

Eden Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 15th November 2017 at 7pm

Fire & Rescue Services HQ, Penrith

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Shelagh Leyland, Bolton Parish Council, Peter Smith, Bolton Parish Council, Miles MacInnes Barton Parish Council.

2. Minutes of the last AGM held on 10th October 2016

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

1. David Huxley pointed out that the discussion group referred to in the Chairman's report had not taken place which is why the round the table discussion has been put on the agenda.
2. David Huxley explained that Councillor Adrian Todd is now the portfolio holder for Eden District Council Devolution of Services instead of Mike Slee. He added that the Devolution of Services is still an issue and something that EALC will include on future agendas.

4. Election of Officers

1. David Huxley was nominated to serve for another year as EALC Chairman. This was seconded and David Huxley was duly elected. David agreed to take on the Chairman role until 1st March 2018.
2. There were 2 nominees for Vice-Chair Sue Castle-Clarke, Ousby parish council and Nigel Longworth, Ousby parish Council.
Following a ballot of all councillors / clerks present Sue Castle-Clarke was elected as Vice-Chair and agreed to take on the role.

5. Election of Representatives to the CALC Executive

David Huxley was elected to serve on the CALC Executive. Sue Castle-Clarke as Vice-Chair was asked if she would like to take up the second seat on the CALC Executive and she agreed.

6. Verbal update by the Chairman

David Huxley explained that this year it had been decided to hold a separate AGM rather than combine it with the Tri-partite meeting as in previous years. He then explained how the District Association meetings operate in other parts of the county and how he believes that the EALC provides an opportunity for parish councils to get together and look at the issues that they have with both Eden District Council and the County Council. This is something that can be considered during the round table discussion.

7. Transparency Code Compliance Update

Sam Bagshaw, Chief Officer CALC explained the audit changes that are coming into effect for smaller parish councils (under 25K turnover) from April 2018 and the funding that is still available from DCLG through NALC to support parishes with transparency compliance. Funding available includes the setting up of a website and up to 3 hours per month for a Clerk to upload documents onto the website. The funding is available until 31st March 2018. Sam provided members present with a list of what funding is available and also what documentation has to be put onto the website to ensure full compliance with the code. Sam reiterated that as there will no-longer a requirement to go through an external audit for smaller authorities it will be necessary to ensure that everything required is published on the website in case a parish council is challenged by for example a parishioner on the transparency of the council. This information should include the salary of the clerk which must be available in the public domain.

Questions asked

Will there be a new annual return?

Sam Bagshaw confirmed that there will be new documentation which will be very similar to what has previously been completed.

How will parish meetings be affected?

Sam Bagshaw said that parish meetings will be required to put all of their documentation on to notice boards as they are not required to have a website.

Do minutes have to be published within 30 days?

Sam Bagshaw confirmed that it is a legal requirement to publish minutes within 30 days of the last meeting and that if councils only meet every 2 months it is necessary for them to publish draft minutes on the website. Once they have been signed at the next meeting they can be taken down and the signed copy put on the website.

Sam Bagshaw pointed out that it is also necessary to publish supporting papers alongside the Agenda for the meeting. She also pointed out that all of this information is available on the front page of the CALC website.

David Huxley asked if it would be possible to re-recirculate the information to parish clerks.

Sam agreed to re-circulate and ensure that the email is flagged as High Importance.

8. Round table discussion regarding future EALC meetings

The members present were split into 2 discussion forums and asked to consider how they would like to see future meetings run.

9. Resume of group discussion

Feedback from the discussion included the following: -

- The need to raise awareness of EALC and its purpose;
- The desire to continue to hold Tri-partite meetings but with separate EALC meetings to determine what issues parishes would like to see discussed;
- Topical issues both national and local to be on the agenda;
- The need for EALC to be more proactive and forward looking;
- To adopt a more informal workshop approach to meetings;
- To make better use of social media and technology;
- Holding meetings in different locations around the district;
- Topics to be identified that generate interest;
- To be used as a means of empowering councillors to make a difference.

It was agreed that David, Huxley, Sue Castle-Clarke, Sam Bagshaw and Sonia Hutchinson will meet to establish a framework to take things forward.

The topic of devolution of services was briefly discussed and it was agreed that EALC will arrange a meeting as soon as possible to discuss the devolution of Footway Lighting from EDC to parish and town councils.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date of the Next Meeting

To be agreed.

