



**‘MINUTES OF THE MEMBERS’ MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2019 HELD
AT THE DOWNSHIRE CIVIC CENTRE, DOWNPATRICK**

ATTENDEES

Aldermen

Tommy Sandford (Chair)
Jim Speers MBE

Angus Carson (Treasurer)
Michael Henderson MBE

Robert Gibson

Councillors

Joe Boyle (Secretary)
Hazel Legge
Derek McKinney
Dermot Curran

Alison Bennington
Beth Adger MBE
Robert Burgess
Valerie Harte

Billy Webb MBE
John McDermott
Charlie Casey
Michael Ruane

Kate Wilson (Admin Assistant)

APOLOGIES

Aldermen

Fraser Agnew MBE
Keith Kerrigan
Tommy Nicholl MBE

Alan McDowell (JV Chair)
Amanda Grehan

Jim Rogers OBE
Stephen Martin

Councillors

Vera McWilliam
Eric Harvey
Stephen Magennis
Diana Armstrong
Jonathan Craig
Niamh Doris

Eddie Thompson
Tracy Kelly
Dale Pankhurst
Errol Thompson
Timothy Gaston
Terry Andrews (SV Chair)

Fiona Ferguson
JJ Magee
Dermot Nicholl
Victor Warrington
Kyle Black

The NAC chairman, Ald Tommy Sandford thanked everyone for attending and he then handed over to Cllr Casey, the Chairman of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council who provided a warm welcome to the Downpatrick chamber. Cllr Casey said that Downpatrick was often described as a medieval village and he was pleased to announce that a new civic centre is currently being built in Newry which will take the chamber back to its rightful home. Cllr Casey said that the low number of members in attendance may be down to the upcoming election and he extended his best wishes to the elected members that are running.

The chair thanked Cllr Casey for hosting today’s meeting and welcoming the NAC Members. He then introduced David and Amanda from Social Enterprise NI who provided a presentation on the work of their organisation, followed by a Q & A session. The presentation and further details as requested will be forwarded to all elected members.

The meeting then commenced.

MEMBERS' MEETING MINUTES - WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2019 - DOWNPATRICK

1. Apologies
Those received by phone/email in advance and stated or ticked in the Attendance Book today are as detailed on page 1.
2. Minutes of last meeting
Agreed by all as proposed by Cllr Adger and seconded by Ald Speers.
3. Matters arising from the minutes
Cllr Boyle stated that a lot will be touched upon within his Secretary's Report.
4. Reports from officers (*Discussion notes and points raised are in italics*)

Treasurer's Report

Ald Carson provided a financial report stating the bank balance at the end of October and details of expenditure since the last report which was provided at the Members' Meeting in August. *This was accepted by all as proposed by Cllr Casey and seconded by Ald Henderson.*

Secretary's Report

Cllr Boyle read his report as follows.

Code of Conduct review - Letters of protest

We prepared a bullet pointed list on why we are asking for the letter to be signed as requested at the last members meeting and this was sent to the member that made the request. A further email was sent to all councillors on 2nd September asking them to sign the letter of protest and hand to their CE's, this included the bullet points.

Following initial contact in June, councils were contacted again in Sept/Oct and the numbers for letters received was updated accordingly. These figures do not include Belfast as they did not respond and M&EA gave a nil return.

Council	Received Sept/Oct	Received by June
Antrim & Newtownabbey BC	21	13
Ards & North Down BC	12	3
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	9	A number
Belfast City Council	No reply	No reply
Causeway Coast & Glens BC	4	2
Derry City & Strabane DC	6	2
Fermanagh & Omagh DC	7	2
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council	37	27
Mid & East Antrim BC	0	0
Mid Ulster DC	31	34
Newry Mourne & Down DC	32	11
Total letters received by CE's	159	94

error, corrected in Sept

Following discussion, it was noted that a large effort has been put into promoting this and if any members feel that they would like to follow up with others within their council or party that may not have signed yet, that is welcome.

Members from ABC, BCC and M&EA raised their concerns on the accuracy of the data as reported. It was agreed the details of emails to and from their respective councils would be provided to them so they could follow up on this.

Code of Conduct review - Ombudsman's Office

We sent them a letter on 23 September asking for an update on the operation of their office following the departure of Mrs Marie Anderson. An immediate response which included a meeting offer was received from Mr Paul McFadden, Deputy Commissioner. This meeting took place on Thursday 14 November with representatives from the NAC and NILGA. Mr McFadden said that it is important that we have a constructive relationship and he and Michaela McAleer answered the questions we asked. Mr McFadden has offered to come along to talk to our members to explain processes and answer any questions.

Code of Conduct review - New DFC Working Group

NAC and NILGA representatives attended a meeting with Tracy Meharg's officials yesterday (Tuesday 19 November). The DFC official provided us with a fair hearing and answered the questions we asked. Dispensation was one of the items discussed and there may be something that can be done for our members on this.

AILG Autumn Seminar

Was held at the Hillgrove Hotel in Monaghan on 11-12 September with the NAC Secretary and Treasurer in attendance. Copies of the AILG Newsletter and their Brexit Issues Paper are available here today for anyone who would like to take a look at them.

NAC AGM

Took place on Friday 4 October at the Glenavon House Hotel in Cookstown. There were representatives from NAC UK, NILGA, AILG and LAMA in attendance, unfortunately SOLACE were unable to send a representative. Our guest speaker, Andrea Winders of Disruptieve.com provided a presentation and this was later circulated to all councillors.

We are pleased to announce that Ald Tommy Sandford is the new NAC Chair, Cllr Terry Andrews is now Senior Vice Chair and Ald Alan McDowell is Junior Vice Chair, the Secretary and Treasurer have retained their positions. Full details of the Executive Committee can be viewed on the NAC website.

Social Enterprise NI Awards Event

As sponsors we were invited to send two representatives to this event which took place on Friday 11th October at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Belfast. Ald Sandford and Cllr Burgess attended representing the NAC. A letter of thanks has been received from SENI.

LGTG review

Ald Sandford, myself and Kate attended a meeting with the Chair of LGTG, Stephen Reid on Wednesday 23 October, Cllr Burton and Fiona Douglas of NILGA also attended. We were updated on the review progress. During this meeting Steven Reid informed us that SOLACE are willing to meet with NILGA and NAC again and the following day we received an email from SOLACE on this and a meeting has been arranged for 17 January 2020.

Ald Henderson said that perhaps we should arrange to liaise with the Training Development Officers within councils to discuss the development of a training plan that meets the requirements of our members and bring this information to the next LGTG meeting.

NAC UK Vice President and Vice Chair Positions

Details on these positions were received from the UK General Secretary, Cllr Brian Nelson, and following discussion by the Executive Committee we have put forward a nomination for each position. It is the turn of NI region to take up the position of Vice Chair for the NAC UK and the Vice President position is open to all regions and will be determined by an election from those names put forward at the NAC UK AGM taking place this coming weekend.

On a point of order raised at the meeting it was stated that historically when it is the NI Region's turn to take the UK Vice Chair position this is done on a party rotational basis. The nomination that had been put forward for this position, as previously agreed by the NAC Executive Committee, did not meet this protocol.

Various aspects were raised concerning this, including that this was a once every eight years position for the NI region to consider and therefore it was an oversight but would be amended by being included in a revised constitution which is currently underway. It was therefore agreed that the nomination previously put forward would be retracted and a new nomination based on the correct party rotational order will be submitted. Whilst all in attendance agreed that this had been an unfortunate situation and that it was ultimately due to a misunderstanding which has absolutely no reflection on the original nominee, who we all accepted would be very disappointed at this decision.

Cllr Ruane proposed Cllr Casey for the UK Vice Chair position and this was seconded by Cllr Harte.

NI Local Government Awards Judging

Judging of the submissions for the NAC NI sponsored category of Best Initiative By A Councillor/Councillor Group has taken place and the score sheets have been sent back to the organisers.

Co-option to the Executive Committee

Ald Michael Henderson has been co-opted to the NAC Executive Committee as it was felt that he could make a positive contribution due to his experience and involvement with NILGA, the LGTG and NAC UK.

5. AOB

The Chair stated that meeting dates for 2020 will be circulated and on behalf of the NAC Officers he wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

6. Next Meeting Date

Next Members' Meeting will be on Wednesday 20 February 2020 in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (details of meeting venue to follow)

DECISIONS TAKEN

- Further details on the letters of protest received by ABC, BCC and M&EA councils to be provided to members, as requested, so they can follow up with their councils on this.
- EC to consider contacting the Training Development Officers within councils to discuss the development of a training plan that meets the requirements of our members so that this information can be brought to the next LGTG meeting.
- The nomination put forward for the NAC UK Vice Chair position was retracted and a new nomination based on the correct party rotational order was to be submitted for Cllr Casey as proposed and seconded.
- Dates of the NAC UK and Regional Meetings will be circulated to all members and councils.