



MINUTES OF MEMBERS' MEETING, WEDNESDAY 27 March 2024
Ards and North Down Borough Council

ATTENDEES

Aldermen

Ald Hazel Legge
Ald Beth Adger MBE

Ald Derek Hussey
Ald Stephen Moutray

Ald Billy Webb

Councillors

Cllr Alison Bennington
Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Joe Boyle
Cllr Gary Hynds

Cllr Julie Gilmour
Cllr Eugene McConnell

APOLOGIES

Aldermen

Ald Alan McDowell

Councillors

Cllr Gordon Kennedy
Cllr Gary Wilkinson
Cllr Cara McShane
Cllr Thomas Beckett
Cllr Keith Kerrigan

Cllr Sam Nelson
Cllr Trevor Wilson
Cllr Alan Barr
Cllr Gretta Thompson

Cllr Roy Crawford
Cllr Victor Warrington
Cllr Lucille O'Hagan
Cllr Christine Creighton

1. Welcome

Cllr Joe Boyle welcomed Members to the meeting in Bangor City Hall and noted an apology from Ald Alan McDowell, NAC-NI Chair.

In the Chairman's absence, and that of the Senior Vice-Chair, the Junior Vice-Chair, Ald Hazel Legge, chaired the meeting

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 17 January 2024

The Chair took members through the minutes of the previous meeting and their approval was proposed by Ald Stephen Moutray and seconded by Cllr Alison Bennington.

4. Treasurers Report

Ald Billy Webb circulated a copy of the most up to date accounts to those present and highlighted the financial situation, noting that invoices were due to go out to councils which should help.

In response to a question from Cllr Eugene McConnell, the Treasurer advised that the use of Honeycomb Recruitment and the costs of running at Sketrick House had been a drain on resources but the move to Bradford Court etc should help to stabilise this.

Cllr Bennington asked what level of reserve was required and was advised that this was 6-9 months.

Ald Webb also reported that the situation regarding the online banking arrangements seemed finally to be moving in the right direction and thanked Ald Legge and Kate Wilson for their support and assistance with this.

This report was proposed by Cllr Terry Andrews and seconded by Ald Derek Hussey.

5. Secretary's Report

Cllr Boyle expressed disappointment at the low turnout noting that ways of addressing this may have to be discussed in the future.

Councillors Review

The Secretary advised that the Roles & Responsibilities Panel was now referred to as a 'Working Group'. The first meeting had been held on 9 January and approximately 15-17 meetings had taken place since then with the NAC having been represented at all of them. He reported that meetings were being arranged with each council on request and encouraged members to ask for this in their own areas. Full feedback was always provided to the panel.

Cllr Boyle wished to place on record the input from the NAC Executive Committee at 2 recent meetings which had provided Maynard Mawhinney with good insight into the daily work of councillors. Cllr Boyle fed back that the review was about more than remuneration and that it may need to be extended noting that it would be better to do it right than to rush it through.

He was also pleased that the response to the recent survey had risen from around 20% in the early stages to over 60% at the closing date. Alison Allen and her staff were thanked for their assistance in promoting this.

Cllr Bennington welcomed the response and asked if a breakdown by council area might be available.

An extensive discussion took place on various aspects of this project and Cllr McConnell asked that the commitment of Cllr Boyle be placed on record, acknowledging his work to date.

In response to a query regarding Ald McDowell's recent paper, it was confirmed that it had been forwarded to the panel today (i.e. 27/3/24)

NAC MEMBERS' MEETING MINUTES

Members discussed participation at Party level and agreed that it was important for all parties – especially Local Government Spokespersons – and all councils to have an input. Members agreed that Party information should be forwarded to Cllr Boyle in order that this could be progressed without delay. Members were also notified that the panel/working group had reached out to the smaller groups such as TUV, PBP, Green etc as well as the independents.

Information was also provided on other aspects of considerations from the Scottish and Irish reviews.

AOB

To encourage attendance, Ald Billy Webb suggested that the Member's Meetings may benefit by moving to a quarterly cycle. It was agreed that this would be placed on the agenda of a future Executive Committee meeting.

Closing remarks

In closing, Cllr Joe Boyle expressed his thanks to Cllr Alison Bennington and Ald Hazel Legge for their assistance by 'stepping in to the breach' following the departure of the temporary Admin Assistant. He advised that he was hopeful of this situation being resolved in the near future.

Ald Legge closed the meeting by thanking those present for attending and thanking Cllr Boyle for his kind words.

Members were advised that the next Executive Committee meeting would be held on Monday 8 April in Bradford Court and that the next Member's Meeting would be in Craigavon Civic Centre in the ABC Council area on Wednesday 15 May 2024.

Decisions/Actions Summary	By
Invite the Ombudsman to a future meeting	Cllr Boyle
Review figure to be provided by Council area	Cllr Boyle
Names and contact details of Party LG Spokespersons to be forwarded to Cllr Boyle	ALL
Cycle of Member Meetings (and attendance) to be discussed at Executive Committee Meeting	EC