

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021 | MINUTES

Date: 26 October 2021

Location: Zoom

Present

Cllr Sue Baxter – NALC chair (Worcestershire Association of Local Council), Cllr Keith Stevens (vice-chair finance) (East Sussex Association of Local Councils, Cllr Mike Drew (vice-chair member services) and Ms Kathy Thomas and Ms Deborah White (Avon Association of Local Councils), Cllr Ann Lovesey, Cllr Elizabeth Luder and Ms Robin Thomas (Bedfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils) Ms Carole Burslem, Cllr Paul Harvey and Mr Paul Nicolls (Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils), Ms Penny Bryant, Mr Henry Clark and Cllr Mike Tew (Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr Lillian Burns, Cllr Brian Kerr OBE and Ms Lesley Smetham (Cheshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr Graham Ford, Ms Sarah Mason and Ms Helen Price (Cornwall Association of Local Councils), Mr David Bell, Cllr Allan Blakemore and Mr Stephen Ragg (County Durham Association of Local Councils), Cllr Jonathan Davies (Cumbria Association of Local Councils), Ms Cecilia Harper (Derbyshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr Ken Browse, Cllr David Chalmers and Ms Cara Stobart (Devon Association of Local Councils), Ms Debbie Hollings and Cllr Janet Wallace (Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils), Cllr Peter Astell, Cllr Brian Brooks and Mr Keith Portess (East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr Peter Davey, Cllr John Gili-Ross and Ms Charlene Slade (Essex Association of Local Councils), Cllr Peter Richmond and Ms Alison Robinson (Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils), Cllr Loraine Rappe (Hampshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr Will Jackson (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils), Ms Magdalene Benson, Ms Carina Helmn and Cllr Bill Pryce (Hertfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils), Cllr Bob Blezzard and Mr Dave Hardy (Isle Of Wight Association of Local Councils), Cllr Sarah Barker, Mr Roger House and Cllr Richard Parry (Kent Association of Local Councils), Mr Darren Cranshaw, Mr Phil Orme and Cllr Colin Peacock (Lancashire Association of Local Councils), Ms Ja'Neen Day, Cllr Anthony Hirons, Cllr Ron Simpson and Cllr Tony Howard (Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils), Mr Jeremy Burton, Cllr Susanne Lintern and Ms Adrienne Quinlan (Norfolk Association of Local Councils), Cllr Stuart Bradnam and Cllr Christine Mollard (North Yorkshire Association of Local Councils), Ms Lynn Lavender, Mr Danny Moody and Cllr Mike Scott (Northamptonshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr David Francis, Mr Stephen Rickitt and Cllr Mick Baker

(Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils), Ms Kiera Bentley, Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan and Cllr Malcolm Leeding MBE (Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr David Beechey and Cllr Ray Wickson (Shropshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr Jenny Lawrence, Mr Dave Mitton and Cllr Loretta Whetlor (Somerset Association of Local Councils), Mr Francis Jackson and Cllr Duncan Wright (South Yorkshire Association of Local Councils), Cllr Pat Ansell, Ms Lisa Horriltt and Mr Andrew McRae (Staffordshire Association of Local Councils), Ms Sally Longmate, Cllr William Sargeant and Cllr Mark Valladares (Suffolk Association of Local Councils), Cllr Steve Cosser and Mr Chris Howard (Surrey Association of Local Councils), Ms Bridgette Chandler and Cllr Rosie Weaver BEM (Warwickshire & West Midlands Association of Local Councils), Mr Martin Beaton (West Sussex Association of Local Councils), Cllr Peter Allison, Dr Michael Czwarno, and Mr David Mullen (West Yorkshire Association of Local Councils), Ms Katie Fielding, Cllr John Scragg and Mr Clive Hooper (Worcestershire Association of Local Councils).

Observers

Ms Pauline Allon, Ms Julie Bell, Ms Sue Cooper, Ms Amanda Davis, Ms Denise Deighton, Ms Danielle Frost, Ms Christine Lalley, Ms Bridget Laraway, Ms Josephine Parish, Mr Justin Robinson, Ms Jackie Weaver, and Mr Stuart Rowde

NALC staff

Jonathan Owen (chief executive), Steve Walker (head of finance and administration), Justin Griggs (head of policy and communications), Jane Moore (interim head of member services and solicitor), Claire FitzGerald (administration manager), Rajiv Dudakia (digital communications manager), Olivia Kane (receptionist and administrator), Nick Howell (campaigns intern), Anders Hanson (projects manager), Jessica Lancod-Frost (policy officer), Silvia Nicole (finance and administration officer), and Beverley Brown (finance and administration officer)

1. Election of the chair of AGM

Resolved: Cllr Sue Baxter be elected chair of AGM.

2. Chair's welcome

The chair welcomed all representatives to the meeting.

AGM remembered Cllr Dave Fleming of Durham Association of Local Councils and Cllr Stuart Hulse, a past vice chair of Cheshire Association of Local Councils, who passed away during the year.

3. Apologies received

Douglas Denham St.Pinnock (West Sussex Association of Local Councils) and Cllr Alan Humphries (Worcestershire Association of Local Councils).

4. Presentation by Chris Rapley OBE from University College of London

The chair of AGM welcomed all delegates to the first part of the AGM and welcomed our fantastic guest speaker professor Chris Rapley OBE from University College London.

Climate change is one of NALC's current big policy themes, alongside health and well-being and young people.

A theme that couldn't be any more relevant or important to England's 10,000 local councils, as we strive to build stronger, more resilient, and environmentally sustainable communities.

Just this week in the run up to COP26, NALC published its latest research on climate change, which shows over 50% of respondents have declared a #ClimateEmergency or biodiversity emergency or have a declaration pending. Tree planting, rewilding and transport are the top steps being taken by our councils. How big is the scale of the challenge facing the planet?

And are we right in our view that local councils have an important, and in fact growing, part to play?

Among his many notable roles and distinguished achievements, Professor Rapley has been Director of the Science Museum, Director of the British Antarctic Survey, Chairman of the London Climate Change Partnership and President of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research.

In 2014, he and the playwright Duncan Macmillan wrote the acclaimed play 2071. And more recently he was the Science Consultant on BBC1's 'Climate Change - The Facts' presented by Sir David Attenborough.

His current interests are in the role of climate scientists in delivering value to society and the communication of climate science.

This segment of the meeting was livestreamed on NALC's social media platforms, to see the full click [here](#) along with the questions colleagues asked in the meeting.

5. Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting – 27 October 2020

The chair presented the minutes of the AGM held on 27 October 2020 and sought approval from the AGM.

AGM noted that Cllr Peter Astell of ERNLLCA had not been included in the list of attendees. It was confirmed that the minutes would be updated accordingly.

A vote was put and the minutes were approved by 72/82 of those voting with 10 abstentions.

Resolved: That the minutes of the AGM held on 27 October 2020 be approved.

6. Annual Report and annual accounts

a. Annual Report

The chair of NALC presented the Annual Report to the AGM. She took this opportunity to offer her thanks to Cllr Leeding MBE who was standing down as Oxfordshire representative. Cllr Baxter recalled how she sat next to Cllr Leeding at her first assembly. Our success is as a result your contributions to NALC and to the sector. Cllr Baxter thanked staff at 109 and her final thank you to all present.

Cllr Baxter commented on the time as chair, reflecting with the phrase “together we stand”.

She was extremely proud to become NALC's chair when she was elected, the first female but hopefully not the last. If you have great female councillors ask them to get involved, talent spot.

Lobbying is important part of the role. We have had some great successes such as our success on referendum principles and with the abolition of the audit commission we have set up SAAA saving our councils a lot of money; our work on GDPR has saved the sector millions of pounds and our long-standing campaign work on the toilet tax has saved councils millions of pounds. Use these examples as a springboard for the future to save communities.

An effective standards regime underpins an effective and well-functioning democracy. We were successful in influencing the committee on standards in public life enquiry on the need to strengthen the regime. However, we are

disappointed that the government has not responded despite our continued lobbying.

Our councils are ambitious and going beyond their tradition role. She cited examples of councils talking initiatives. The chair was proud to see our report with the Alzheimer's Society on building dementia friendly communities being presented to the PM in the gardens of Downing Street.

We recently published our latest report on what councils can do to prevent climate change.

Recognising and celebrating the work of councils is important and we are thrilled to support the star councils award.

Hosting a royal visit was a highlight during Cllr Baxter's time as NALC chair, when the Princess Royal, Princess Anne, attended the 2019 NALC annual conference in Milton Keynes.

Cllr Baxter reflected that the previous chairs have all contributed to make NALC great and that over her term of office, she worked hard to strengthen the relationship between NALC and county associations. During the pandemic the greater use of Zoom has enable more people to engage in meetings.

As for the future, we must stand together, and these would be her priorities:

- Lobbying – by all of us all the time with your MPs. Everybody is fundamental to successful lobbying. Ministers listen to their MPs. Tell them about the good work we do and tell them about the issues you face, which they will take up on your behalf. We must lobby together to get the change we want to see.
- The second challenge is planning and local government reform. We have a part to play and a responsibility to current and future generations to build sustainable communities. Communities must be at the heart of the planning system. We must work together to ensure neighbourhood plans are strengthened and better and protected.

What do we want from reform? Are we prepared to change to get what we want?

Levelling up is taking shape. Cllr Baxter met Neil O'Brien MP recently. His view is empowering leaders and communities, boosting living standards, improve public services and restoring local pride. Our sector has a huge part to play in this. The government has an opportunity to help.

We need investment and support to build our capacity. We must invest in ourselves by training and improvement. We need to have more investment to

improve. We need to invest in our partners. We must invest in our communities, use the precept, and keep people and place at our heart.

We must stand together to secure the investment we need.

Good governance is important. We published a statement to promote civility and respect in public life. This project is supported by NALC and SLCC and we are working to secure further investment. This must stay at the top of our agenda.

It is vital we stand together to meet all these challenges, we must be ambitious, get new people involved, invest in ourselves and be confident in the future.

Member services

Cllr Drew provided an update on member services staffing and gave thanks to NALC staff.

- Charlotte Eisenhart, head of members services is on maternity leave. As a result, Jane Moore is acting head of member services in addition to role as legal services manager and Anders Hanson joined as projects manager in February.
- Linda Hammond left NALC in May with Lisa Etchell joining in August as projects officer.
- In legal, Gurvynda Paddan-White is on maternity leave. The team is covering this service within existing resources.
- KPIs have remained at the same level despite the current arrangements and resourcing.

Cllr Drew also provided AGM with an update on some of the recent work of member services including:

- Website - a project plan is in place to ensure a new website is launched next year.
- Local Council Award Scheme - two rounds of panels have been completed, and the third one is currently underway with results due in January.
- E-learning - the pilot has been completed and plans are being drawn up for how this will develop.
- Being an interested party in the High Court virtual meetings proceedings - this raised the profile of NALC local government sector colleagues.
- Legal Covid and meetings guidance issued.

A vote was put and the Annual Report was approved by 80/82 of those who voted with two abstentions.

Resolved (1) That the Annual Report for 2020/21 be received and approved.

b. Annual accounts

Cllr Stevens presented the annual accounts for 2020/21 to the AGM with an indicative budget for the next three years.

Cllr Davey updated AGM on progress with the review of governance documents. He also thanked Steve Walker, the head of finance and administration for his hard work and support over the past year.

A vote was put, and the annual accounts were approved by 81/83 of those who voted with two abstentions.

Resolved: That the audited annual accounts for 2020/21 be received.

7. Subscriptions to NALC

AGM considered the recommendation by National Assembly on 16 September 2021 to increase the affiliation fee for 2022/23 to 7.49 pence per elector with a cap of £1,920 for larger councils.

Cllr Blezzard said that he was mandated to support no increase to the affiliation fee for this year. He argued that it would send the wrong message to increase the fee when councils are having to cope with decreased budgets.

Cllrs Valladares, Peacock, Johnson, and Parry all supported the increase outlining that it would be wrong to freeze the fee, that NALC already provides members with a value for money service and a 1% increase is below inflation which is in effect a decrease.

After a vote, 72 voting in favour, nine against and two abstentions, it was resolved that the affiliation fee for 2022/23 be increased to 7.49 pence per elector with a cap of £1,920 for larger councils.

Resolved (1): That the affiliation fee for 2022/23 be increased by 1.9% to 7.49 pence per elector with a cap of £1,920 for larger councils.

Resolved (2): That the budget for the years 2022/25 be received.

8. Motions to AGM

8.1. Payment schedule of affiliation fee payments to NALC.

The Finance and Scrutiny Committee recommended a change in clause C of the Subscriptions section constitution in-order to improve the Association's cash

flow at the start of the year. Effectively the first payment to be made on or before 31 May, in place of 30 June.

Change:

All county association subscriptions to NALC to be made in two instalments. The first payment on or before 30 June calculated at 80% of the total using the previous year's membership figure as a base with a balancing sum paid on or before the last day of September using figures supplied to NALC by 31 August at the latest for the current year. The failure of a County Association to pay by these dates may make the County Association no longer able to access services, provided on behalf of its member councils. Withdrawal of NALC services to a county association in these circumstances will be subject to a decision of Assembly.

To:

All county association subscriptions to NALC to be made in two instalments. The first payment on or before 31 May calculated at 80% of the total using the previous year's membership figure as a base with a balancing sum paid on or before the last day of September using figures supplied to NALC by 31 August at the latest for the current year. The failure of a county association to pay by these dates may make the county association no longer able to access services, provided on behalf of its member councils. Withdrawal of NALC to a county association in these circumstances will be subject to a decision of Assembly”.

A vote was put, and the motion was defeated by 60 to 17 with six abstentions.

The chair suggested that the Finance and Scrutiny Committee review the whole subscription process over the next year and put a new motion to the next AGM.

Resolved: That the motion be not approved.

8.2. Use of the word chair

It is proposed that the term chairman in the NALC constitution is replaced with the gender-neutral term chair.

A vote was put, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Resolved: That the motion be approved.

8.3. Appointment of parliamentary vice-presidents

It is proposed that AGM approves the appointment of an unspecified number of parliamentary vice-presidents to enhance the Association's influence. "That the constitution be altered with the addition of a new little c under honorary officers, p10 - "That in addition NALC appoints parliamentary vice-presidents to further the sector's influence in Parliament".

A vote was put and the motion was unanimously approved

Resolved: That the motion be approved.

9. Appointments

9.1. Election of President

It was proposed that Baroness Scott of Needham Market be elected as president of NALC.

A vote was put and the motion was unanimously approved.

Resolved: That the motion be approved.

9.2. Election of Working Vice Presidents

Mike Drew proposed It was proposed that NALC appoints the following vice presidents of NALC, Cllr Sue Baxter and another to be delegated to National Assembly

A vote was put, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Resolved: That the motion be approved.

9.3. Election of parliamentary vice-presidents

It was proposed that the follow be elected as parliamentary vice-presidents of NALC.

- Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle
- Lord Lytton
- Lord O'Shaughnessy
- Andrew Gwynne MP

A vote was put, and the motion was unanimously approved

Resolved: That the motion be approved.

9.4. Appointment of auditor

AGM was invited to agree to extend Milton Avis's contract for 2022/23.

A vote was put, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Resolved: That the motion be approved.

10. Next Meeting

Resolved: That the date and location of the next Annual General Meeting will be confirmed shortly.

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