

**Minutes of the 68th Annual General Meeting of the
Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils**

**Held at The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester on
Saturday 17 October 2015**

Item

1. Welcome & housekeeping.

Danny Moody (Chief Executive) welcomed everyone to the AGM, especially the guest speaker James Kingston from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

In attendance were one hundred and twenty two delegates with seventy two member parish and town councils and parish meetings in Northamptonshire represented.

2. Election of Officers of the Association for the year 2015/2016.

The following were nominated and duly elected:

a) President	Dr Paul Blantern
b) Vice Presidents	Cllr Catherine Lomax Mr Jeffrey Greenwell Mr Gordon Shorley Cllr Mrs Gwen Radcliffe

c) On the recommendation of the board of directors the AGM resolved unanimously to discontinue the office of Honorary Treasurer and instead create the role of Internal Controls Director (ICD) to have scrutiny over the officer finance function. The ICD will be appointed on an annual basis by the board of directors.

d) Auditor	Kate Brown Accountants
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3. To receive the recommendations of the Appointments Panel on persons to be appointed to the board of directors for 2015/16.

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	Re-appointment
4.	Lynn Lavender	Duston Parish Council	Re-appointment
5.	Richard Lewis	Rushden Town Council	Re-appointment
6.	John Marshall	Ashton Parish Council	Re-appointment
7.	Lynne Taylor	Daventry Town Council	Re-appointment
8.	Vacancy	-	-

RESOLVED: That the seven candidates be appointed en bloc as directors for the year 2015/16.

4. President's Address.

Dr Blanter welcomed everyone to the AGM. He said that, like all of local government, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is going through the most radical change ever, with unprecedented demand on services coupled with an unprecedented reduction in available finances. He said that just to meet the demand for additional school places in this fast-growing county would require an extra thirty two new schools to be built. Dr Blanter talked about NCC's Next Generation Model with new business units being set up for wellbeing, places, adult social care and children's services. The new units will work with and commission services from other public sector bodies, including parish and town councils, as well as the private sector and the voluntary and community sector. A retained "NCC Core" of one hundred and fifty employees will provide scrutiny, accountability and democracy.

Dr Blanter fielded a number of questions on the future of public service delivery and concluded by saying that as the world becomes more fluid it becomes increasingly difficult to predict future needs but that NCC was committed to working with its partners to make Northamptonshire a great place to live.

5. Confirmation of the minutes of the 67th AGM held on 18 October 2014.

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 2015 including the Annual Statement of Accounts and balance sheet for the year ending 31 March 2015.

Richard Lewis (Chairman) presented the Annual Report and thanked the directors, staff, vice presidents and president for their support during the year. He reflected on a particularly useful board away day earlier in the year and said that now the Association was on a firmer financial footing the accounts should return to surplus. Richard thanked Bernard Lock for his many decades of dedicated service to the Association and wished him well for the future. Richard also proposed a vote of thanks to outgoing director Michael Heaton and retiring vice president David Hill.

Bernard Lock reported that the summary accounts had been circulated as part of the Annual Report with the full accounts posted on the Association's web site. He commended them to the AGM.

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

7. To determine subscription levels for the year 2016/2017.

The board of directors recommended that the per council element of the Northants CALC membership fee be increased by inflation (CPI August 2015 – 0.0%) from £150.00 to £150.00 and that the per elector element of the Northants CALC membership fee be increased by inflation (CPI August 2015 – 0.0%) from 22.50 pence to 22.50 pence.

RESOLVED: That the board's recommendation be approved.

8. To consider motions put by member councils.

a) Proposed by Yardley Hastings Parish Council and seconded by Overstone Parish Council that:

"In view of the considerable inconvenience often caused to local communities by statutory undertakers starting work on the public highway without first having given advance notice to the Parish Council concerned, this meeting urges the Secretary of State to amend the relevant codes of practice issued by him pursuant to the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 so as to require undertakers themselves to give advance notice to the Parish Council or Community Council concerned of the proposed commencement date of any such works in their area, such requirement to be in addition to the existing requirement to give notification to the local street authority".

The debate was universally in support of the motion, with speakers recounting their own experiences of the trouble caused by a lack of co-ordination of street works. Cllr Jon Bailey proposed an amendment that the words "*give advance notice to the Parish Council*" be changed to "*give advance notice to **and consult with the Parish Council***". The amendment was carried.

RESOLVED: That the motion as amended be carried. (Dr Blanter to speak to Head of Highways)

b) Proposed by Raunds Town Council and seconded by Wollaston Parish Council that:

“This meeting urges the National Association of Local Councils to lobby government for the removal of Class M permitted development from the change of use classes within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 SI 596. Class M permitted development allows for a retail or betting office or pay day loan shop of less than 150m² to be converted to a dwelling house without the need for a planning application. This has the potential to have an irreversible and detrimental impact on many high streets in smaller towns across the country as retail outlets are converted to housing without local people being given the opportunity to have their voices heard on decisions that affect their High Street”.

A range of views were expressed, from those in favour of decision making being pushed down to the most local level so that communities are in control of their own areas, to those that felt that conversion to residential was preferable to boarded-up shop premises.

Dave Munday proposed that the words “*and to reverse the decision of Brandon Lewis MP to make permanent the permitted development right to convert offices to housing*” be inserted after “SI 596”. The amendment was accepted by Raunds Town Council.

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

9. Keynote Speech “The Best Councils...”.

James Kingston, from the Local Service Transformation Team at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) said that the future was local and that research shows that for every £1 invested in services delivered through the *Our Place!* programme £3.40 worth of benefit had been returned. He said that sometimes smaller can be better but that new approaches were required to unlock the potential of parish and town councils to deliver change. He said that communities were active (showing a very full map of parish councils delivering Neighbourhood Plans and/or engaged in the *My Community Rights* programmes) and that people very much want to be involved in decisions at a very local level.

James said that DCLG wanted to support parish councils and that it was a time of change and opportunity and that DCLG wants parish councils to seize those opportunities by drawing on their experience and knowledge and sharing expertise with colleagues up and down the country. James concluded by saying that “...*the best councils are the ones that are making the most of being small, neighbourhood level councils, closest to the people, drawing on their natural strength to represent the communities they serve*”.

A very lively question and answer session followed, with many questions centring on the capacity (money, skills, knowledge, ambition) of the sector to deliver more. James said that there are economic realities that can't be ignored but that there are solutions if councils are prepared to think laterally. He said that clerks were “*like CEOs of SMEs*” and had the opportunity to be really innovative in finding new answers to old problems. He said that help was available locally and nationally and that any council wishing to do more will find a whole range of support available to it.

The President thanked James Kingston for attending the AGM and giving a very positive and uplifting presentation and hoped that DCLG will work with all levels of council to achieve real and lasting change.

10. Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) & CiLCA Presentations.

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

Jenny Hodgson	Stanwick Parish Council
James McKechnie	Desborough Town Council & Wilbarston Parish Council
Deborah Rush	Grendon Parish Council and Cogenhoe & Whiston Parish Council
Alison Moses	Brackley Town Council
Tina Charteress	Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council
Julia Tufnail	Islip Parish Council and Little Addington Parish Council

Dr Blanter presented an LCAS Quality certificate to Cllr Richard Gell of Higham Ferrers Town Council and congratulated the council on its achievement.

11. Question & Answer session (time permitting).

Cllr Adam Jeskins from Syresham Parish Council asked what support would be available to parish councils regarding auto enrolment. Danny Moody replied that he would shortly be sending out a pack of guidance and information to all member councils on their responsibilities.

James McKechnie from Desborough Town Council proposed a vote of thanks to the Member Enquiry Service (MES) Team, who had helped him out several times during the year. The MES Team members are Nikki Daft, Erica Fothergill, Helen Hoier and Rosie Smart. A warm round of applause followed.

Danny Moody picked the prize draw winner out of the hat and Dr Blanter presented Sarah Rodger from Warmington Parish Council with a £100 shopping voucher kindly donated by Jewson builder's merchant.

12. Close.

Dr Blanter thanked the sponsors, exhibitors, the Northants CALC staff and all helpers for putting on a successful AGM and particularly all the delegates for their attendance and willingness to participate.

The meeting closed at 12:55 p.m.

Signed: _____

Date: _____