

Avon Local Councils' Association
Regional Committee Meeting **Thursday 21st March 2019**

1. **Present** - Kathy Thomas (Chairman), Dick Whittington, Geoff Coombs, Jonanna Van Tonder, Jeremy Blatchford, Mike Drew, Judith Chubb-Whittle, **Apologies** - Jayne Stansfield, Rhiannon Prys-Owen, Clive Fricker, BoB Symons, Dawn Drury, Rosemary Naish, Noel Walter.

2. **The minutes** of the last meeting were confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings

3. **ALCA Finance Report** (Written report supplied following the meeting.)
The unaudited Projected Balance Sheet for the past four years shows that we are heading for an overspend of £6,583 for the year 2018-19, which is better than I predicted at the 2017 AGM.

Our problem is that our only income that can be relied on is the subscriptions and training; if either fall, then we go into the red even more so. I have gradually been increasing the subscriptions over the past four years by 2.5% and I feel that if it was increased outside inflation, we would lose members, not only the smaller parishes but also some of the larger ones. If we could recruit the 14 non-Members that would only bring in another £3,951 and still would have left us with £2,632 deficit.

Our reserves are still above the recommended level (should be greater than a year's expenses, ours in this current year being £ 43,537), but it will be only one more four-year cycle before the surplus is absorbed and then we could be in trouble. The Regional Committee need to consider what action needs to be taken to remain viable for the foreseeable future.

4. **Internal organisational Issues**

a) Discussion - ALCAs reliance on training to fund the Association

There is a NALC ambition for all Cllrs. to be trained and that training should be a condition of office. One suggestion is that councillors should pay for training themselves. The RC felt that volunteers should not be out of pocket financially as a consequence of giving their time to serve as councillors. A sliding scale of charges for training based on the precept of PC was suggested. For ALCA to be sustained solely by subscriptions so that the profit from training could ploughed back into training and development was agreed as an ambition. Subscriptions don't currently cover operational costs. It was suggested that members should be made aware at the AGM that training needs to factor in the CO's time to deliver the service, but we don't want to price small councils out. Item for discussion.

- b) A “visioning session” for the future of ALCA.

It was felt that this would be best timed after AG meetings, where member input could be sought.

A PC survey – “What is ALCA for?” was suggested. Results to be brought to the next meeting.

- c) Personnel Working Group.

Membership - Dick Whittington, Kathy Thomas, BoB Symons, Rhiannon Prys-Owen

Mike Drew offered to be a temporary member if required.

Mid-April date preferred. CO to circulate contract of employment.

- d) It was agreed to purchase of a video conferencing camera [LINK](#)

5. Project work / proposals

- a) Mike Drew proposed making a proposal to NALC’s Policy Committee on the need to ensure that Public Open Space on new developments remain in public hands (ideally Town/Parish Councils) and not in the hands of Management Companies set up by Developers who then charge the residents of the new properties. AGREED
- b) Social Isolation and Loneliness. NHS priority. This is something that cannot be dealt with centrally and the solutions lie with communities. Communities need to have as much going on as possible so as to involve as many people as possible – local councils need to provide and facilitate. Theme of both NALC and ALCA AGM. Case studies such as Number 65, Walking for health and NP Blaise project should be collated. Gov. funding is available through the lottery.
- c) Provision of a locum clerk service - Most clerks are working to capacity and being a locum is very difficult “Cooking in someone else’s kitchen”
Larger councils could be encouraged to loan out staff as a development opportunity.
- d) Coordination of Support for CABs - particularly in South Gloucestershire
Encourage all SG councils to put 1p per elector rate on the precept to support CAB – to be tabled at the SG AGM

6. Area Groups Reports

- a) North Somerset NSC have not recovered from losing its senior staff – new staff have been invited to NS AGM in June. The recent Forum meeting attracted 25 PC’s with a speaker on social isolation.

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- b) South Gloucestershire – bring AGM forward to late June
- c) Parishing Bristol - links are being made to Neighbourhood Partnership contacts through a recent Alternative Politics meeting.
- d) BNES - Progress has been made in particular through negotiations on an Asset Transfer Policy.
- e) At the NALC spring conference Yate gave a presentation on its detached youth work. Other topics included a strategic vision with CPRE and Community Wealth Funds using dormant bank accounts. No Lobby Day (due to Brexit debates)

7. Updates / consultations

- a) The review of NALC's handling of motions from CALC's – no objections to the proposals
- b) Report on NALC Conference and AGM. The general theme was that the work of LC's, especially in picking up what the District Council can no longer provide due to austerity, is becoming more recognised, with a 3-year commitment to not capping the precept request.
- c) Arrangements for the 2019 AGM Flax Bourton Village Hall is booked. Avon Search and Rescue have been approached. It was suggested that under the Health and Well Being theme we should show case what LC's in Avon are doing to inspire others, such as 65 High Street, Nalisea.

8. Any Other Business - None

- 9. **The next meeting** will be in North Somerset in late June after AG meetings