

Minutes of the 79th Annual Conference & AGM of the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils

**Held at Moulton Community Centre, Moulton
Saturday 3 October 2026**

Item

1. Welcome & housekeeping.

Northants CALC CEO, Danny Moody (DM) opened the meeting and welcomed delegates. There were 128 attendees in total, with 118 registered councillors and clerks representing seventy-two member councils.

The meeting was chaired by Lynn Lavender (LL), Chair of Northants CALC, who welcomed everyone to the meeting, including delegates, guests, and sponsors. LL reflected on a year of significant progress for Northants CALC. She highlighted the strengthening of advisory, training, audit and support services, the Association's strong financial position, and the adoption of a new Strategic Plan for 2026-2029 with a focus on leadership, organisational resilience, service development, and artificial intelligence. She also noted Northants CALC's involvement in Project Keystone and its contribution to national discussions about the future support framework for parish and town councils. As this was her final AGM as Chair before standing down in November 2026 after completing the maximum three-year term, Lynn thanked fellow directors, staff, and member councils for their support and dedication, concluding that Northants CALC enters the coming year in a strong position with a clear vision and ambitious programme of work.

2. Appointment of Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2027.

RESOLVED: That Kate Brown Accountant be appointed as the auditor for the year ending 31 March 2027.

3. Appointment of Directors for 2026/27.

The Appointments Panel recommended the following for appointment at the AGM:

No.	Name	Qualifying Council
1.	David Fuller	Oundle Town Council
2.	Andrew Holt	Upton Parish Council
3.	Kate Houlihan	Far Cotton & Delapre Community Council
4.	Lynn Lavender	Ashton Parish Council
5.	Geoff Paul	Moulton Parish Council
6.	Mike Scott	Great Addington Parish Council
7.	Lynne Taylor	Daventry Town Council
8.	Steve Tucker	Raunds Town Council

RESOLVED: That the eight candidates be appointed en bloc as directors for the year 2026/27.

4. To approve the minutes of the 78th AGM held on 4 October 2025.

The minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting and were signed by the chair.

5. To receive the Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2026.

LL commended the Annual Report and Accounts to the AGM. There were no questions.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report & Accounts be received and noted.

6. To determine subscription levels for the year ending 31 March 2028.

The board of directors recommended that the per council element of the Northants CALC membership fee for the year starting 1 April 2027 and ending 31 March 2028 be increased by inflation (CPIH July 2026 – 3.1%) from £207.39 to £213.82 and that the per elector element of the Northants CALC membership fee for the year starting 1 April 2027 and ending 31 March 2028 be increased by inflation (CPIH July 2026 – 3.1%) from 31.12 pence to 32.09 pence.

Larger councils (10,000 – 30,000 electorate) are charged a fixed fee for membership of Northants CALC. The fee for the year starting 1 April 2026 and ending 31 March 2027 was £3,318.22. A 3.1% increase would take it to £3,421.09. The total fee payable for YE 31 March 2028 will therefore be (£3,421.09 + NALC Affiliation fee). The equivalent fee for super councils (30,000 + electors) would be increased from £6,027.84 to £6,214.71. The NALC fee is capped at £2,274.00, so the total fee payable will therefore be (£6,214.71 + NALC £2,274.00).

Parish Meetings with less than 100 electors AND no precept are offered affiliate membership for 2027/28 free of charge. The maximum fee that any council or parish meeting pays is capped at £1 per elector.

RESOLVED: That the board's recommendations be approved.

7. Plan or Be Planned – Guest Speaker Neil Homer.

Neil Homer, Founder and Planning Director of ONH Planning for Good, delivered a presentation entitled *Plan or Be Planned*. Neil discussed recent changes to the planning system, including the new National Planning Policy Framework, national development management policies, delegated decision-making, and reforms to the appeals process. He argued that parish and town councils should move from being reactive consultees to proactive place-shapers, using evidence and strategic planning to influence development and infrastructure provision within their communities. Neil highlighted the continuing value of Neighbourhood Plans and introduced the concept of Settlement Spatial Plans as a tool for exploring alternative futures and informing Local Plans and major planning applications. Case studies from Bloxham and the WWATCH group of councils demonstrated how communities can successfully secure improved outcomes by planning positively for growth rather than simply opposing development. A question-and-answer session followed covering digital planning, neighbourhood plan reviews, logistics and warehousing developments, cross-boundary planning issues, and the management of community assets on new developments.

8. Planning Update with North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council.

Planning updates were received from Simon Richardson, Head of Policy & Placemaking at North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), and Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director of Place, Economy and Environment at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). Simon outlined the implications of the new National Planning Policy Framework, including the National Scheme of Delegation, changes to Local Plan preparation, and the increased importance of maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan. He explained that NNC is progressing work on its new Local Plan, remains supportive of neighbourhood planning, and is seeking to strengthen engagement with parish and town councils. Stuart provided an update on the West Northamptonshire Local Plan, including recent amendments following consultation and the requirement from Government to continue progressing the existing plan towards examination. He also outlined the council's Planning Transformation Programme, covering improvements to planning performance, enforcement, Section 106 administration, communications, and digital working.

The subsequent Q&A session covered housing land supply, enforcement resources, logistics and warehouse development, neighbourhood planning, estate adoption issues, and the operation of the planning system under the new national framework.

9. Council of the Year Award.

DM read out the commendation for the Jeffrey Greenwell Council of the Year award, which was won by Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Parish Council.

DM said that Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Parish Council “...is business-like, outward-looking, and deeply rooted in its community. Its work encompasses local services, community facilities, highways and traffic matters, defibrillators, rights of way, heritage, charitable funds, and the parish’s Neighbourhood Plan. Its website provides a particularly impressive window onto a council that is active, transparent, and constantly engaged with the issues affecting its residents.”

The award was presented to the Vice Chair of Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Parish Council, Cllr Jenny Harwood and the Clerk, Mark Hunter.

10. Recognition Awards - CiLCA, Local Council Award Scheme, Councillor Development Framework, and Officer Development Framework.

LL recognised the officers that had completed their Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) since the last conference: Jenny Evans, Cosgrove Parish Council, Paul Barton, Crick Parish Council, Mel Bland, Daventry Town Council, Nichola Ali, Finedon Town Council, Emma Dezelu, Kettering Town Council, Sylvia Tilaks, Little Harrowden Parish Council, Mark Lyon, Little Houghton Parish Council, Pip Davis, Middleton Cheney Parish Council, Nicola Joy, Raunds Town Council, Steve Tucker, Raunds Town Council, Donna Hardman, Roade Parish Council, Vivienne Prodger, Rushden Town Council, and Joanne Coduri, Wellingborough Town Council.

LL congratulated Far Cotton & Delapre Community Council and Higham Ferrers Town Council on achieving Bronze Awards under the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS), and Brixworth Parish Council and Evenley Parish Council on achieving Silver Awards.

LL then recognised all the councillors that have achieved an award under the Councillor Development Framework (CDF) and Donna Hardman, Clerk to Roade Parish Council, who has completed all stages of the Officer Development Framework (ODF).

11. Prize Draw & Closing Remarks.

DM announced that the winner of the Wicksteed Leisure Prize Draw was Sharon Collins for Collingtree Parish Council, who was presented with a voucher and chocolates by Jodie Midlane from Wicksteed.

LL thanked all the sponsors and exhibitors, the parish and town council delegates, the team at Moulton Parish Council for hosting, and the staff at Northants CALC for putting the whole event together.

12. Close.

LL announced that the 80th Annual Conference & AGM will take place on Saturday 2 October 2027 at the University of Northampton, and she asked people to put the date in their diaries.

The conference closed at 12:54 p.m.

Signed: _____

Date: _____