

Carlisle Parish Councils Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8th November 2017

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

Mike Higginbotham (Vice Chairman) welcomed all those present to the CPCA AGM 2017 and reported that he would be Chairing the meeting. Apologies had been received from John Harper, William Bundred and Sonia Hutchinson.

2. Minutes of the last AGM held on 24th October 2016

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

None reported.

4. Chairman's Report

Craig Nicholson presented the CPCA Chairman's report, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

It has been a very challenging year for the CPCA. Claire Rankin resigned from her post at CALC and a replacement had been sought but unfortunately the post holder resigned in May due to health issues. Sonia Hutchinson took over the post last month. Dates for CPCA meetings had been set and then cancelled throughout the year. A meeting was held on 21st March 2017 where it was decided that two Tri-partite meetings per year were not being effective due to low attendance by Parish Councils and all three tiers were facing budget pressures. Suggested ways forward were to be pooled and sent to Parishes for consideration.

Due to other commitments, Craig has had less time to devote to the Chair's post and apologised for not achieving what was hoped from the last AGM meeting. However, he is still willing to assist the CPCA wherever possible. Mike Higginbotham thanked Craig for all his hard work.

5. Treasurer's Report

Samantha Bagshaw circulated the Treasurer's report to all present. There is £627 in the account which was a grant from Carlisle City Council for digital projectors.

The CPCA bank statements are still being delivered to Claire Rankin's home address which needs to be changed. Mike Higginbotham asked all present if the bank account should be amalgamated with CALC and it was agreed that it

should remain separate. It was also agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair and Ronnie Auld are to continue as signatories. Samantha is to contact Ronnie to ask if he still wants to be a signatory.

6. Election of Officers

Craig Nicholson, Stanwix Rural PC nominated Mike Higginbotham, Wetheral PC for the position of Chair. This was seconded by Bryan Craig, Dalston PC. Mike was duly elected.

Mike Higginbotham, Wetheral PC asked all present if anyone was interested in the position of Vice Chair. Craig Nicholson was nominated and this was seconded by Keith McIntosh, Cummersdale PC. Craig was duly elected and said that he will try and help as much as he can amongst his other commitments.

7. Election of Representatives to the CPCA Executive Committee

The members of the CPCA Executive Committee were duly elected. The members are Craig Nicholson, Ronnie Auld, William Little, Bryan Craig, Keith McIntosh, Mike Ridley and Mike Higginbotham. William Bundred and David Moorat are possible members.

8. Election of Representatives to the CALC Executive

Mike Higginbotham, Wetheral PC and Bryan Craig, Dalston PC were elected as representatives on the CALC Executive Committee.

9. Transparency Code compliance update – Samantha Bagshaw

Samantha reported that she is attending all District Association meetings regarding Transparency Code compliance which applies to all Parish Councils with an annual turnover of under £25,000 per year. Grants will still be available to Parish Councils until 31st March 2018.

Due to the abolition of the Audit Commission, all Parish Council financial information needs to be displayed on Parish Council websites or on an alternative website where it can be viewed. Samantha warned that if all information is not displayed on websites, members of the public could challenge the Parish Council which could incur costs. Also, the DCLG is doing spot checks via NALC. Fines could be imposed in the future.

Parish Councils still require an Internal Auditor and ideally in the future, it would be helpful if Auditors were trained to give guidance on what is required on websites.

Sonia Hutchinson is to contact William Little regarding appointing an Internal Auditor.

The DCLG are encouraging all Parish Councils to have their own laptops and scanners so that if/when another Clerk takes over the post they inherit the equipment from the previous Clerk rather than using their own. This is recommended for Freedom of Information and Data Protection purposes. Parish Councils are also encouraged to claim for the Clerk's extra hours on Transparency work which can be claimed back to April 2015.

Samantha asked all present to spread the word to other Parish Councils that funding is still available. There is a list of what material is required to be displayed on websites which is available from CALC which can also be viewed via a link from the front page on the CALC website <http://www.calc.org.uk/> A copy of the Application Thresholds list is also available from CALC via email office@calc.org.uk Copies of these documents were available for all present to take away.

Samantha is waiting for clarification from NALC regarding the exemption certificate and will send out the details once it is received.

If anyone has any questions regarding Transparency, please contact the CALC office on 01768 812663 or office@calc.org.uk

10. Devolution of Services – Samantha Bagshaw

Mike and Samantha have met with Chief Executive, Jason Gooding (Carlisle City Council) and reported that Carlisle City Council are planning greater engagement on how services are delivered between Carlisle City Council and Parishes. If Parishes would like to take ownership of an asset from Carlisle City Council, they are willing to listen to proposals. Carlisle City Council are planning on keeping services in-house. Another meeting with Jason is planned for next week to discuss further.

Eden District Council are rolling out devolution of assets, particularly street lighting to Parish Councils. They are offering a 100% budget for maintenance for the first year, 75% the second year, 50% the third year and 25% the fourth year. After that, Parish Councils are expected to take on full ownership of street lights. If they don't take ownership of them the lights will be taken down when they fail or after the four years.

There followed a presentation by David Moorat, Brampton Parish Council regarding the public toilets in Brampton where the entrance door has a padlock on it, there is fungus on the ceiling, dirt on the walls, a ceiling light is not working and there is a broken lock on a cubicle door. There are approximately 13 toilets when only 4 are really necessary.

Carlisle City Council arrange for a Cleaner to attend to the toilets 5¼ hours per week which requires the Cleaner to travel in a van from Carlisle to Brampton. The cost of the cleaning amounts to approximately £9,500 per year. Brampton Parish Council do not wish to take responsibility of the building itself but would like to have support from Carlisle City Council to upgrade the toilets and to employ a local person to clean them which would

save the cost of a van travelling from Carlisle. Quality standards would be agreed, training would be given, the door to the toilets could be improved and the cleaning would cost less than £9,500 per year.

Brampton Visitor Centre is manned by volunteers and there are now 10,000 visitors per year. The most frequently asked question in the Visitor Centre is people asking the location of the public toilets.

Brampton Parish Council approached Carlisle City Council about the toilets 3 years ago but got an unsatisfactory response.

It was decided that Mike and Samantha would take this issue to Jason Gooding at the meeting next week to discuss how Carlisle City Council could help to support the upgrade of the toilets. David could provide photographs or the presentation for the meeting and Bryan Craig could provide photographs of Dalston public toilets if necessary. Dalston Parish Council have volunteers who open and close the toilets each day which works well. This issue could be discussed at the next Tri-partite meeting.

Keswick Town Council handed the public toilets over to the public sector who charge 20p for people to use the toilets. It is a Social Enterprise and not for profit organisation. St Cuthbert's Without Parish Council pay for street lighting, playground and grass cutting so have control over these assets.

Feedback and any other areas of concern from Parish Councils would be useful regarding quality provision of Carlisle City Council and are to be sent to the CPCA.

This issue needs to be talked about and agreed as devolution will be increased by District Councils and the Parish Councils will need to increase their Precepts. Council Tax will probably not be reduced.

11. Any Other Business

Rockcliffe Parish Council are currently without a Clerk. Samantha is to email other Parish Clerks about the vacancy. CALC can also put adverts on the website and the monthly Newsletter if Clerk vacancies arise.

The CPCA is the way forward for Parish Councils and more feedback would be useful. Attendance of Parish Councils at CPCA meetings would be beneficial to them so that problems can be shared. A letter to Clerks explaining what the meeting is about, the Mission Statement of the CPCA group, and the minutes are to be sent to Clerks. The CPCA Executive is to look at and review the Terms of Reference of the group. Parish Councils could create a CPCA link on their websites so that minutes could be loaded.

12. Date of the Next CPCA Executive Meeting

Thursday 4th January 2018 to be held at Dalston. Parish Councils are to contact Sonia Hutchinson at office@calc.org.uk for any ideas, thoughts or

subjects to be discussed at the meeting. Mike thanked Sonia for taking on the role of Parish Liaison Officer for Carlisle District Association and thanked everyone for attending.