Nicholl

David Drysdale  
Tommy Sandford

Councillors

Joan Baird

Valerie Harte

Billy Webb

1. Chairman's Welcome

The NAC Chair, Cllr Andrews opened the meeting and handed over to the Fermanagh & Omagh (F&O) DC Chair, Cllr Barry McElduff who welcomed everyone to the Council Chamber in Enniskillen Townhall. Cllr McElduff then spoke about the NAC and the work it carries out to represent the interests of all councillors across all political parties and he said that the NAC members are welcome to Fermanagh, and he wished them well for their meeting today.

Cllr Andrews thanked Cllr McElduff for the warm welcome and he also thanked the F&O Vice-Chair, Cllr Allan Rainey for joining the NAC members pre-meeting and for staying to attend the opening of the meeting.

Cllr Andrews said that since the last NAC Members' Meeting, we learnt of the following deaths:

- Baron Trimble of Lisnagarvey, the father of Cllr Hon Nicholas Trimble
- Cllr John Finlay of Mid & East Antrim Council
- Mrs Maureen West, the mother of Cllr Diana Armstrong
- HM Queen Elizabeth II
- Cllr Allan Rainey's grandson
- Cllr Philip Smith's mother
- Ald Paul Michael's father

He offered condolences on behalf of the NAC and a minute's silence was then observed in respect of those that had passed.

Cllr Rainey thanked Cllr Andrews and his councillor colleagues for their messages of sympathy and kind words in relation to his recent bereavement saying these were greatly appreciated.

Cllr Andrews then read the list of Apologies that have been received by email and phone and these, plus those subsequently advised have been recorded.

## 2. Minutes of last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last Members' Meeting held on 20 July 2022 were proposed as a true and accurate record by Cllr Adger, seconded by Cllr Thompson, and agreed by all.

Cllr Armstrong asked if the meeting with the DfC Officials in relation to the councillors' review which was scheduled for August had taken place and was advised it did not and that Cllr Boyle would provide further details within his Secretary's Report.

## 3. Officers Reports – Treasurer, Secretary and National Chair

### **Treasurer's Report**

The NAC Secretary, Cllr Boyle provided details of the organisation's current financial position on behalf of the Treasurer in his absence,

The Treasurer's report was approved as proposed by Cllr Armstrong and seconded by Cllr Curran.

### **Secretary's Report**

Cllr Boyle then delivered his report as follows:

#### Bereavements

In relation to the passing of those that the NAC Chair Cllr Andrews has spoken about, I can confirm that letters of condolence and sympathy cards were sent on behalf of the NAC accordingly. I would like to thank the members that have passed this information on and would ask that you let us know of any future bereavements as we don't want to miss passing on sympathies to anyone from our councillor family.

#### Last Members Meeting Decisions

Decisions and actions taken as agreed at our last Members Meeting in July have been carried out as follows:-

## NAC MEMBERS' MEETING MINUTES - WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022 IN ENNISKILLEN

---

### 1. Covid-19 Additional work by councils and councillors

A letter was sent out on 25 July to all councils and councillors asking for details of additional work they have carried out during the pandemic.

We received responses from six Councils and seven Councillors; all responses received were acknowledged and the information provided has been recorded.

Following a decision taken by the EC we wrote to NILGA on 2 August asking if they would provide details of the additional work that they carried out during the pandemic, and a response with detailed financial information was received from their CE, Alison Allen. I would like to thank Alison for this, also Minister Dierdre Hargey, MLA for the financial assistance that her department provided to councils.

### 2. Causeway Coast & Glens (CC&G) Women's Group Presentation

At our last Members Meeting in July, it was agreed that the contact details for the CC&G Women's Working Group should be passed on to all Members.

Cllr Peacock's presentation and contact details were sent to all NAC Members on 3 August. This information was also included in our Newsletter and are on the Information Page of the NAC NI Website.

### 3. Letter to the Minister for Health

We sent a letter to Minister Swann on 12 August 2022 in relation to the unacceptable wait times that constituents are facing when contacting Doctor's surgeries and for getting an appointment. We followed up on this on 29 August and again on 3 October and then received a response saying:

"Kate,

*Thank you for your email. Your original letter has been received and registered as CORR-1297-2022. A response is currently being drafted by officials.*

*To note due to the high volume of correspondence sent to Minister Swann, we do not issue acknowledgements.*

*Kindest regards  
Suzanne*

*Suzanne Ferris  
Assistant Private Secretary to Robin Swann MLA"*

Whilst this is stepping outside our organisation's role, we felt it was important that we address this issue on behalf of our constituents.

Other activities are as follows:

#### Newsletter

A Newsletter covering the period of July to September was circulated on 22 September.

#### NAC UK AGM & Conference

This will be taking place from Friday 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at The Station Hotel, Carlisle. Details including the agenda and booking form were circulated to all Councillors and Councils on 12 October 2022.

At this event Cllr Charlie Casey will step down as National Chair and the new National President, Cllr Beth Adger will receive the Chain of Office, this is a wonderful achievement for the NI Region – being the first time we have had a member in place as President. We wish Beth all the best and extend our thanks to Charle for representing us as National Vice-Chair and Chair over the past years.

## **NAC MEMBERS' MEETING MINUTES - WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022 IN ENNISKILLEN**

---

### Councillor Equality

The meeting scheduled to take place on 8 August 2022 was postponed by the DFC Officials to allow the Minister more time to consider the items that the NAC has asked to be included in the Terms of Reference Document for The Review of the Roles & Responsibilities of Councillors.

A response was sent stressing our disappointment that the meeting was postponed and the importance of moving this matter forward as soon as possible. I asked for an update and new meeting date as soon as possible.

However, due to the current situation at the Assembly it is unlikely that this will progress.

### NAC NI Conference

The *NAC at 30 years, Defining Our Positive Future* Conference took place on Tuesday 27 September 2022 in the Glenavon House Hotel. The event was supported by NILGA with their former CE, Derek McCallan facilitating and their current CE, Alison Allen provided a presentation; Business Services Officer, Sarah Little was also in attendance to assist with running the virtual aspect of the event. We had twenty-four attendees in the room and six joined in on-line.

A Draft Outcomes Report has been provided by Derek and is currently with the EC for review, this will then be shared with Members and if approved will form the basis of the NAC NI's Business Plan for moving the organisation forward.

### NI Region AGM

This took place on Friday 21 October at the Glenavon House Hotel. There was a very good turn-out with over forty people in the room for the event plus seven on-line and we were pleased to have guests from NAC UK, NILGA, AILG and LAMA in attendance plus Mr Anthony Carleton and Mr Jeff Glass from the DfC who were there on behalf of Minister Hargey.

Mid Ulster (MU) District Council kindly provided very generous Goodie Bags which were greatly appreciated by those in attendance, and we are thankful to the MU staff and Kate for arranging this. Following the selections and nominations the EC remains the same for this year, apart from a change in the Women's Representative, which rotates by party annually and this is now Cllr Alison Bennington.

NAC Long Service Awards for 29 years of service were presented to five Members who were in attendance – Ald Alan McDowell, Ald Jim Rodgers, Ald Norman Hillis, Ald Tom McKeown, and Ald Allan Bresland, a further award for Ald Kenneth Twyble was sent on to the Democratic Services at Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon to pass on as he was unable to attend. Since the NAC created the Long Service Awards, we have worked our way down from over 40 years' service to this point and the next awards will be for 25 years of service,

Links to the photographs taken at the event have been circulated to those in attendance and will be added to the Gallery Page of the NAC NI website.

I thank all of you that attended the AGM and for your support throughout the past year.

### Presentation to Derry City & Strabane (DC&S) District Council

The Chair and myself made a presentation to the Council Governance and Strategic Planning Committee Meeting on Tuesday 1 November by WebEx.

We explained details of the Councillor Equality journey to date and the current situation and then answered questions put to us by the committee members.

We are grateful to Ald Hussey for arranging this to help promote the NAC to Members and to DC&S DC for inviting us, Cllr Andrews, and myself both felt that the committee were very supportive of the NAC.

AILG/LAMA

Over the past months Members of the EC have been invited to various conferences by AILG & LAMA. AILG Conferences in Donegal and in Trim, Co. Meath were attended by Cllr Andrews, Cllr Burgess, and myself and recently on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> November, EC Members attended a meeting with LAMA at the Lord Mayor's Chamber in Cork City.

Both organisations sent representatives to the NAC NI Region AGM, and they have been invited by the General Secretary, Cllr Brian Nelson to attend the NAC UK AGM which is taking place in Carlisle at the end of this month.

We are happy to continue building upon this relationship as it is important to share information and advice in relation to the councillor role across the regions and for some time there was no contact, so we are pleased to have picked this up again.

**End of Secretary's Report**

*The following matters were put forward in relation to items on the Secretary's Report -*

Ald McDowell thanked Cllr Boyle for his very comprehensive report, he spoke in relation to the financial support provided to councils during COVID-19 and he said that it was important for it to be put on record that the NAC are thankful to all Ministers and particularly The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and The Department of Finance (DoF) for ringfencing financial support to councils during the pandemic.

Ald McDowell then raised the postponed meeting with DfC Officials and, following discussion, it was agreed that a request should be made to Mr Anthony Carleton for a meeting to discuss the Councillor Review process, this was proposed by Ald McDowell, seconded by Cllr Curran, and agreed by all.

Several members then contributed to a discussion about Doctors Surgeries and the waiting times and processes in place for appointments, some reported positively saying there were no problems at their local surgeries; and the following points were noted:

- *Many doctors will not be going back to operating how they did before COVID.*
- *The pressure being put on GP's will prevent new trainees entering the profession.*
- *Uniformity is important – everyone should get the same level of service.*
- *Hospital waiting lists are having a negative effect on the Ambulance Service and if emergency treatment is required whilst waiting for an operation it can also mean a longer hospital stay.*
- *Young medical students don't consider being a GP as a good career option.*

Cllr Legge requested that the next Long Service Awards should be for 20 years' service as this aligned with five complete terms of office, Cllr Boyle agreed to add this as an Agenda item for discussion by the Executive Committee.

Cllr Legge said she will be attending the NAC UK AGM in Carlisle and will be there to congratulate Cllr Adger in person when she receives her presidency, she proposed that a letter of congratulations is sent from NAC NI, this was seconded by Ald Henderson.

Cllr Andrews then handed over to Cllr Casey for the National Chair's report.

**National Chair's Report**

Cllr Casey thanked Cllr Andrews and said he is looking forward to the upcoming NAC UK AGM and seeing Cllr Adger being awarded with the National Presidency position. He advised that he will be resigning as National Chair at the AGM as he will be retiring from council early next year and will not be able to carry on the position. He advised that he had already informed the NAC General Secretary of this, and a new Chair is to be appointed. Cllr Casey said he was sad that this is the last Members' Meeting he will attend and that he has enjoyed his time working with the NAC over many years.

Cllr Andrews thanked Cllr Casey for his service to the NAC locally, and at national level as Chair, saying it is a great achievement and it was suggested by Ald Henderson that a letter of thanks should be sent to Cllr Casey from the NAC.

**4. Any Other Business**

Ald Hussey spoke about the presentation made to his council by Cllr Andrews and Cllr Boyle and the issues around equality across councils. Cllr Boyle said that the NAC have the support of the spokespersons for Local Government from all the main political parties for the proposed review, but some work may need to be done with the party Group Leaders at each council to gain their support and he emphasised the importance of having the word 'maximum' deleted from the Councillors Allowance allocation notice issued by the DfC.

Cllr Andrews thanked Ald Hussey for all his work and the great opportunity to present to DC&S DC.

**5. Chair's closing remarks and Next Meeting Date**

Cllr Andrews thanked the F & O DC staff, Nuala Quinn from Democratic Services for co-ordinating all the arrangements for today's meeting and Jill Patton, Member Services Officer for arranging for the Chair, Cllr Barry McElduff and Vice-Chair Cllr Allan Rainey to attend, he also thanked the staff from the IT Department for setting up Zoom for our virtual attendees

The next Members Meeting will take place at 11am on Wednesday 25 January 2023, hosted by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council at Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn with a Virtual Link for those joining from home.

Cllr Andrew ended the meeting thanking all attending The Chamber and those joining On-Line.

Decisions/Actions Summary	By
A request is to be made to Mr Anthony Carleton of the DfC for a meeting to discuss the Councillor Review process	JB
Long Service Awards to be made for 20 years' service to be added as an agenda item for discussion by the Executive Committee.	JB
Send a letter of congratulations to Cllr Adger for being awarded the NAC National Presidency position.	JB
Send a letter of thanks to Cllr Casey for his service to the NAC at local and national level.	JB