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**MINUTES OF THE MEMBERS FORUM MEETING –  
COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS - CLOONAVIN - COLERAINE ON 15 AUGUST 2018**

**ATTENDEES**

Aldermen

Michael Henderson MBE (Chair)	Angus Carson (Treasurer)	Alan McDowell
Ian Henry	Robert Gibson	Bill Keery MBE
Arnold Hatch	Tommy Sandford	William King MBE
Norman F Hillis	Allan Bresland	Tommy Kerrigan MBE
Tommy Jeffers	May Beattie	Tommy Nicholl MBE

Councillors

Joe Boyle (Secretary)	Billy Webb	David Arthurs
Brian Duffin	Michael Maguire	Joan Baird OBE
Diana Armstrong	Errol Thompson	Victor Warrington
Sean Clarke	Beth Adger MBE	Derek McKinney
Charlie Casey	Mickey Ruane	Robert Burgess
Kate Wilson (Admin Assistant)		

**APOLOGIES**

Aldermen

John Smyth	Junior McCrum	Robin Cherry MBE
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Councillors

Fergal Lennon	Brian Heading	Declan O'Loan
Terry Andrews	Dermot Curran	Valerie Harte

The Chairman opened the meeting asking for a minute silence in respect of the sudden passing of Cllr Jim Brown MBE, this was observed and the Secretary then spoke a few words about Jim and a conversation they had on the day he passed away.

The Chairman remarked that today is the 20 year anniversary of the Omagh bombing and a further silence was observed as a mark of respect for the victims and their families.

Ald King welcomed everyone to the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Headquarters, he spoke about the positive affect that tourism is having on the region as visitor figures are, once again, up on previous years. He referred to the beautiful setting of the council offices and offered members the opportunity to look around the building and grounds after the meeting.

1. Apologies

The Chairman read out those received by phone and email, he asked for others to be noted in the Attendance Registration Book. All are detailed above.

2. Minutes of last meeting

These were agreed by all as proposed by Cllr Burgess, seconded by Cllr Adger.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Ald Sandford advised that in relation to Item 6 the two vacancies for the Belfast City Council Members' Delegates will not be filled until after the elections next year.

Cllr Maguire stated that at the last members' meeting he had raised a query during the GDPR Presentation regarding non acknowledgement of his data protection application and payment. He has still not received a response to the many follow up requests that he has made through the ICO on-line chat service, by phone calls and emails.

The Secretary noted that the NAC should follow up with ICO on behalf of Cllr Maguire.

4. Reports from officers

The Treasurer reported on the current bank balances and stated that as the interest rates are not good with our bank deposit account with Bank of Ireland he would welcome any suggestions from Members on other accounts available that may have a more favourable rate, bearing in mind that the fees charged would also be a consideration.

The Secretary reported as follows:

NAC submission on the consultation draft regulations amendments to DfC

Following a decision taken at the last Members' Meeting a submission was made opposing the changes in relation to planning committees. A response to this has been received stating that the Department for Communities (DfC) will not be taking the draft regulations beyond consultation stage and no policy changes will be introduced until a minister is in place.

Committee places lost by changes to Councillors' political affiliations

Following receipt of a letter from a Councillor who had lost his committee seats when becoming an independent, we have written to the Permanent Secretary of the DfC asking for clarification on this issue.

Confidentiality Matters

An email has been received from a Councillor raising concerns about the proposal made at the last members' forum meeting for sending agendas and minutes by email and Members' Meeting minutes being published on the NAC website. The EC agreed the following:

**Use of council or private email addresses** – a survey has been sent out to all Members' Delegates asking if they wish to receive meeting notices by email and their preferred email address.

**Publication of Members' Meeting Minutes on the NAC website** - this is to be decided by the NAC members and to be discussed today.

The Chairman advised that this matter was previously discussed at a Members' Meeting but the outcome was not recorded as being proposed or seconded. Many Members contributed to the debate that followed with the general response being that the NAC should be "open and transparent" and publishing minutes on the website is a good way to inform all Councillors of actions taken and our activities. Cllr Adger proposed that the minutes of the Members' Delegate meetings should be published on the NAC website, this was seconded by Cllr McDowell and unanimously agreed.

Councillor remuneration and benefits

A response to the letter sent to the Secretary of State (SoS) was received from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and this was read out. It states that the request made in the NAC letter was also mentioned to the SoS by Ian Paisley but this is a matter for DfC and the NIO have no power to intervene. They will however bring the NAC correspondence and proposals to the DfC's attention.

### Local Government Training Group (LGTG)

Two NAC officers have been nominated to sit on the Elected Member Development Group that will be inputting and discussing ideas for the future of the LGTG. A meeting is arranged for later this month.

### Re-imbusement of Data Protection Fees

A letter received from Mid Ulster Council stating they will not be repaying GDPR registration fees to their Councillors was read out and this prompted many comments from Members.

The Secretary stated that there are five Councils repaying fees and six not, some Councils are saying their decision is based on legal advice, he declared that this will be raised at a meeting with SOLACE to try to get clarification on why Councils do things differently. The Chairman explained that GDPR refunds to Councillors seems to be a grey area as Councils pay for registration with reference to Council business, political parties pay with reference to their business but Councillors still have to register and pay for activities in relation to their constituents. It was pointed out that it is the law and that all Councillors need to register.

On further discussion it was noted that a number of Councillors that have paid registration fees to ICO haven't received acknowledgment or their registration documents and certificates either, a straw poll taken indicated that this applied to around 50% of those that have applied. It was noted that NAC will write to ICO on this matter.

A meeting with SOLACE has been arranged for 6 September and this will be on the agenda.

### Friends of the Earths' (FOE) request for divestment from fossil fuels

NILGOSC has responded to this saying they believe that divestment would have no effect on CO2 levels and that a reduction in demand would be more effective.

Following up on Niall Bakewell's request to give FOE a right of reply to NILGOSC's response, the EC have invited him to present at the December 2018 members meeting, James Orr has accepted as Niall has been off for a while.

### Joint meetings of NAC/LAMA and NAC/AILG

Five NAC EC members are meeting with AILG on Wednesday 29 August. We are still waiting to receive a proposed meeting date from LAMA.

### NAC UK Conference 14-16 September, Leicestershire

The Secretary advised details of the next NAC UK event. Some Councillors stated that they are not provided with NAC UK event details, the Chairman said that all Councils receive this information from NAC UK and it is their responsibility to make it available to their Members. He said that the NAC AGM which takes place in November is a very worthwhile event to attend as NI members are represented on the UK committee. Ald Sandford advised that this year's AGM will be on 23 November 2018 in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Chester. Cllr Casey asked for further details of the AGM to be made available to members so they could seek Council permission and make travel arrangements. Ald Beattie proposed that NAC write to all Councils CE's asking them to circulate NAC UK information to members, this was seconded by Cllr Thompson.

### Survey on emailing of meeting notices

This was sent out yesterday, Members were asked to respond so we can record Members' Delegates email preferences for receiving meeting invites and papers.

### NILGA Awards update

There have been 11 entries for the NAC Award, applications and scoring sheets are with the NAC nominated judging panel for marking.

5. Any other business

No

6. Date of next meeting

This will be the AGM which will take place on 5 October at the Glenavon House Hotel in Cookstown. Wavell Moore has been asked to present on the Code of Conduct Review, he will confirm early September and then the meeting invitations will be sent out.

**Decisions**

- The NAC are to write to ICO regarding the non-acknowledgement of applications and payments made for GDPR registrations by a number of councillors.
- Minutes of the members' delegate forum meetings are to be published on the NAC website.
- Details of the NAC UK AGM to be made available to members so they can seek council permission and make travel arrangements.
- The NAC will write to all Councils CE's asking them to circulate NAC UK event information received to their Council Members.