

CUMBRIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Minutes of a meeting of CALC's Executive Committee held on Saturday 1st April 2017 at 10.00 am at the Community Fire Station, Penrith.

PRESENT:

Ronnie Auld
Peter Bales
Ann Byers
Mike Cumming
Leith Hallatsch
Mike Higginbotham
Keith Hitchen
David Huxley
Leslie Johnson
Brian Kennish
Bob Mather
Rick Petecki
David Peters
Margaret Throp

In attendance: Samantha Bagshaw, Chief Officer and Veronica Stockdale, Parish Support Officer for Carlisle and Eden District Associations

Cllr Mike Cumming from Barrow District Association was welcomed to the meeting in an informal capacity, until the Association is formally recognised at the AGM in November.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Hay and Mr Stan Simpson

MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 14th January 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

3. There was some discussion of a matter arising from the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 22nd October 2016. This related to minute number 7:

'It was **agreed** that CALC's employees' salary scales will be reviewed before the April meeting of the CALC Executive'

It was **agreed** that this matter should be resolved before the meeting on 24th June of the CALC Executive and the outcome reported to the Committee.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2017

4. The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair of CALC for 2017. Cllrs Leith Hallatsch and Margaret Throp were proposed and seconded.
5. Cllr Margaret Throp was elected Vice Chairman for 2017

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE FROM THE CUMBRIA LEADER'S BOARD

- 6 The Chairman reported back to the Committee on the Cumbria Leader's Board held on Friday 17 March. He reported that there was a presentation from Sandra Booth on behalf of University of Cumbria in relation to plans for a Cumbria Institute of Technology.
- 7 The government will be launching a call for proposals to establish Institutes of Technology in spring 2017. The board expressed support for the initial statement of intent and wished to be kept informed of any progress.

8 Industrial Strategy Consultation

The Board considered the Industrial Strategy consultation and felt that it would be helpful if responses could be shared with the Board and the LEP

- 9 Discussion of NHS Cumbria, the changes to the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) in Cumbria and outcome of success Regime.

Agreed that:

- a) Recruitment was a major issue and a hindrance to progress
- b) There is still a need to work together

- 10 There is a Cumbria wide strategy housing being put together by the LEP and the district councils. It was highlighted that the strategy is available for consideration.
- 11 IPPR Forgotten Opportunities Report on the rural economy. A lot of the funding for rural development currently comes via the EU funding and it was agreed that the group needs to keep this issue at the forefront as the process to leave the EU continues.
- 12 CALC members discussed the value of CALC's presence at the Cumbria Leaders' Board meetings and expressed the hope that CALC could Chair the meeting at some point. It was also suggested that given the districts have a joint district meeting, it might be a good idea for the non district/borough leaders to meet to discuss issues relevant to their sectors from time to time.

Agreed: That members need to be kept informed of the discussions at the Leaders' Board and that the Chief Officer should circulate the Chairman's notes of the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE FROM NALC NATIONAL COUNCIL AND LOBBY DAY IN PARLIAMENT 28TH MARCH 2017

13. At **National Council**, items discussed were:

There has been confusion over the draft template of the employment contract drawn up by NALC. It was clarified that this was being withdrawn by NALC at the current time, to allow further discussion of the matter.

Referenda principles – NALC has been advised by the Secretary of State that these will be revisited, so NALC is asking parish and town councils to be mindful of the amount they increase their precepts by.

NALC is also beginning a review of governance arrangements for councillors and a report for discussion will be issued at some point later this year.

14. **Parliamentary Lobby Day**

The Chairman met with 3 MPs:

- John Woodcock MP
- Trudy Harrison MP
- Sue Hayman MP

He was met with a generally positive response from the MPs:

15 John Woodcock MP was concerned about recruitment in Cumbria and is promoting the Choose Cumbria campaign being run by the CN Group. He was also pleased that Barrow parishes are going to have formal representation on the CALC Executive. They also discussed the importance of broadband speeds in Cumbria. He was invited to the CALC AGM.

16 Trudy Harrison MP – requested an invite to the 3 tier meetings in Copeland and was interested in knowing more about the work of parish councils in Copeland. She was invited to the AGM

17 Sue Hayman MP - discussed roads, health and recruitment in Cumbria. She was invited to the AGM

18 The Chairman was encouraged by the MPs' interest in working together for the good of the county and it was agreed that they would attend an MPs meeting in the county to take these issues further

19 The Chairman is also meeting Rory Stewart MP and Tim Farron MP in Cumbria and will pursue a meeting with John Stevenson MP.

THE CHALLENGES FACING CALC

- 20 The Chief Officer explained that in order to bring about improvements to the service that CALC offers to members, consultation across all the aspects of services delivered was required.
- 21 Members expressed concern about managing expectations as a result of the survey and the difficulty in getting the survey right. The value of engaging outside consultants to assist with this process was also discussed.

It was **agreed** that:

CALC allocates a budget of a maximum of £1,190 to allow the engagement work to move forward. This represents 2 weeks work based on a 35 hour week. It is envisaged this time will be spread over 6 months.

MEETINGS THAT FALL OUTSIDE THE CHIEF OFFICER'S HOURS

- 21 Currently the Chief Officer attends a number of regular meetings that fall outside the hours worked on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. These include:

Cumbria Chief Executives
Monitoring Officers
Executive Cttee
CALC AGM
Parish Forum

- 22 The LDNPA meetings, which take up a large part of a Monday, cause a backlog of work on return.
Currently, the Chief Officer attends these meetings (or catches up work) in her own time and is unremunerated. The options to address this situation are:
- That the Chief Officer does not attend the meetings
 - That the Chief Officer takes time in lieu for attending meetings
 - That the Chief Officer claims hourly rate for additional meetings attended on a monthly basis to be reviewed by the Chairman, and to a total additional cost of no more than £1,689.60 pa.
- 23 Members discussed the issues and recognised the value of CALC's presence at these meetings. The issue of covering the telephone when the Chief Officer or Parish Development Officer are out of the office during their core hours (including due to annual leave or sickness) was also discussed along with wider issues of the capacity of the office to carry out its wide range of duties.

It was **agreed** that:

- a) The attendance of meetings outside core office hours would be remunerated up to a maximum of 88 hours per annum, with a total additional cost to CALC of **£1,689.60**
- b) That these additional hours be agreed by the Chairman on a monthly basis.
- c) That the Chief Officer investigates what the possibilities are for a telephone answering service to cover the phone calls received when the office is unstaffed.

CALC'S LEGAL ROLE

24 At the Executive Committee meeting held on 14th January, members considered an item regarding Above Derwent Parish Council. It was reported that the Council had not been happy about the level of legal support that it had received from both NALC and CALC.

25 At minute 23 of that meeting on 14th January, it was agreed that

- a) CALC has to provide greater clarity to member councils to ensure that they are aware of the extent and nature of the legal support that both organisations can offer.
- b) A form of words be brought back to the next meeting of the CALC Executive to be discussed and agreed.

26 As a result, the following recommendations were made to the Committee:

- That at the next AGM, the Objectives as set out in CALC's Constitution should be amended to remove the word 'protect'
- That the wording on the website which sets out the Benefits of CALC Membership should have the word 'essential' removed
- That the caveat below should be added.
- 'Please be aware that whilst the National Association of Local Councils provides legal advice on a wide range of topics, it cannot act on behalf of individual councils when disputes arise.'

It was **agreed** that all of the changes above be implemented in order to ensure greater clarity to members regarding the extent of CALC and NALC's powers to support individual council's legal requests.

CHIEF OFFICER'S DELEGATED POWERS

27 The Committee discussed the recommendation that the Chief Officer should have delegated powers to spend up to the sum of £250 on the core competences of the business but that any expenditure above this amount should be referred to the Executive Committee for approval.

The recommendation was **agreed**

CHIEF OFFICER AND CHAIRMAN'S EXPENSES

- 28 It was **agreed** that in future that the expenses of the Chief Officer are to be approved by the Chairman and that the Chairman's expenses are in turn approved by the President.

AUTHORISATION OF MANDATE TO CHANGE THE ADDRESS FOR THE CPCA BANK ACCOUNT

- 29 It was **agreed** that the Chief Officer to authorised to the change of address on the CPCA bank statements from the former Parish Liaison Officer's home address to the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Penrith.

ANNUAL PAY INCREASE FOR STAFF

- 30 It was **agreed** that the Chief Officer implement the nationally agreed local government pay increase (Unite, Unison and GMB agreed with the LGA) for 2017-18, of 1% for the 5 members of staff employed by CALC. It is payable from 1st April 2017.

REPORTS FROM DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

- 31 The reports from the District Associations were noted, with the information about B4RN highlighted in the South Lakeland District Association report. It was **agreed** that this was very relevant to many parishes and the information should be used as a basis for an article in the CALC newsletter. The B4RN contacts should also be circulated to all parishes.

The Chairman introduced Veronica Stockdale to members.

- 32 The relevance and effectiveness of the 3 tier meetings across some districts of the county was discussed, highlighting the need for greater relevance to ensure that parish councillors feel it is worth their while attending the meetings.

- 33 The Copeland District Association Chairman felt that meetings in Copeland have been successful although this is helped by having major projects of widespread interest ongoing – NuGen's Moorside project and the National Grid's North West Coast Connections. It was suggested that templates for successful meetings should be shared between districts more.

- 34 The situation in Carlisle was also discussed – again recognising that parishes were not engaging with the tripartite meetings and this was having an impact on the degree of engagement from the principal authorities. The Carlisle Parish Council Association (CPCA) Executive is planning to arrange a meeting open to all Chairmen of Carlisle parishes to seek their views on the issue the outcome of which will be reported back to the Committee in the normal manner.

REPORTS FROM CALC REPRESENTATIVES

35 The Committee received written and verbal reports from the Association's representatives:

Lake District National Park Partnership Meeting Monday 20th March 2017

36 The meeting was held at County Hall, Kendal and was hosted by Cumbria County Council. There were 3 significant reports in the Agenda to be followed by updates from Partners. Because of the interest and many Questions generated, this final part of the Agenda had to be carried over to our next meeting in June.

Items discussed were:

36 An Update from Connecting Cumbria on Super-Fast Broadband in the National Park. Within commercial and other constraints there has been substantial progress but much remains to be done. Many isolated Communities should not be optimistic about receiving a full supply in anything like the near future. People need to indicate that they are willing to subscribe to the service if and when the cabinets arrive in their area. This will indicate a need and we should all encourage the take-up of (or fibre) Broad Band to make more money available for more connections. This important report resulted in a great many questions, some of which were addressed.

37 An overview of the of the infrastructure Recovery Programme following the Floods" presented by Nick Raymond, Senior Manager Infrastructure Recovery, Cumbria County Council.

38 World Heritage Status - "Updates on ICOMOS progress and new communications toolkit." presented by Steve Ratcliffe and Jayne Pugh. Steve reported that the week-long and very intensive visit by Inspectors on behalf of Unesco in early October last year was quite constructive. There have been subsequent contacts since and we are hoping for a positive outcome between 7th to 10th July.

39 Jane Pugh followed with a report on how we should celebrate with events the designation as soon as we are informed in July and concepts of a publicity and advertising Campaign to capitalise on the project. There were many questions raised at the end of this presentation on the possible format and timing. Some members felt that the formal celebrations should be properly planned for early next year.

40 Closing the meeting Lord Clark of Windermere who has so ably Chaired the Partnership for 10 years and guided the World Heritage Site project indicated that the end of this year would be an appropriate time to step down. Appropriate recognition of his valuable service will follow at a later date.

50 Reports from Partners deferred to June Meeting : Community Engagement Framework Principles // SLDC Community Housing Fund // Nurture Lakeland : Visitor Giving // Business Task Force update // Climate Change subgroup // Farming and Brexit.

Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership

51 The Chairman attended this meeting which primarily discussed to continue to work closely with the communities that have been affected by flooding to ensure that they receive the help they still need. He was also concerned that CALC as an organisation is at the heart of their engagement with communities as one of the key partners.

52 Connecting Cumbria The Committee was updated on the fact that cost of putting up commercial 4G masts by EE under the new Emergency Communications Network Agreement in the Lake District National Park is not financially viable therefore the Home office has undertaken to carry out the work. EE will use these masts to put their equipment on but there is doubt whether there will be public use or other networks will be able to share these masts and the question has been put to the Broadband minister Matt Hancock MP, by the Cumbrian Hub Coordinators. The government has set an objective to ensure that the whole of the UK has 4G coverage wherever the “Blue Light” services have access.

53 Connecting Cumbria’s Phase 1 is not quite finished, despite giving access to connection to Superfast broadband 12,000 more premises than initially agreed, a further 661 are still to be connected because of the way the contract was written. The total is currently around 128,000 premises with the ability to be connected in Cumbria.

54 Phase 2 is running concurrently with Phase 1. Phase 2 connections will tend to come in at the end of each phase rather than consistently throughout due to the dependence on other external factors. We must stress the ongoing need to promote take up of the superfast broadband offer. Take up is now at 34.9% but needs to be 40% in order to trigger the release of more funds in a “clawback” agreement with BT to enable more access by the harder to reach residents

Agreed:

- Chief Officer to remind people via the newsletter about signing up to SFBB
- Chief Officer to get the breakdown of take up by division and district for district Chairmen.

CALC PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS TO FEBRUARY 2017

55 The Committee noted the statement of payments and receipts for the period ended 28th April 2017.

CHIEF OFFICER UPDATES

56 The Chief Officer updates were noted.

57 Transparency Fund – it was discussed that the significant increase in the number of parishes in Cumbria now with a website should be taken into account. The Chief Officer was asked to find out from parishes in more detail about their websites and how they are being used and run as this information may prove to be useful in discussions with partner organisations.

58 Lake District National Park Authority – discussion about how effective the feedback to parishes is from the Park Parish reps. Many do attend their district association meetings and feed back.

Agreed:

- to ask the parish reps on the NPA to write a brief report for the CALC Executive
- Invite Mike McKinley to speak at the AGM about his role and the role of parish members on the LDNPA

CALC AGM SPEAKER AND VENUE

- **Agreed** to invite Peter McCall to speak at the AGM in November
- **Agreed** to change the date of the AGM to 18th November 2017
- **Agreed** to consider venues other than Wetheral VH for the AGM

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

60 The Committee was reminded that the on-going closure of local branches of banks in small town is a serious problem which needs to be kept in mind.

61 The CALC Chairman and Vice Chairman were recommended to attend the excellent Chairmanship training put on by CALC. Both agreed that they would attend the course.

Chairman