

Cumbria Association of Local Councils

Annual General Meeting 2020

Minutes of the 46th Annual General Meeting of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils held on Saturday the 26th September 2020.

This was a virtual meeting held on the Zoom platform starting at 10.30am

Present:

Cllr David Graham (President) in the chair

Brian Craig (Dalston PC)	Andy Pratt (Drigg and Carleton PC)
Jonathan Davies (Penrith TC/Great Clifton PC)	
Leith Hallatsch (Windermere and Bowness TC)	
David Peters Natland PC)	Paul Titley (Keswick TC)
Jane Tea (Kirkoswald PC)	Sue Castle-Clarke (Ousby PC)
Mike Higginbotham (Wetheral PC)	Peter Smillie (Arnside PC)
Helen Barlow (Thursby PC)	Anne Byers (Dalston PC)
Phil Hancock (Morland PC)	Gillian Martin (Thursby PC)
Mary Bradley (Broughton PC)	Hazel Broatch (Hayton PC)
Peter Winter (Preston Patrick PC)	Roger Atfield (Levens PC)
David Graham (Crosby Ravensworth PC)	Keith Hitchen (Waberthwaite PC)
Bev Pink (Great Salkeld PC)	Gordon Nicholson (Lazonby PC)
Shelagh Leyland (Boltons PC)	Chris Shaw (Moresby PC)
Martin Tett (Buckingham Council) (Guest Speaker)	

In attendance Samantha Bagshaw (Chief Officer), Sonia Hutchinson (Parish Support Officer), Karen Wood (Office Administrator). Chris Shaw took a note of the meeting.

Sue Castle-Clarke, Chair of CALC, welcomed parish representatives and the guest speaker to the meeting. She said that this was her first meeting as chairman of the county executive and the conference would in normal circumstances have been held in South Lakeland. She said that it was hoped that next year the annual general meeting and the conference could be held on the same day. It was agreed that the meeting be recorded but once the minute had been agreed the recording would be deleted

Part 1

Cllr David Graham the association President introduced Martin Tett, the leader of Buckingham Council.

The guest speaker spoke with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation which it was agreed would be circulated. He then answered questions.

Q. Were there remuneration packages to parishes to accompany devolution?

A. The devolution was to community boards which could include town and parish councilors as non-voting members and financial assistance followed.

Q. What are the negatives of unitary.

A. At present there are too many councilors and the council is unwieldy but when an election is allowed the number will be reduced. A second point is temporary but for Cumbria embarking on the journey is important. Those councils whether district or county should not burn the bridges behind them by signing long term contracts before being dissolved as happened in Buckinghamshire.

Q. Views on Combined authorities and with devolution to include elected mayors.

A. Personal view but against elected mayors and combined authorities. Saw no requirement in Buckinghamshire which is a large authority and met the local needs argument by forming community boards. No merit in elected mayors which may be a populist figure and is not good for democracy.

Q. What part did the parish councils play in designing the proposal to government.

A. None. The business case that was accepted by government was put together by the former county council. It was followed by extensive consultation resulting in an arrangement where decisions taken by the community boards are in two parts. i) An indicative vote to include town and parish councilors on the board followed by ii) a confirmatory vote taken by elected members only.

Q. What savings will be made?

A. Aim is to make saving of £18.2 million over 5 years. This is achievable despite some spoiling tactics by former district councils. It would have been possible using section 22 for the new unitary authority to have taken over district council budgets. It wasn't used. £2.5 million will be saved in senior management posts and several ex council buildings will be sold.

Q. Will it be quicker and slicker?

A. Yes. It will be a better service for residents and was shown by the way the authority tackled the Covid crisis.

Q. What is the point of more than one unitary authority?

A. Personal view None. Must accept Cumbria is a very large area but with the unitary authority taking the strategic decisions local delivery can be taken at a lower level which allows a sense of identity.

Q. How important for authority to be co-terminus with the health and social care

A. In Buckinghamshire we are fortunate in that the boundaries for the police, the LEP, the Acute Hospital Trust and the CCG are the same and it is beneficial. It will assist our bid for a growth deal which we will make without an elected mayor.

The President, in thanking Martin for his informative presentation, said that it gave an indication of the complexity and the length of the process but set out the challenges, the benefits and the opportunities.

Part 2

Business Agenda

1 Apologies for Absence

These were received from Julie Hartley, Chris Johnson, Jean Airey, Doug Sim and Barton and Pooley Bridge parish council

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 9th November 2019

They were agreed as a correct record and signed by the President

3. Matters Arising

The president said at the 2019 annual meeting it was noted that “the constitution did not allow co-option to the county executive of members to serve for three years and a further election for the 3 vacancies would be held at the next annual meeting”. It was on the agenda under item 8(ii)

4. Presentation of the CALC 2019/20 Annual Review.

The chair of the executive committee Sue Castle-Clarke presented the report. She said that several issues have stood out in the year with uncertainty of Brexit, local government reorganisation, possible changes to the code of conduct but since March 2020 the Covid 19 has dominated. She said a section of the report included particulars of how some parishes had adopted to the present situation and it was becoming clear that meetings using a virtual platform were likely to continue through the winter. She said that the Calc staff had been available to help and a number of seminar type events had proved very useful. Turning to the district association work she said that these were changing with the principal authorities unable to provide the officer assistance that was once the case. She said that the organisation was investing in training and support and continued to have a very high level of membership. She said that the county executive was encouraging clerks by training to become more professional and there was a willingness to use the precept to provide an improved service to residents. Finally, she thanked her predecessor Rick Petecki for the work he had undertaken whilst in office and for the work of both the staff and the county executive.

5. Presentation of the Statement of Accounts

The chief officer in presenting the statement of accounts said that whilst there had been a deficit over the year the executive had agreed to additional support and an officer had been recruited for 4 months. This had been worthwhile. The executive was looking at the strategic position, the future and the way the organisation should operate. She believed this was a worthwhile exercise. She emphasised that Calc was financially sound. It was noted that the detailed income and expenditure papers were available on request.

6. Election of Officers:

i). President

David Graham was proposed and seconded and elected President for the forthcoming year.

ii). Vice-President

Mr S. T. Simpson was proposed and seconded and elected Vice-President for the forthcoming year

iii. Hon. Treasurer

Ms Julie Hartley was proposed and seconded and elected as Hon.Treasurer for the forthcoming year.

7. Appointment of Auditors

The reappointment of Saint and Co as the Association's auditors was approved

8. Appointment of Executive Committee

i.) The president reported the nominations made by the district associations

Allerdale	Cllr David Wilson Second representative to be notified	(Brigham PC)
Barrow	Cllr Mike Cumming	(Askham and Irleth PC)
Carlisle	Cllr Bryan Craig Cllr Michael Higginbotham	(Dalston PC (Wetheral PC)
Copeland	Cllr Andrew Pratt Cllr Doug Sim	(Drigg and Carleton PC) (St Bees PC)
Eden	Cllr Sue Castle –Clarke Cllr Jane Tea	(Ousby PC) (Kirkoswald PC)
South Lakeland	Cllr David Peters Cllr Peter Smillie	(Natland PC) (Arnside PC)

ii. Elections of members to the county executive

The president said that there were three Executive Committee places to be filled by election and under the Constitution each local council in membership of the Association is entitled to two voting representatives (who may be serving councillors or officers) and the Honorary Officers are also entitled to vote, that is the President, the Vice President and the Hon. Treasurer.

Voting took place by show of hands and the following were elected:

Mary Bradley (Broughton PC)

Mark Kidd (Staveley with Ings PC)

Bev Pink (Great Salkeld PC)

9. To determine the annual increase of the CALC subscription fees for 2021/22. The president moved the following recommendations approved by the county executive

i. That the CALC subscription income shall be increased by 4% for 2021/22.

The motion was carried by 17 votes to 2

ii. That the CALC subscription for parish meetings that raise a precept shall be increased by £1 to £35 in 2021/22, plus 7.42p per elector for the NALC portion of the membership fee.

The motion was carried by 13 votes to 2

iii. That parish meetings which do not raise a precept, shall not be charged any CALC or NALC subscription in 21/22.

The motion was carried by 14 votes to 0

10. NOTICE OF MOTION

Clifton Parish Council proposes the motion that CALC represents Clifton Parish Council in devolution discussions and negotiations as part of the current Cumbria Devolution and unitary authority plans.

As our county association of local councils, Clifton Parish Council request that CALC adopts a policy and position on the Cumbria Devolution plans and represents Clifton Parish council in the negotiations to ensure that Town and Parish councils in Cumbria are part of the negotiations and form a key part of the future of local government in Cumbria. Ensuring that the future upper levels of local Government in Cumbria work with as partners and involve town and parish councils in the process and development of the communities we serve and have more involvement and devolved local powers to the community including greater say in planning issues and local development plans.

Jonathan Davies in moving the motion said it gave Calc authority to act on behalf of his parish and by extension all other councils in membership and secondly set the policy to be adopted. He said that Calc should be represented in the discussions leading to a decision about what type of unitary was adopted to ensure that local councils were listened to in a way that was not the case at present. He gave as an example the way he believed principal authorities looked at submissions made in planning applications. Peter Winter said that he understood the guest speaker to say that whilst local councils remained consultees in Buckingham, they did not take decisions and he believed many councils in Cumbria would agree with that position. David Peters (Natland PC) in opposing the motion said that in fact it was one motion as set out in the first paragraph with the second paragraph the argument in favour. He said that it was a matter for individual parishes to determine their own view on this topic and not to ask the association to become involved. He said that splitting the county into separate unitary authorities and perhaps bringing an area from north Lancashire

into one would cause Calc organisational difficulties. Andy Pratt said that the Calc executive had adopted an interim position statement because whilst it was aware of the county council position it did not know what the district councils were proposing and until there was a framework for consultation then the interim position was appropriate. Peter Smillie agreed with that view. It was noted that the meeting remained quorate. Keith Hitchen (Drigg and Carleton PC) said that if the eventual proposal was for unitary authorities in parts of Cumbria then it was an issue that the district associations should consider with a view to advising local councils of their view. Helen Barlow (Thursby PC) and Hazel Broatch (Hayton PC) both said the matter should be further discussed by their parish councils. The motion was put to the vote and lost by 5 in favour 10 against with 6 abstaining.

11. To discuss any other matters raised by councils.

The president said that no other matters had been notified to be raised.

12. **CONCLUDING REMARKS:** Councillor Sue Castle-Clarke, Chairperson of CALC. The chairperson said that the next year would see reorganisation in Local Government and that once the green light was given there were likely to be big changes. Calc had to be ready and hearing the guest speaker and the Buckingham experience would help bring local councils up to speed. Shaping the political landscape should be left to the principal authorities but Calc would be ready thereafter.

She thanked those attending the meeting

The meeting closed at 1.30pm