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**MINUTES OF MEMBERS' MEETING, WEDNESDAY 21 MAY 2025**  
**Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, The Braid, Ballymena**

**ATTENDEES**

**Aldermen (in person)**

Ald Alan McDowell  
Ald Hazel Legge

Ald Stephen Moutray

Ald Derek Hussey

**Councillors (in person)**

Cllr Julie Gilmour  
Cllr Fergal Donnelly  
Cllr Rodney Quigley

Cllr WJ Webb MBE  
Cllr Thomas Beckett

Cllr Joe Boyle  
Cllr Gary Hynds

**Aldermen & Councillors (via Teams)**

Ald John Smyth  
Cllr Victor Warrington

Cllr Errol Thompson  
Cllr Trevor Wilson

Cllr Gretta Thompson

**APOLOGIES**

**Councillors**

Cllr Alison Bennington  
Cllr Christine McFlynn

Cllr Roy Crawford

Cllr Terry Andrews

The Chairman opened the meeting by wishing a very Happy Birthday to Cllr Julie Gilmour and councillors sang a chorus of 'Happy Birthday' in her honour.

Members were reminded that this meeting had been arranged by the late Ald Beth Adger MBE, to welcome members during her year as Mayor and thanked Mid & East Antrim Council for honouring that commitment. Members observed a minute's silence in her memory.

**1. Welcome**

Ald Alan McDowell welcomed those members attending both in-person and remotely to the meeting in The Braid at Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies had been received in advance of the meeting and additional ones were also noted from the floor.

**3. Minutes of last Meeting held on 19 March 2025**

The Chair took members through the minutes of the previous meeting and their approval was proposed by Ald Derek Hussey and seconded by Cllr Julie Gilmour

### 4. Treasurers Report

Cllr Billy Webb circulated and shared on screen the up to date accounts and outlined the income, expenditure and closing balance, noting that 5 councils had already paid their 2025/26 fees in addition to Antrim & Newtownabbey who had paid 4 years in advance at the beginning of the current mandate. He sought support from Members to encourage prompt payment was made by their councils

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Cllr Joe Boyle and seconded by Cllr Julie Gilmour.

### 5. Secretary's Report

The Secretary added his own tribute to those already paid to the late Ald Beth Adger noting that the impact of her loss would be felt by many for some time.

Cllr Boyle reported on a very successful and positive meeting which had been held with LAMA (Local Authority Members Association) – the NAC equivalent body in the South of Ireland, the two bodies having already met on several occasions in recent years. It was agreed that both organisations had much to learn from each other and that they would continue to meet for an exchange of views going forward.

The Secretary advised that following the release of the Minister's decision on the Roles & Responsibilities Working Group report, he had provided a copy to AILG (Association of Irish Local Government) and was awaiting their comments. Cllr Boyle expressed his disappointment that after a total of 8 years since the review had begun, culminating in the recent report, he would have hoped for a more favourable outcome. He also reported that Minister Lyons to date has not granted NAC a meeting but he will continue to be pressed on this.

Cllr Boyle concluded by noting the shake-up at the recent local government elections in England. He advised that the General Secretary of NAC-UK had lost his seat but will remain in post as a paid employee.

### 6. UPDATE FROM NATIONAL VICE-CHAIR

Ald Derek Hussey advised that he wished to be associated with the Secretary's opening remarks regarding Ald Beth Adger and noted that her loss was also felt nationally as she had held the post of National President until November 2024.

He had attended the NAC-UK Conference in Scarborough which had dealt with Finance although he felt that it was not necessarily relevant to Northern Ireland. Ald Hussey advised that he was promoting Northern Ireland as a potential location for a future NAC conference. This was welcomed by Members, with the Chair promoting the topic of the Green Economy and advising that the recently produced booklet would be distributed to all councillors ASAP.

### 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman took the opportunity to update members on the first extremely successful Enterprise Training Workshop held in the Ulster Bank HQ on 25 April, with the second workshop being held in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area on 30 May in North-West Regional College emphasising the importance of keeping the momentum going.

The Secretary gave a detailed account of the timeline – as he understood it to be, regarding the Roles & Responsibilities paper. In his opinion there were a number of questions to be asked regarding the process, including how and when this had been delivered to the Executive of the NI Assembly. Having sat on the panel for its duration from January 2024 until the delivery of the recommendations on 16 August 2024 and having heard their input agreed at all levels, the decision was unexpected and gut-wrenching.

The floor was opened to all members and many spoke to express their disappointment and felt that the NAC would be justified in lodging an FoI request seeking answers on a number of issues. They also felt disrespected.

It was agreed that the Secretary would lodge the aforementioned Freedom of Information request and also seek an urgent meeting with the Minister. Some members cautioned that the issue should be dealt with sensitively and ensure that the focus is not on the remuneration but on the process, the value placed on councillors and equality across councils. This was agreed.

On the issue of future Member Meetings, it was agreed to re-issue an invitation to the Local Government Ombudsman to attend, noting that visits had been made to individual councils

The meeting closed at 12.45pm