

YORKSHIRE LOCAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Executive Board of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations held at the Bridge Hotel, Walshford, Wetherby at 10.30am on Saturday, 15 October 2016.

PRESENT

Mr M Elsmore (President), Mr I Strong (Vice President), Cllr S Fawcett (Vice-chairman) and (Harrogate Branch), Cllr P Whitaker and Cllr B Hawkins (Deputy) (Craven Branch), Cllr D Bradnam and Cllr F Roberts (Hambleton Branch), Cllr R Lynn (Harrogate Branch), Cllr M Czwaro and Cllr N Fawcett (Leeds Branch), Cllr W Delf and Cllr I Threlfall (Richmondshire Branch), Cllr G Stilwell and Cllr P Reeve (Ryedale Branch), Cllr R Walker and Cllr J Preston (Scarborough Branch), Cllr J Strelczenie and Cllr A Thomas (Selby Branch), Cllr R M Greenwood and Cllr P Allison (South Pennine Branch), Cllr F Jackson, Cllr D Rowley, Cllr D Liddell and Cllr S Thornton (South Yorkshire Branch), Cllr L Harrison (Wakefield Branch), Cllr S Harrison and Cllr P H F Powell (York Branch).

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs S Spence (Chief Officer), Mr C Pilkington (Deputy Chief Officer) and N Moorcroft (Local Councils Officer)

APOLOGIES

The following representatives had tendered their apologies in advance of the meeting:

Cllr Dr J Dunford (Chairman) and (South Pennine Branch), Cllr D Wright (Vice-chairman) and (South Yorkshire Branch), Cllr P Baker (Craven Branch), Cllr R A Jones and Cllr A V Scholes (South Yorkshire Branch), Cllr P Jordan and Cllr T Saunders (Wakefield Branch).

Councillor S Fawcett chaired the meeting in the absence of Councillor J Dunford.

39/16 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor B Hawkins (Craven Branch) to her first meeting of the Joint Executive Board.

The Chairman reported the passing away of Councillor John Newsome who had represented the Wakefield Branch on the Executive Board, Councillor Harold Mills who had represented the Wakefield Branch on the Board some years ago but whose contribution to YLCA had been excellent and also to Gareth Roberts, who had worked for YLCA jointly with ERNLLCA in the creation of parishes project. The Board paid its respect to these three valued contributors to the work of YLCA by holding a minute's silence in their memory.

40/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

41/16 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President gave a brief report on his activities since the meeting in July. He had represented YLCA at Yorkshire Day and attending a meeting of the newly formed, Bingley Town Council to welcome it into membership of YLCA.

42/16 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As the Chairman was absent no report was received.

43/16 WORK OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

The Deputy Chief Officer spoke in relation to a written report on the work of the Associations since the last Joint Executive Board Meeting. He highlighted the number of written and telephone casework advice requests received and dealt with by the office in that time, including a comparison with the figures from the same period in the previous year which displayed a small decrease in the relevant numbers. Members heard that the Audit and Employment Panels, and Finance and General Purposes Meeting had been held in September and that the summer round of Branch meetings had been serviced by staff members.

Two editions of White Rose Update have been produced and circulated to members along with a variety of e-mails to member councils on assorted topics.

The Associations have also continued to promote the Digital Transparency Fund to those parish councils eligible to apply for funding from it and Yorkshire has the highest number of councils to have successfully drawn down funding. YLCA have been represented at a meeting of the Transparency Fund Board.

Since the July Board meeting, the Associations have delivered 18 different training courses of topics such as workplace pensions, employment law, finance, induction for new clerks and the basic introductory course for new parish and town councillors. A Local Councils Award Scheme training event was also arranged for those involved with assessing applications. Much work also went into planning the proposed conference at Scarborough from 28 October to 30 October and a strong programme was prepared but the conference has now been cancelled due to a lack of interest.

Work to progress the Internal Audit Service of the Associations is taking place and we internal auditors are now being recruited so that they can be made available to member councils in due course.

The Associations have also been represented at Yorkshire Day, various committee meetings of the National Association of Local Councils and a meeting of the Northern Group of county associations. The Associations have also participated in a NALC Devolution Task & Finish Group conference call, a NALC Legal User Group meeting and both Cilca Operations Group and tutors' meetings.

Nationally the priority for the National Association of Local Councils is making sure that the Government does not introduce a referendum requirement on parishes proposing to raise their precepts. He explained the Government's current consultation document is proposing placing a requirement on parish and town councils with a Band D precept higher than that of the lowest charging district council for 2016/17 (£75.46), and which have a total precept for 2016/17 of at least £500,000, while taking account of transfers of responsibilities. It was confirmed that YLCA has circulated notice of this consultation in the White Rose Update newsletter and will be sending out further information to member councils encouraging them to respond to the consultation to oppose any such requirement being imposed.

Issue raised by Leeds Branch

RESOLVED

That the YLCA obtain information related to the percentage turn out required for a referendum on the abolition or creation of a parish/town council.

The Chairman thanked staff for their continued contribution to YLCA.

44/16 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2016, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

45/16 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Chief Officer informed members that a gavel had been obtained from a related source and that the cost amounted to cost of postage to York House.

46/16 FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report to 30 September 2016

The Chief Officer presented financial report to 30 September 2016. She specifically reported that subscriptions had increased slightly and that the uptake on training courses had resulted in the net income being substantially higher than the figure expected. On the expenditure side, she explained that bookings for YLCA Conference had been well below that expected and subsequently a decision was made to cancel at a date which reduced the financial risk to YLCA.

Councillor R Greenwood gave his support to the Chief Officer's decision to cancel the YLCA Conference.

Membership subscriptions 2017/18 and to agree a budget for financial year 2017/18

RESOLVED

That the budget for 2017/18 (as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee) be approved.

That the element of membership fees will remain static for financial year 2017/18. That the full NALC pence per elector of 6.73p is applied to membership fees for the next financial year. Cllr Greenwood reminded the Board that YLCA had heavily subsidised member councils in the current financial year following a serious hike in the NALC fees; however it was felt that the Associations could not continue with a subsidy, particularly as it was proposing not to increase its own element of the fee.

Bank reconciliation to 30 September 2016

RESOLVED

That the bank reconciliation statement to 30 September 2016 is received.

47/16 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 September 2016 be endorsed.

Matters recommended for endorsement from the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

That the YLCA advice giving policy is amended to help ensure that the advice reaches the council as intended

RESOLVED

That the YLCA advice giving policy is amended to permit the Chief Officer to send advice requested for a member council to be sent to the Chairman of the Council in addition to the Clerk, where the officer believes that this is a sensible action to take.

Additional provision to the YLCA Complaints Policy

RESOLVED

That a minor addition is agreed, compelling complainants to put their complaints to writing in the first instance.

48/16 EMPLOYMENT PANEL

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Employment Panel held on 7 September 2016 be endorsed.

Matters recommended for endorsement from the Employment Panel

To receive expressions of interest for Employment Panel membership

RESOLVED

That Councillor M Czwarno is appointed to the YLCA Employment Panel.

Line management of the Chief Officer to be undertaken by the Chairman of the Employment Panel

RESOLVED

That the Chairman of the Employment Panel undertakes the role of line manager to the Chief Officer.

To appoint a deputy line manager for the Chief Officer

RESOLVED

That the Chairman of the Joint Executive Board undertakes the role of deputy line manager to the Chief Officer.

To adopt a revised policy for the management of staff grievance and disciplinary issues

RESOLVED

That a revised policy for the management of staff grievance and disciplinary issues be adopted.

49/16 AUDIT PANEL

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Audit Panel held 7 September 2016 be endorsed.

50/16 INTERNAL AUDIT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

The Deputy Chief officer confirmed information given previously in the meeting that internal auditors are currently being recruited.

51/16 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

To receive reports from the recent NALC meetings

No meetings had been attended by representatives.

Minutes of a joint Northern Group/NALC meeting on 20 July 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of a joint Northern Group/NALC meeting on 20 July 2016 be received.

To check that the nine representatives to NALC conference are still able to attend and to appoint deputies if necessary

It was noted that the nine representatives previously agreed remain available to attend NALC Conference and AGM.

Review of Direct Access Scheme as it applies to Yorkshire parishes

The Chief Officer reported that of the 30 councils recommended for Direct Access Scheme only two councils have used the service. She explained that the Associations had not experienced any major issues with the Scheme and that it would be acceptable to continue with the status quo if the Board wished to do so.

RESOLVED

That provision of this service to the 30 member councils with the highest electorates is continued and reviewed in October 2017.

YLCA representative at the NALC Changing Places Conference on 30 November 2016

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Liddell attends the Conference to represent YLCA.

52/16 TRAINING UPDATE AND CONFERENCE UPDATE

YLCA training programme and three-day conference – 28 October to 30 October

The Chief Officer had nothing further to add to conference item as such had been discussed during items of business earlier on the agenda. The Chief Officer outlined the current training programme to the end of 2016. Training events/workshops on Planning will be arranged for early 2017 and further evaluation of feedback forms will help identify training needs of individual councillors for the forthcoming year.

Report on the work of the YHRTP

The Deputy Chief Officer reported that the Regional Training Partnership had not met.

53/16 Local Council Award Scheme

The Chief Officer reported on councils that had recently achieved the LCAS. She also reported that applications continued to take longer to assess than the two months given by NALC due to pressures of other and more important YLCA work. She also reported on a training event in September for LCAS assessors which had been led by Charlotte Eisenhart from NALC.

54/16 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Yorkshire in Bloom (Cllr S Fawcett)

Members received a verbal report which highlighted a decline in the number of entries received (due to cost), the Regional Awards ceremony held at York Race Course and the National Awards ceremony which took place on the evening of Friday 14 October.

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (Cllr N Fawcett)

A verbal report highlighted the organisation's restructure and the next regional meeting to be held in November in Eland, Leeds.

Both councillors were thanked for the ongoing contributions to these external bodies and for their reports.

55/16 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2017

RESOLVED

That the meetings of the YLCA Joint Executive Board in 2017 will be held on Saturday 14 January, Saturday 22 April, Saturday 17 July and Saturday 14 October

Chairman..... Date