

CUMBRIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils held on Saturday the 16th October 2021

This meeting was a virtual meeting held on Teams platform commencing at 10.30am

Present:

Cllr David Graham (President) in the Chair

Peter Smillie (Arnside PC)	Bryan Craig (Dalston PC)
Leith Hallatsch (Windermere and Bowness TC)	
Julia Dodson (Wetheral PC)	David Wilson (Brigham PC)
Sue Castle-Clarke (Ousby PC)	Janey Hassam (Sedburgh PC)
Mike Higginbotham (Wetheral PC)	Jonathan Davies (Penrith TC)
Doug Sim (St Bees PC)	Joy Pemberton-Piggott (Above Derwent PC)
Arthur Capstick (Staveley with Ings PC)	David Peters (Natland PC)
Trevor Allison (Cummersdale PC)	Jane Tea (Kirkoswald PC)
Mark Kidd (Staveley with Ings PC)	Paul Titley (Keswick TC)
Lindsay Nicholson (Kirkby Thore PC)	Laura Morgan (Crosscanonby PC)
Kate Tripp (Windermere and Bowness TC)	Mike Cumming (Askam & Irleth PC)
Ann Byers (Dalston PC)	Stephen Harwood (Keswick TC)
Peter Winter (Preston Patrick PC)	Nick Ford (Cleator Moor TC)
Freda Chapman (Borrowdale PC)	Jackie Drake (Ulverston TC)
Andy Pratt (Drigg and Carleton PC)	Lynn Bell (Pennington PC)
Roger Atfield (Levens PC)	Valerie Bowen (Penrith TC)
Chris Shaw (Moresby PC)	Sebastian Bell
Paul Evans (Speaker)	Helen Moriarty (Speaker)

In attendance Samantha Bagshaw (Chief Officer), Sonia Hutchinson (Parish Support Officer), Lesley Cooper took a note of the meeting.

Sue Castle-Clarke, Chair of CALC welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting again was held remotely via Microsoft Teams but it was hoped that next year it would return to a face to face meeting. The Chair requested that attendees put the name of their parish/town council in the chat box to aid the minute taker. The meeting was to be recorded for minute purposes and would be deleted once the minutes had been completed. There were no objections to this. To vote attendees were asked to either put up the yellow electronic hand or their physical hand.

The first part of the meeting would be the Annual General Meeting and the second part the Speakers who in turn would deliver their presentation.

Sue Castle-Clarke then handed the Chair over to David Graham to chair the formal part of the meeting.

PART 1 – Business Agenda

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 September 2020. Jonathan Davies stated that he represented Clifton PC only and asked for the minutes to be amended.

There were no further amendments and the minutes were accepted by a show of hands

3. Matters arising

None

4. Presentation of the CALC Annual Review

The Chief Officer, Samantha Bagshaw stated that the review was now in a new format which hopefully reflected the membership as a whole and hoped that members had enjoyed it and it was more relevant. Articles included Bootle partnership working on improving flood resilience, St Bees community radio initiative, Scaleby's walk on rights of way publicising the changes to the rights of way map after 2026 and Appleby Town Council being award a Quidditch town and the economic development around this project.

Trevor Allison asked if page numbers could be added in future.

5. Statement of Accounts

Samantha Bagshaw presented the Statement of Accounts.

20/21 year end income £111,320 from activities/fees/grants/training, expenditure £106099. Current Account £32k, Deposit Account £40k, Cumberland BS £62k interest rates are low but including interest £126,047 in funds, £6k up on previous year mainly due to continued Covid restrictions meaning remote meetings. Staff time travelling a big cost normally and also training on line reduced costs – this has been reflected in the cost of training.

Valerie Bowen asked if training would continue remotely as this was a responsible way of working and helping climate change.

Samantha Bagshaw responded that it was noted that more people attended training remotely especially in the winter months. Training was constantly under review and there had been positive feedback from both attendees and trainers. Some courses may return to face/face in the future but this would depend on the trainer/facilitator being comfortable.

The President thanked Samantha Bagshaw for her hard work.

6. Election of Officers

i) President

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

ii) Hon Treasurer

Ms Julie Hartley was proposed and seconded and elected as treasurer for the forthcoming year

iii) Vice President

It was noted that Mr Stan Simpson was stepping down from the post. He had worked hard for the Association as a Trainer and gratitude was expressed for his great service to the Association and Parish Councils.

7. Auditors

It was proposed and seconded that Saint & Co be reappointed as auditors for the Association

8. Appointment of Executive Committee

The president reported the nominations made by the district associations

Allerdale Cllr David Wilson (Brigham PC)

Second representative to be notified

Barrow Cllr Mike Cumming (Askam and Irleth PC)

Carlisle Cllr Bryan Craig (Dalston PC)

Cllr Michael Higginbotham (Wetheral PC)

Copeland Cllr Andrew Pratt (Drigg and Carleton PC)

Cllr Doug Sim (St Bees PC)

Eden Cllr Sue Castle –Clarke (Ousby PC)

Cllr Jane Tea (Kirkoswald PC)

South Lakeland Cllr Peter Smillie (Arnside PC)

Second representative to be notified due to the resignation of Cllr David Peters

9. To determine the annual increase of the CALC subscription fees for 2022/23.

Recommendations:

i. That the CALC subscription income shall be increased by 8.25% for 2022/23

Sue Castle-Clarke stated that this increase would only increase annual bills for smaller councils by less than £10 per year, medium councils by less than £20 and larger councils £30-40 per year. The increase was required to fund the additional hours that the CALC team will have to spend due to Local Government Re-organisation in supporting parishes, the perishing of Carlisle and Barrow and the proposed salary increase of 1.75%

Chris Shaw (Moresby PC) this increase could have a serious effect on councils and questioned whether this was designed to lose members.

Sue Castle-Clarke responded that there was no intent to reduce membership and the decision had not been taken lightly.

A vote was taken and 21 members voted for the proposal

ii. That the CALC subscription for parish meetings that raise a precept shall be increased by £1 to £36 in 2022/23, plus 7.49p per elector for the NALC portion of the membership fee.

A vote was taken and 26 members voted for the proposal

iii. That the CALC subscription for parish meetings that do not raise a precept shall be increased by £1 to £36 in 2022/23, plus 7.49p per elector for the NALC portion of the membership fee.

Sue Castle-Clarke pointed out that there were 15 Parish Meetings that currently did not raise a precept but who still received the same services as those that do currently for free. This proposal was to level things up so that everyone contributed for the services provided.

Discussion took place and concerns were raised as to alternative funding sources and whether these Parish Meetings would leave the association. It was asked if Parish Meetings had been consulted prior to the proposal but this had not been undertaken. It was questioned whether these Parish meetings actually used the services and Sonia Hutchinson responded that they do.

It was noted that PM's who do not raise a precept have the same voting rights as those that do.

Members asked that communication regarding the increase show the difference between the % increase and the actual £ increase to show the actual impact and to ensure that it was factual and not misleading.

It was noted that some Parish Meetings were more active than others and some did not meet at all.

A vote was held For 23 votes, against 4 votes

10. Proposed change to the Legal Structure of CALC

Recommendation:

i. That an application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation is progressed

ii. That the Executive Committee bring a draft Constitution for the CIO back to a General Meeting of the membership for their approval.

It was proposed that the 2 actions be linked together.

Sue Castle-Clarke stated the constitution aims and rules of the Association had been looked at and deemed not fit for purpose for an Organisation employing staff. Guidance/advice had been sought around legal responsibility. At the moment there is personal liability on the executive should anything go wrong.

Benefits – protect trustees (limited liability), legal standing, attract new funding streams, grants etc, no impact on tax exemption and still can be a membership organisation. Other types of organisations were looked at but not appropriate for CALC. The application was being progressed and a draft constitution will be brought back to the membership for voting on by the full membership at an AGM. Approval today is being sought to do the work towards a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Questions were asked as to the number of trustees, how they would be selected would there be a different format to the current arrangement. Concerns were raised that the trustees would not be the correct mix of individuals on the board representing all councils and that it could take away the representation of the membership.

Concerns were expressed that this was being rushed through and that alternatives had not been investigated or implemented on a short term basis whilst further investigation took place.

It was reiterated that CALC had taken 12 months to consider this and taken advice on this from independent sources and this was the best fit for CALC.

Members wished for the proposal to go out for consultation with the membership
Vote for the proposals: 25 Against : 2

11. To discuss any matters raised from councils

None

The President thanked everyone for attending the AGM.

Part 2 Speakers

Due to technical difficulties breakout rooms could not be undertaken so the speakers gave their presentations

Paul Evans – Cumbria Local Nature Partnership – Nature Recovery in Cumbria

Paul gave a presentation on the state of nature in Cumbria and how everyone can help to make a difference

In past 10 years Nationally 1:3 species had decreased in numbers and 15% were threatened with extinction. It was difficult to know the exact problem in Cumbria, LDNP had some data on losses of meadows and species. The world was in a biodiversity emergency. Flying insects were a good indicator and there had been a ¾ decline in flying insects over the last 20 years. As these are key to the food chain – worrying. Peatlands in poor condition and releasing carbon not storing.

Good news – can make a difference

20% species improved with the introduction of wildflower strips in gardens, landowners planting meadows and regenerating of woodlands are all attracting pollinators and other species.

Government to introduce new legislation in 2025 – Environment Act

Every Authority will need a Nature Recovery Strategy, restoration of 500k ha of wildlife habitats. Linking of nature/wildlife sites to enable species to move around more freely by linking up habitats eg woodland creating natural corridors.

Cumbria has been a trial for this eg A66 wildflower banks on roadside verges

Parish and Town Councils can take positive action on the ground developing small projects, encouraging gardens/businesses to plant more using every bit of land to help nature, gathering data.

Volunteering, identifying problems

Helen Moriarty – Citizens Climate Change Jury – Kendal Town Council

2019 Kendal TC declared a climate emergency and commissioned a jury to empower citizens.

March 2020 1st town to have a citizen's jury. Experts invited to speak and the following were agreed to act on: food/farming, transport, energy and local government.

Public engagement in the recommendations eg torch light event now a walking procession and no vehicles. Town council creating a mandate against "business as usual". Lots of projects aligned to climate challenge, local support/facilitate/partnerships, integrated report into TC vision, Climate influence projects.

Citizen jury members invited to continue supporting different events. A panel assesses progress/develop responses

Importance of local produce/working with nature – organic farms

Solar audit of Kendal -data target/grant opportunities

20mph whole of Kendal encourage more cycling/walking

Municipal composting

Online inspiration hub/myth busting

Reagan Blacker – Workington Nature Partnership

Reagan explained how Workington TC and Allerdale BC formed a partnership to look at unmanaged green spaces and how they could be made viable for nature

New nature reserves/parks had been created within Workington that were naturally connected. SSSI sites formed on old works ponds. Old industrial sites being put to better use and creating natural habitats for wildlife.

Sue Castle-Clarke thanked all the speakers for interesting and informative can do projects. Covid had encouraged more people to go outside and see the environment and raised awareness of how it could be changed for the better. Community leaders need to encourage communities to change and make a greener place and it was certainly food for thought.

Sue Castle-Clarke thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 12.54