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**MINUTES OF THE MEMBERS' MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2019  
AT THE TOWNHALL, ENNISKILLEN**

**ATTENDEES**

Aldermen

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

Councillors

Joe Boyle (Secretary)	Billy Webb MBE	Michael Maguire
Seamus Doyle	Patsy Kelly (Attendee)	Diana Armstrong
Errol Thompson	Victor Warrington	Derek McKinney
Valerie Harte	Michael Ruane	Charlie Casey
Terry Andrews	Robert Burgess	

Kate Wilson (Admin Assistant)

**APOLOGIES**

Aldermen

Ian Henry	Tommy Sandford	William King MBE
Tommy Jeffers		

Councillors

Eddie Thompson	Fergal Lennon	Brian Bloomfield
Timothy Gaston	Declan O'Loan	Dermot Curran

Cllr Howard Thorton, the Chairman of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council delivered a welcome on behalf of his council. He spoke about it coming to the end of the first term for the newly formed councils and the challenges in this and how it was prevalent with this being a border region. He remarked on the aims and objectives of the NAC and said that he realised some delegates may have had to travel quite far to attend today and thanked everyone for coming along. He extended good wishes to all that will be standing again in the upcoming elections and for those standing down he wished them well with whatever path they take in the future. He finished up by saying he hoped that we have a good meeting and handed over to the Chairman. The Chairman thanked Cllr Thorton on behalf of the NAC.

1. Apologies

Those received by phone/email in advance and stated or ticked in the Attendance Book today are detailed above.

2. Minutes of last meeting

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

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 advised the current and reserve bank balances. He stated that a new computer and software had recently been purchased and explained how he had re-negotiated the office insurance policy resulting in a saving of over £100

The Secretary provided the following update.

The items that were discussed by the delegates have been noted below that item *in italics*.

GDPR Registrations– we emailed all councillors reminding them that the fee is annual and included links for registering etc. We received 9 responses, some asking for help with the registration process, which we provided.

*There was discussion around the annual renewal dates and how these are based on the anniversary date of your initial registration meaning that some councillors may have to renew before the elections and then may not be re-elected, it was suggested that some may hold off for the election results before paying their renewal fee \*.*

*The Secretary stated it is a legal requirement and the NAC's advice to councillors is to renew promptly. The Treasurer said that when you receive a renewal notice there is a cut-off date for paying and if this is not met a fine will automatically be issued.*

\* Following the meeting we checked the ICO website and it states that if you no longer need to pay a data protection fee then you can cancel your registration and there are links to carry this out.

Members Meetings' Date changes Following discussion at the last Members' Meeting, the NAC EC have suggested that we may want to arrange to hold a Members Meeting in November rather than December.

*Following a proposal by Cllr Thompson and seconded by Cllr Armstrong this motion was agreed by all.*

Friends of the Earth (FOE) request for NILGOSC to divest from fossil fuels following receipt of the presentation and documents from FOE in January, we circulated this along with NILGOSC's statement to all councillors.

NAC UK Events details are now being circulated by us to councils, as well as councillors. Recent presentations are available on our website.

*The Chairman explained that the theme of the last conference was Single Use Plastics and he described elements of the presentation and how this can be downloaded from the NAC website. He further advised that the guest presenter at the conference also carries out work in NI and may be available to attend councils to provide this presentation.*

NILGA Info on 'Purdah' was sent by NILGA to their EC and the Chair shared this. Following discussion by the NAC EC this information was circulated to all councillors.

LGTG Meeting scheduled for 10 January was cancelled by Stephen Reid the day before. A new meeting date has not been advised.

NAC/LAMA meeting took place on Friday 25 Jan 2019 in Banbridge with 4 NAC and 7 LAMA Members in attendance. LAMA have invited all EC members to attend their Spring Conference on Thursday 7th March and requested that we provide a presentation on NAC.

*The Chairman thanked Cllr Doyle and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council for hosting the NAC/LAMA meeting for us.*

Social Enterprise Conference Thurs 31 Jan 2019 details were circulated to all councillors. The Secretary stated he was the only NAC EC member that attended which may have been down to the very bad weather but it was a very worthwhile event and he met Sue Gray, permanent secretary of Dept of Finance who was presenting at the conference.

Councillor Equality Press articles were published in various local papers during late December and January on this and the story was covered on Radio Ulster's Nolan Show, it was felt that overall the coverage given to it has been more positive than negative.

*The Chairman stated that some of the political parties had not been supportive and it was disappointing that their statements to the media seemed to focus on the pay increase aspect rather than general equality issues we are addressing on behalf of councillors. It was noted that a press release was issued by a party without input from their NAC delegate and subsequently the issues and reasons behind our campaign were explained to them by the councillor, the Secretary thanked the councillor for this.*

Again on Councillor Equality we followed up in December and January with John Kelpie on his agreement to discuss this matter with SOLACE members. We have been advised this will be discussed at the February meeting of SOLACE, and we will be updated following that.

Code of Conduct Review A letter was received by the NAC Chairman from the CE of Lisburn City & Castlereagh Council expressing the Councils' support for the NAC with their appeal for a review of the Code of Conduct and a thank you letter has been sent.

*The Code of Conduct review was discussed with many councillors voicing concerns in relation to the difficulties in working under this, in its current form, and the lack of progress on the review. It was put forward that action should be taken prior to the upcoming elections as newly and re-elected councillors could be again asked to sign their agreement of acceptance of the Code despite many feeling that in its current form it is not fit for purpose or understanding it. It was noted that the NAC's attempts to progress the review have been hindered by the lack of a functioning Assembly and no Minister in place. However, without the review the Ombudsman has the power to continue to enforce the code in its current form and may be extending her powers of discretion to investigate cases which took place over five years ago and it was also stated that this is the only region in the UK that the Code of Conduct is mandatory.*

*A proposal was made by Ald Speers, seconded by Ald Keery that the NAC should work jointly with the NILGA to seek legal advice on councillors acceptance of the code and a further proposal was made by Cllr Webb, seconded by Cllr McDowell that the NAC should write to the Permanent Secretary of the DfC highlighting the flawed document, both motions were agreed by all.*

NILGA's Local Government Awards will be put back due to the elections with entries and judging taking place from June and the Awards Ceremony is to be held in February 2020.

That completes the Secretary's report.

5. SRA allocation distribution

A summary of the information requested from all councils, as decided at the last members' meeting, was handed out for discussion. It was explained that the summary does not include payments to Mayors/Deputy Mayors and Chairs/Vice Chairs as this is made under separate budget headings, however some councils had provided this detail. It was also mentioned that the total amount received by each council is dependent on population and the elected members have input to the decision on how this is distributed within their council. A proposal was made by Cllr Doyle and seconded by Cllr Burgess that details of payments to Mayors/Deputy Mayors and Chairs/Vice Chairs should be added to the summary and circulated to the Members' Delegates.

6. AOB  
None

7. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday 17 April 2019 at 11am, being hosted by LCCC at Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn.

The meeting concluded with the Treasurer asking those present to tell other delegates within their council about the advantages of attending the members' meetings.

**DECISIONS TAKEN**

- Arrange for the Members Meeting normally held in December to be held in November instead.
- Arrange a meeting with NILGA to discuss seeking legal advice on councillors' acceptance of the Code of Conduct following the elections.
- Write to the Permanent Secretary of the DfC highlighting the flawed Code of Conduct.
- Add details of payments to Mayors/Deputy Mayors and Chairs/Vice Chairs to the SRA summary and circulate to the Members' Delegates.