



**MINUTES OF THE MEMBERS' MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2018
AT THE GUILDHALL, DERRY/LONDONDERRY**

ATTENDEES

Aldermen

Michael Henderson MBE (Chair)	Angus Carson (Treasurer)	Alan McDowell
Bill Keery MBE	Ian Henry	Jim Speers MBE
Arnold Hatch	Allan Bresland	Tommy Kerrigan
Mary Hamilton (Attendee)		

Councillors

Joe Boyle (Secretary)	Billy Webb MBE	Michael Maguire
Gus Hastings	Errol Thompson	Victor Warrington
Christine McFlynn	Michael Carr	Michael Ruane
Charlie Casey	Robert Burgess	Terry Andrews

Kate Wilson (Admin Assistant)

APOLOGIES

Aldermen

John Smyth	Tommy Sandford	William King
David Drysdale	Tommy Jeffers	May Beattie
Beth Adger MBE	Tommy Nicholl MBE	

Councillors

Seamus Doyle	Cara McShane	Diana Armstrong
Stephen McCann	Brian Bloomfield	Amanda Grehan
Declan O'Loan	Dermot Curran	

Cllr John Boyle, the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council delivered a welcome to all, saying that he was delighted to see his colleagues from the SDLP and the other parties in attendance. He stated that he is six months into his post of mayor and that being a border council had led to political challenges over the past year and there may be more in the coming year. He stated the importance of the history of the city and highlighted the growth in outreach which has extended to China, North America and the City of London, and how the council is keen to develop this further. He finished up by wishing everyone a peaceful and happy Christmas and handed over to the Chairman.

1. Apologies

The Chairman said that apologies advised today, received by phone, email, and as ticked in the Attendance Registration Book would be recorded. All are detailed above.

2. Minutes of last meeting

These were agreed by all as proposed by Cllr Thompson and seconded by Cllr Burgess.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

4. Reports from officers

The Treasurer reported that the finances within the organisation are in good standing and the current bank balance should see us through until the end of this financial year.

The Secretary started his report by providing an overview of the status of 'Attendees' at NAC members' meetings whereby:

- Up to eight members' delegates can be put forward by each council to represent their serving councillors at the NAC members meetings.
- All NAC members are welcome to attend these meetings and can take part in discussions, however non-delegates do not have the right to vote or make decisions and they will not receive a meeting invite or copies of meeting minutes prior to approval.
- Members' meeting dates are published in advance on the Meetings page of our website and in Newsletters which are circulated to all councillors and also accessible through the website. Meeting minutes are published on the NAC website, when approved.
- Non-delegates that attend members' meetings should sign in the Attendance Register under the 'Members Section' and their attendance will be recorded in the minutes, however, apologies are not necessary and will not be recorded.

The Secretary asked if all members were happy with this and, if not, to let us know.

Following some comments there was a proposal by Cllr Casey which was seconded by Ald Hatch that the NAC should promote upcoming members' meeting details emphasising the offer that all councillors are welcome to attend, it was agreed that this should be carried out after the upcoming elections.

The Secretary said that due to the AGM the last members' meeting took place in August, therefore the executive committee (EC) will look into changing dates for future meetings to close the long gap and also address the unsuitability of a members' meeting taking place just a week before Christmas. He then gave a general update of the NAC activities since the last members' meeting as follows:

- **The NAC AGM was held on 3 October in Cookstown** and actions taken on proposals made during this meeting will be reported in detail and discussed further today. (These details are recorded under items **A & B** on the following pages).
- **Awards for Long Serving Councillors** were presented at the Local Government Awards evening on 11 October to Cllr Dermot Curran, Ald Jim Speers and Ald Jim Dillon. Our award of Best Initiative By A Councillor/Councillor Group was presented to Cllr Julie Flaherty of ABC Council.
- **Social Enterprise NI Sponsorship**, the NAC took an advert in the SENI Awards Event programme, we also had social media mentions and our banner/logo was displayed at the awards event on Friday 19 October, which was attended by the NAC Secretary.
- **AILG Autumn Seminar, Monaghan 24 & 25 October**, the NAC Chair and Secretary attended as guests and made some good contacts. They met the LAMA Chair, Mags Murray and we are co-ordinating dates for a meeting between NAC and LAMA, to take place early in 2019.

- **Local Government Training Group (LGTG)**, the meeting planned to take place on 26 November was postponed by Stephen Reid until 10 January 2019.
- **NAC UK AGM & Event Information**, the NAC UK AGM took place on 23 November with a good representation of councillors from the NI region in attendance. The EC have decided that all NAC UK Event and Meeting information received should be forwarded directly to all Councillors, the event details for 2019 have recently been circulated.
- **Committee places lost by changes to Councillors' political affiliations**, the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Communities (DfC) replied to our letter on this stating that "It is a matter for each individual council to satisfy itself that it is operating within the parameters set out by the 2014 Act"
- **Meeting with Special Advisor to the Secretary of State, Kris Hopkins** The NAC received a meeting request, two days in advance of the proposed date of Wednesday 21 November. The NAC Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer attended and were provided with details of the Brexit agreement. They passed on information on the items of concern for councillors which have already been communicated to the Secretary of State.

A) Following proposals made at the AGM, the NAC wrote letters regarding the items which are summarised below. The replies were read out by the Secretary.

The Code Conduct Review

Firstly we wrote to the Secretary of State, a reply was received from her office, in which the NI Executive Formation and Exercise Functions Bill to Parliament was referred to. We then wrote to the Permanent Secretary for the DfC to request a meeting, referencing the SoS's letter, we received a reply which stated that "...given the fact that any revised Code cannot come into effect until laid before and approved by the Assembly, there would be no further action we could take following a meeting."

Severance Pay

We wrote to the Permanent Secretary for the DfC and received a reply which referred to the basic and special responsibility allowances (SRA) being increased, this letter also stated that - "Any future consideration of councillor remuneration including severance arrangements would be a matter for an incoming minister." *This item was discussed further, see over.

GDPR Registrations

We wrote to the ICO regarding the problems our members had experienced with the data protection registration process and we received a reply offering assistance. Following this we asked councillors to let us know if they were still having difficulty with their registrations, see below for details received.

Summary of responses to the GDPR email sent to all Councillors

Total Emails received	14
No assistance required	3
Registration Instructions requested	2
Haven't been able to register	3
Registered but no certificate or receipt	6

* Severance Pay Discussion

During this discussion, points were made regarding general SRA allocations, and those in relation to councillors serving on committees, also on expenses/mileage allowances paid to councillors generally, and for attending meetings at outside bodies. This debate highlighted that, once again, councils operate differently on how they manage payments, resulting in an inconsistency in remuneration for councillors, and possibility inequality, which is dependent on which council they serve under. Agreement was reached on a proposal by Ald Hatch, seconded by Cllr Thompson that this item should be taken forward to the EC for further discussion. A decision was taken that the Treasurer will investigate if MLA's receive a lump sum for their mileage allowance.

B) At the AGM, Cllr Maguire raised a request for sponsorship for his council's 'Spirit of Volunteering' event. At that time this item was deferred to the EC due to time constraints at the AGM. The EC decided that that this item should be discussed further at this meeting for a decision to be reached by all members, this discussion was carried out under 'Any Other Business'.

5. NAC Constitution

This item is deferred to the next members meeting due to time constraints.

6. Any other business

Cllr Maguire raised a request for sponsorship of a volunteer awards event that is run by his council bi-annually. He thanked the EC for considering his request and bringing it back to the members to discuss. He provided further details about the event and advised that NILGA had sponsored a 'special award' for £250 which gave them a high level of publicity, he proposed that the NAC consider making a small contribution. A number of members put forward their opinions and the outcome reached was that to support this type of event is outside the remit of the NAC, as an organisation. Based on the points made during the discussion, Cllr Maguire said he was happy to let the matter drop.

The Chairman spoke briefly about the upcoming NAC UK events and their relevance to our members, he asked delegates to make all members aware of them and to show support by attending, when possible.

7. Next meeting

Will be hosted by Fermanagh & Omagh District Council at The Townhall in Enniskillen at 11am on Wednesday 20 February 2019.

8. Presentation by Friends of the Earth (FOE)

Following a call for NILGOSC to divest from fossil fuels, and a response being received to that, the NAC accepted the FOE's offer to provide a presentation, this was made by Deirdre Duff and V'cenza Cirefice, this was followed by a Q & A session. To be circulated.

Decisions

- To promote members' meeting dates to all councillors and re-instate that they are welcome to attend, this will commence after the 2019 council elections.
- The EC are to look into date changes for members' meetings to shorten the autumn gap and move the pre-Christmas meeting forward.
- The EC are to discuss Severance Pay and SRA further and take necessary action.
- The Treasurer is to check if MLA's receive a lump sum for their mileage allowance.
- Friends of the Earth presentation and associated documents plus NILGOSC response to their call for divestment is to be circulated to all councillors.