

**The Alliance
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
& National General Meeting
Friday 3 July 2009
South Tyneside MBC**

Agenda item 2

A civic welcome was given by the Mayor of South Tyneside MBC, Cllr John Anglin.

Annual General Meeting

1. Attendance and apologies

Attendance

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Cllr E. Watts | Acting Chair |
| S. Fothergill | Secretariat |
| P. O'Mara | Secretariat |
| J. Dixon | Secretariat |
| D. Parry | Secretariat |
| Cllr A. Tomlinson | Bolsover |
| T. O'Connell | Rotherham |
| Cllr G. Whelborn | Rotherham |
| Cllr S. Wright | Rotherham |
| Cllr K. Knight | Doncaster |
| Cllr B. Harrison | Doncaster |
| J. Bennett | North Lincolnshire |
| Cllr W. Eckhardt | North Lincolnshire |
| Cllr M. Grant | North Lincolnshire |
| A. McKay | Fife |
| Cllr J. Robertson | North Lanarkshire |
| Cllr J. Kelly | East Ayrshire |
| Cllr A Robertson | Fife |
| Cllr R. McGill | Clackmannanshire |
| D. Hewet | East Ayrshire |
| Cllr T. O'Neill | Warrington |
| Cllr L. McGuire | St Helens |
| Cllr J. Greer | Knowsley |
| Cllr K. Cuncliffe | Wigan |
| B. Cowley | Knowsley |
| Cllr D. Ledger | Northumberland |
| Cllr. A Napier | Durham CC |
| Cllr A. Laing | Durham CC |
| M. Kipling | Durham CC |
| Cllr L. Wanger | Stoke-on-Trent |
| C. Hunton | Stoke-on-Trent |
| L. Watson | Redcar & Cleveland |
| Cllr G. Dunning | Redcar & Cleveland |
| J. Daly | Sunderland |
| Cllr E. Malcolm | South Tyneside |
| D. Crawford | South Tyneside |
| Cllr K. Jackson | Staffordshire Moorlands |
| Cllr S. Manion | Dover and Kent CC |

B. Hill
Cllr P. Ansell
P. Slater
Cllr R. Heron
Cllr D. Grant

Dover
Cannock Chase
Director, Alliance Wales
Sunderland
East Lothian

Apologies

P. Huck
Cllr M. Graham
Cllr R. Wellington
D. Heggarty
H. Knowles
Cllr K. Sanderson
Cllr C. Ross
Cllr S. Bainbridge
Cllr K. Parry
Cllr G. Webb
Cllr V. Tyler

Barrow-in-Furness
Gateshead
Torfaen
Flintshire
Furness Enterprise
Barnsley
Sheffield
North Lincolnshire
Northumberland
Northumberland
Northumberland

2. Chair's Annual Report

2.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting, especially new delegates. He addressed the meeting on the work of the Alliance in the context of the current economic and political situation and the need for the Alliance to respond. He argued that the work of the Alliance was now more important than ever and that, as an All Party organisation representing areas with residual economic and social problems now hit by the recession, it needed to adapt to meet the new challenges.

3. Financial report

3.1. The financial report was presented by the Hon Treasurer, Cllr Terry O'Neill. It was pointed out that the Alliance accounts had been recently audited thoroughly for the first time since the 2007 merger. A cumulative effect was a larger carry over than expected. The Treasurer recommended that future audits should take place annually and promptly to ensure reliable financial control. This was agreed.

3.2. The accounts for 2007-08 and 2008-09 were noted and the revised budget for 2009-10 was adopted.

4. Election of National Officers for 2009-10

4.1. The following were nominated and duly elected:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| National Chair | Cllr Eion Watts (Bolsover) |
| Senior Vice-Chair | Cllr Terry O'Neill (Warrington) |
| Vice-Chairs | Cllr Bob Wellington (Torfaen) |
| | Cllr Jimmy Kelly (East Ayrshire) |
| | Cllr Shaun Wright (Rotherham) |
| Hon. Secretary | Cllr Alan Napier (Durham) |
| Hon. Treasurer | Cllr Steve Manion (Dover and Kent CC) |

5. Honoraria

5.1. It was agreed that existing honoraria payments be carried forward to 2009-10.

6. Constitutional amendments

6.1. There were four suggestions tabled for amendments:

1. It was agreed that the number of national meetings should be reduced from seven to six;
2. It was agreed that all national meetings should be National General Meetings;
3. It was agreed that the National Elected Officers should function as an Executive and that they should be renamed the National Executive Members;
4. There was a lengthy discussion on re-branding and the comparative merits of name changes. The proposal to re-brand as the 'Industrial Communities Alliance' was put to a vote and carried by a significant majority.

7. Dates of national meetings

7.1. The proposed dates for the meeting for 2009-2010 were tabled and member local authorities were asked to contact the Secretariat with offers to host meetings.

8. Revised work plan

8.1. A revised work plan was outlined to the meeting. The plan covered issues that the Alliance had been involved in over the last two years but reflected the shifting priorities towards responding to the recession and promoting manufacturing.

8.2. In discussion, it was pointed out that the aim - "to raise standards of health and life expectancy in Alliance areas to nearer the national average" - was not ambitious enough. It was agreed to amend this to read to "*at least* the national average."

8.3. Reference was also made to the need to measure outcomes and highlight the successes of the Alliance to help retain and increase membership.

8.4. With the suggested amendments the work plan was adopted.

National General Meeting

9. Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 24 April 2009

9.1. The minutes were agreed as a true record and there were no matters arising.

10. Minutes of the Policy Advisory Group meeting of 3 June 2009

10.1. Dave Hewett pointed out that he was a representative for East Ayrshire not East Lothian as recorded in the minutes. It was agreed to correct this.

10.2. Matters arising: Clarification was sought on Item 5 – Any Other Business (Clean Coal Alliance). The Secretariat pointed out that the Alliance, through the All Party Parliamentary Coalfield Communities Group, was engaged with this matter.

11. Future Jobs Fund

11.1. Since the last National Meeting on 24 April there had been intense activity around the new Future Jobs Fund. Briefings had been circulated to all Alliance member local authorities as well as MPs. A workshop was held in Barnsley on 23 June. Arising out of the pooling of ideas at the workshop a further briefing had been circulated with suggestions to help local authorities deliver.

11.2. A proposal to set up a National Worklessness Forum was contained in the government response to the *Tackling Worklessness Review*. It was decided to seek Alliance representation on this body.

12. Responding to the recession

12.1. The Policy Advisory Group (PAG) had discussed the work of the Alliance in its response to the recession. Although work had intensified on joblessness, steel and manufacturing, it was apparent that impact on Alliance local authorities was more severe than first thought. The PAG suggested a report on the impact of the recession be produced for the autumn. It was agreed to do this.

13. Steel crisis

13.1. A detailed report on a 'Steel Summit' meeting with the Secretary of State, Lord Mandelson accompanied this agenda item. The Secretary of State had indicated he would reconvene the summit.

13.2. In discussion, reference was made to the situation at Teesside Cast Products and the latest Corus announcements on job cuts. Delegates took the view that short-time working subsidy for all manufacturing affected by the recession was the main priority.

13.3. It was agreed to seek to reconvene the 'Steel Summit', to pursue a meeting with Corus and, if appropriate, with a minister. It was also agreed that the National Chair should write to the Secretary of State on the issue of short-time working subsidy and to gear up for a campaign on this for the next Parliamentary session.

14. Manufacturing

14.1. Having taken an in principle decision to prioritise support for manufacturing the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) had discussed ways of taking matters forward. The PAG made three suggestions to the meeting: develop the skills agenda for the needs of modern industry; focus on regional economic strategies of RDAs and devolved bodies; put pressure on the government to fully exploit the use State Aids.

14.2. In discussion, reference was made to involvement with the new Leaders' Boards and the implications of a Conservative government disbanding Regional Development Agencies.

15. Skills

15.1. The meeting was informed of the Parliamentary activity that had taken place to pursue the Alliance's agenda for low skills adults. This included an Early Day Motion and Adjournment Debate at which a minister had offered a meeting with MPs. It was decided to follow this offer up and plan an event in Westminster as soon as possible after the summer recess.

16. State aid rules

16.1. It was noted that the Alliance was in discussion with civil servants on the prospects for EU State Aid rules post 2013. It was agreed that discussions should be guided by the six principles outlined in this agenda item.

17. Future of EU funding

17.1. This consisted mainly of report from meeting between the Secretariat and civil servants at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills held on 21 April. The main purpose of the meeting was to open channels of communication with the Government on emerging thinking in the run up to the EU funding round after 2013.

18. Scotland MSPs group

18.1. The inaugural meeting of the Cross Party Industrial Communities Group in the Scottish Parliament was postponed until 2 September. A report will be made to the next National General Meeting.

19. Wales conference: report back

19.1. It was reported that there had been a successful conference in South Wales on Recession and Welfare Reform held jointly with the Bevan Foundation. A report, commissioned by Alliance Wales on Incapacity Benefit in Wales, was released at the conference.

20 Health inequalities

20.1. The meeting was informed of the ongoing work with the LGA Improvement and Development Agency's (IDeA) *Communities for Health Programme*. Another roundtable meeting was planned for 10 July in London. A meeting with *Health Challenge Valleys Initiative* was also reported on.

20.2. It was agreed to pursue a larger, more participatory event with IDeA and to encourage Alliance Wales to follow up opportunities with the *Health Challenge Valleys* team.

21. Coalfield stakeholders group

21.1. Efforts were ongoing to reinvigorate the Coalfield Stakeholder Group and encourage cross-departmental involvement from the government. The Permanent Secretariat at DCLG was planning to convene a meeting at senior level. Themed workshops were planned starting in September. Regional events involving the

Homes and Communities Agency, RDAs and Job Centre Plus were also being considered.

21.2. It was agreed to welcome DCLG's efforts to convene a cross-departmental meeting and to keep Alliance members fully briefed on developments with regard to themed seminars and regional events.

22. Homes and Communities Agency

22.1. This item covered the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) budget, the National Coalfields Programme, the Land Restoration Trust, RDAs, future work, Annual Members' Forum and Coalfield Action Zones.

22.2. It was decided to: monitor developments with regard to the National Coalfield Programme and the Land Restoration Trust; ask member authorities to report back on the impact of RDA cuts; open up a strategic dialogue with the HCA to achieve a better balance between housing and regeneration and the importance of regeneration outside the core cities; to plan a Annual Members Forum in the Autumn.

23. LGA conference: report back

23.1. It was reported that the Alliance's presence with an exhibition at the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Conference had been worthwhile. A number of representatives from potential member local authorities had expressed an interest in the work of the Alliance. It was decided to follow up these contacts.

24. Annual Conference

24.1. Plans for the Annual Conference in Port Talbot with the current list of speakers were outlined to the meeting and members were strongly encouraged to attend.

25. Regional reports

25.1. Midlands and South region reported on: the election of a new Chair, Cllr Manion (Dover and Kent); the National Coalfield Programme and the Snowdown site; concerns about Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) funding.

25.2. North West region also expressed concerns about CRT.

25.3. Each other area indicated that all matters had been covered on the main agenda.

26. Any other business

26.1. There was no further business and the Chair closed the meeting.