

**Minutes of the 67th Annual General Meeting of the
Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils**

**Held at The Saxon Hall, Raunds on
Saturday 18 October 2014**

Item

1. Welcome & housekeeping.

Danny Moody (Chief Executive) welcomed everyone to the AGM, especially the guest speaker Professor Colin Copus. In attendance were ninety one representatives from fifty nine member parish and town councils and parish meetings in Northamptonshire. President Dr Paul Blantern had given his apologies and in his absence the meeting was chaired by Mr Jeffrey Greenwell (Vice President).

2. Election of Officers of the Association for the year 2014/2015.

The following were nominated and duly elected:

a) President	Dr Paul Blantern
b) Vice Presidents	Cllr Catherine Lomax Mr David Hill Mr Jeffrey Greenwell Mr Gordon Shorley Cllr Mrs Gwen Radcliffe*
c) Honorary Treasurer	Mr Bernard Lock
d) Auditor	Kate Brown Accountants

*Danny Moody read out a commendation for Gwen Radcliffe, who was retiring from the board of directors and being appointed as a Vice President. Gwen joined the County Committee of the Northamptonshire Association of Local Councils in 1986; so is retiring just short of her 30-year service anniversary. She was chairman of the Association between 1993 and 1996, a time that covered the important 100 year anniversary celebrations for parish councils in 1994.

3. To receive the recommendations of the Appointments Panel on persons to be appointed to the board of directors for 2014/15.

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

No.	Name	Qualifying Council	Type of Appointment
1.	Peter Allen	Towcester Town Council	Re-appointment
2.	Peter Byng	Silverstone Parish Council	Re-appointment
3.	Linda Carter	Brackley Town Council	First time appointment
4.	Michael Heaton	Spratton Parish Council	Re-appointment
5.	Lynn Lavender	Duston Parish Council	First time appointment
6.	Richard Lewis	Rushden Town Council	Re-appointment
7.	John Marshall	Ashton Parish Council	Re-appointment
8.	Lynne Taylor	Daventry Town Council	Re-appointment

RESOLVED: That the eight candidates be appointed en bloc as directors for the year 2014/15.

4. President's Address.

Jeffrey Greenwell said that politics at all levels is hotting up as we approach the general election in May 2015. He said the rule of law is fundamental and noted that next year is the anniversary of Magna Carta. He said all levels of local government, including parish and town councils have a proud and long record of adherence to the rule of law.

In considering item 7 Jeffrey said *"It's your association; you (parish councils) set it up to give you advice in times of trouble. We are better together joined is this County Association and with NALC"*.

Jeffrey Greenwell welcomed all delegates and wished them a good AGM.

5. Confirmation of the minutes of the 66th AGM held on 19 October 2013.

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

6. To receive the Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2014 including the Annual Statement of Accounts and balance sheet for the year ending 31 March 2014.

Richard Lewis (Chairman) presented the Annual Report and thanked David Linnell, immediate past chairman for his efforts. Richard said it had been a busy time as the chairmanship of the Federation of East Midlands Associations of Local Councils (FEMALC) had fallen to Northants CALC this year. He thanked the Association's staff and the board members for their hard work during the year and particularly thanked the outgoing/retiring directors Kath Bonner-Dunham and Gwen Radcliffe.

Bernard Lock (Honorary Treasurer) said that the summary accounts had been circulated as part of the Annual Report and commended them to the AGM.

A delegate asked what the New Councils Programme was and Danny Moody explained that it was a national programme and that the new councils of West Hunsbury Parish Council and Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council shared a national grant of £25,000. Northants CALC was the accountable body, so received the monies from NALC and paid them out to the parish councils.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be received and noted.

7. To determine subscription levels for the year 2015/2016.

The board of directors recommended a one-off structural change in membership fees from 2015 that would put the Association on a sound financial footing for the future.

Comments in favour included:

- Northants CALC is a good CALC and offers value for money
- The fee, even at the new level, is the smallest of our council's professional fees
- It's still a very small percentage (<1%) of our precept, so let's just get on with it
- In the commercial world councils would pay £450 per hour for the advice received from Northants CALC for a fraction of that

Comments against included:

- Unfair on the smallest parishes
- Doesn't take into account financial pressures on electors
- Increase might cause a loss of members

Richard Lewis said that the board thought long and hard before making its recommendation including looking at thirty four areas where expenditure could be reduced or income could be increased. He said it was a sound proposal that would secure the financial future of the Association for the foreseeable future.

An amendment was proposed and seconded that the increase be phased in over three years. The amendment was defeated.

An amendment was proposed that the increase be restricted to the rate of inflation. There was no seconder so the amendment was lost.

The original motion was put to the vote and was carried with 52 votes in favour, 7 against and 2 abstentions.

Danny Moody thanked the AGM and promised that the Association would work hard to deliver value for money and would listen to the smallest parishes to ensure that services were fit for purpose for all.

RESOLVED: That the per council element of the Northants CALC membership fee for the year starting 1 April 2015 and ending 31 March 2016 be raised from £65.00 to £150.00 and that the per elector element of the Northants CALC membership fee for the year starting 1 April 2015 and ending 31 March 2016 be increased from 14.72 pence to 22.50 pence.

8. To consider motions put by member councils.

It was proposed by Deanshanger Parish Council and seconded by Roade Parish Council that:
"This meeting urges the National Association and Local Associations to press the Government to protect all pubs from the threat of conversion to supermarkets, betting shops and pay-day loan stores by ensuring the need for planning permission and community consultation, which is not presently required under change of use legislation."

Cllr David Aaronson spoke to the motion saying that a pub in Deanshanger was being converted to a supermarket shop and the change of use had not required planning permission, so the community had not had an opportunity to express its views. In seconding the motion Catherine Camp said that it was important that locals got a chance to have their say. Cllr Neil Harvey said that the principle should also be extended to post offices and banks that were at similar risk to pubs.

RESOLVED: That the motion be carried. (Danny Moody to communicate motion to the policy committee at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC))

9. Keynote Speech "Localism – Is It Working?"

Professor Colin Copus from De Montfort University gave a thought-provoking address on Localism. He said that all politics is local and that if government is not about place it's about nothing and listed some principle authorities whose names don't identify a real place (e.g. "Three Rivers District Council"). He said that units of politics necessarily need to relate to place, which is why parish and town councils have such a strong sense of identity and such a clear mandate. He said that Localism was threatened by austerity and centralist thinking, citing the fact that 90.5% of local councillors belong to one of three political parties, which represented a "*stunning penetration of local government by central government*". Prof Copus painted a "Domesday Scenario" where unelected partnerships replaced truly democratic elected representation and there was a gradual and continual erosion of the principles of elected local government. As an alternative he then presented a "Flight of Fancy Scenario" where local politics became more pluralised, local government became more financially independent (e.g. retention of business rates), where members of the public had the right of recall over elected representatives and where powers, but not necessarily service delivery, were devolved to the lowest possible level.

Professor Copus fielded a number of questions from the floor. Jeffrey Greenwell then thanked Prof Copus for his illuminating presentation and for attending the AGM to share his views.

10. Council of the Year Award / CiLCA presentations.

Danny Moody read out a commendation and announced that the Came & Co. Northamptonshire Council of the Year for 2014/15 was Brackley Town Council. The award recognised the projects the council has been engaged in recently, particularly the WWI centenary commemoration where the council's effort stood out for the thought and preparation that went into the event, from the cleaning of the community's war memorial, to the involvement of local children and the trawl of council archives to find relevant information.

The award was presented to Town Clerk, Linda Carter, by Vice President, Jeffrey Greenwell.

Jeffrey Greenwell congratulated those clerks that have achieved the sector qualification, the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) since the last AGM: Sally Bramley-Brown (Bugbrooke and Stoke Bruerne Parish Councils), Val Furniss (Middleton Cheney Parish Council), Angie Daly (Irthlingborough Town Council), Chris Etherington (Great Oxendon Parish Council), Julia Lane (Daventry Town Council) and Claire Connolly (Moulton Parish Council). Congratulations to all.

11. Question & Answer session (time permitting).

There were no questions from delegates.

Danny Moody then asked Gwen Radcliffe to draw the winner in the prize draw. The prize of a set of Christmas lights donated by Blachere Illuminations went to Billing Parish Council and was received by Cllr Mrs Gurcharan Kaur Chaggar.

12. Close.

In his closing remarks Jeffrey Greenwell said "*This is your Association. It is run for you, the member councils. By attending this meeting you control the Association and today you have voted to make it a strong Association for the future*". He thanked everyone for their attendance and wished them well for the forthcoming year.

The meeting closed at 1:05 p.m.

Signed: _____

Date: _____