Northumberland Association of Local Councils

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held at 5:30pm on Thursday 8th October 2026
County hall, Morpeth. Northumberland NE61 2EF.

Present:
Cllrs D Hughes, D Francis, J Rowell, H Shaw, C Seymour, C Connoly, A Hinchcliffe, L Dunn, C Miller, A Reynolds, J Sutton, S Hill, J Henderson, S Furguson. G Turner, Andy Dean (CAN) and 8 other Cllrs who did not sign in.
Graeme Popay (Chief Officer)

1: Welcome and apologies for absence

The Vice President Cllr David Francis welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were given from 7 members including President David Woodard and Vice President Alex Wallace

Apologies were also received from:

- Kim Guiness Mayor NorthEast Combined Authority
- County Cllr Glen Sanderson
- Dr H Patterson COE NCC

2: Minutes of the 2025 AGM

The minutes of the 2025 AGM had been previously approved at the County Committee meeting on 4th December 2025

3: Matters arising

None

4: Annual Report and Accounts 2025 - 2026

The Chair Cllr Hughes read through his report, reflecting on the last 12 months highlighting the work detailed in the Annual Report of Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC), He thanked members for their attendance at the County Committee meetings and thanked the County Council for it continued support by providing a free meeting space at County Hall and for accommodating this AGM at the Town and Parish Council County

Conference, he added that the spring meeting of the County Committee would be at the spring conference and if today was a success we would consider holding next year's AGM at the conference too.
He thanked Andy Dean and the officers at CAN for their continued support.

The report was approved.

4.1 The Accounts for 2025-2026

Cllr Francis referred members to the accounts in the annual report He thanked Margaret Tweddell for her continued hard work in keeping and presenting the financial information in such good order and thanked Gillian Turner our new auditor.
Cllr Hughes invited questions from members, there were none.

5: Finance – County membership fee for 2027-28

The County Association annual membership fee
At a meeting of the Executive Committee on 4th July 2026 a paper was considered and the following three recommendations to the AGM were unanimously agreed.

Recommendation 1 - A flat rate contribution paid by each member council, currently £36.18 per annum, be reduced to £25.00. This is expected to raise a total of £3,675.00.

Recommendation 1 was approved

Recommendation 2 - The contribution using the February 2026 Council Tax Base, currently 30.75p per £, be reduced to 27.5p per £. This is expected to raise £31,629.95. Actual fees charged will be based Council Tax Base published in February 2027

Recommendation 2 was approved

Recommendation 3 - £14,625.59, from the County Association's reserves be set aside for the specifically for provision of free training for the period ending 31st March 2028. At the October meeting of the Executive Committee a decision will be made on the method of allocation of this funding to each member council.
On the recommendation of the County Committee, the Meeting resolved that this Association had a zero increase to the County portion of the membership fee. The National affiliation fees for 2026/27 is 8.6 pence per elector (capped at £2,216 for the largest councils).

Recommendation 3 was approved

6: Honorary Officers

The following were elected as the Honorary Officers:

President – David Woodard

Vice Presidents – David Francis Mike Wood and Alex Wallace

Treasurer – Gillian Turner

Auditor – Vacant

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7: Membership of the County Committee

As per the 2025 AGM, item 7, it was agreed, that all members would remain on the committee until the next local elections in 2029 or until replaced locally.

Noted

8: The County Constitution

The County Constitution had been amended and adopted at the 2025 AGM – no further changes were recommended.

Noted.

9: Guest Speaker

Cllr David Francis welcomed Jonathan Owen. National Association of Local Councils Chief Executive. Jonathan reported that NALC's continued to work to ensure that parish and town councils are recognised as an essential part of local democracy.

Jonathan reported on:

- Continuing to lobby government to recognise the importance of neighbourhood-level democracy.
- Making the case for parish and town councils to have a meaningful role in devolution and local government reorganisation.
- Pressing for councils to be represented in the decision-making structures strategic and mayoral authorities.
- Promoting the importance of local councils in community leadership, neighbourhood services and place-making.
- Building relationships with ministers, MPs, peers and national organisations.
- NORA the new AI tool on the National Website
- His retirement and the search for a new COE

Cllr David Hughes thanked Jonathan for coming to Northumberland and for his many years of service to the sector.

10: Any other urgent business

The Chair Cllr Hughes reported that:

- The Charter between Northumberland County Council and NALC was under review.

The meeting closed at 6:10pm

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