

**Avon Local Councils' Association**  
Regional Committee Meeting Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020

**1. Present**

Kathy Thomas (Chairman), Dawn Drury, Mike Drew, Jayne Stansfield, Cheryl Kirby, Gail Boyle, Geoff Coombs, Dick Whittington, Jeremy Blatchford, Noel Walter.

Apologies – Robert Law and Rhiannon Prys-Owen  
Notes – Deborah White, Chief Officer

2. The minutes of the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019 were confirmed as a correct record

**AGREED**

- 3. ALCA Finance Reports** - Financial information supplied as Google docs.

Loss of training income due to Covid 19 will impact by increasing the annual deficit. Calculations have been done on potential shortfall for information.

Subscription renewals are automatic unless notice given by 31<sup>st</sup> March. To date neither resignations, nor annual subscriptions have been received from Batheaston, Chelwood, Filton, Freshford, Horton, Kelston PM, Kenn, Nempnett Thrubwell, Portbury, Portishead, Puxton, Radstock, Rangeworthy, Walton in Gordano. Reminders have been sent.

**4. Sector Issues**

Covid 19 lock down impact on Local Councils.

There will be significant impact on those Councils relying on income from services that have had to cease. The number of cases will be relatively few, but the impact serious. There is currently no dedicated government support for these councils and it is now clear that what support was provided will be wholly retained by the Unitary Authorities.

Some Councils providing services have been successful in furloughing staff not supported through the precept.

The confusion over whether Local Councils (as precepting bodies) can receive the Village Hall grant has now been sorted out and most have been in receipt of £10,000.

The substantial increase in people claiming Benefit, because of Covid 19 will have an impact on Council Tax income received and subsequently the

Council Tax base, by an estimated 12%. This will impact on the precept calculation. There is also a predicted need for additional services required.

**ACTION** – Mike Drew to develop a information module for Local Councils, for delivery by Zoom.

#### Local Councils support for community action

ALCA should continue to request that all Local Councils are granted GPC to replace S137 to allow them to become better facilitators of community action during the pandemic. Also to have a greater say in community activity as first tier authorities.

BNES Council have provided good case studies of actions taken  
As NS is a public health pilot area for social prescribing, PC's have taken a role in supporting Community Transport to deliver prescriptions, supermarket delivery etc.

Encouraging Local Councils to have remote meetings - Most PC are now meeting remotely, with the smallest councils leading the way. There seems to have been more resistance to remote meetings in some larger councils. Some are still holding out for a physical meetings, but there are tasks, such as approving the Annual Governance Audit, that will require a remote meeting if the lock down easement does not keep with the deadlines.

Lobbying nationally for adequate broadband for everyone is still important.

Support for Clerks – Zoom meetings for Clerks are proving very popular. Non members have been included, as they are unsupported if the councils they work for are not supportive of membership. It helps them to understand the benefits of membership – they don't know what they don't know.

## 5. Internal organisational Issues

### Resources Committee

Banking arrangements now include extra authorisers of payments. Chief Officer and Treasurer able to set up payments and approve (CO will only approve in exceptional circumstances), Dick Whittington and Mike Drew are now able to authorise payments.

Financial information is now shared in Google Drive for ease of access.

Operating in the "Lock Down" world required a new higher spec laptop and Zoom conferencing license, both approved by the Resources Committee

To hold the ALCA AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020 using Zoom was **AGREED**

Suggestions for speakers included

NALC Officer

Community Engagement Keynsham virtual high street

Chief Officer – Deborah White

Email - [avoncalc@gmail.com](mailto:avoncalc@gmail.com) Tel: 07496 514035

Potential for a national speaker  
**ACTION** – suggestions for speakers

**ALL**

6. NALC Report

All conferences have been cancelled, which will impact on income.  
All staff working from home and meetings have moved on-line

Nationally County Officers and NALC staff are meeting weekly on Zoom to keep up to date with the legislation and to provide support. This will move to alternate webinars on set topics such as HR and Risk Assessment  
SWCLCA – last physical meeting was just before lock down and there has since been a Zoom meeting of the NALC reps and County officers  
SW County Officers are Zoom meeting weekly to help with local issues and to exchange information

7. Area Groups / preparation for AGM's

- North Somerset Area Group AGM will on 25<sup>th</sup> June by Zoom with the Leader of NS council as speaker
- South Gloucestershire Area Group AGM will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> July by Zoom
- B&NES Area Group AGM will be a remote meeting on 11th June

8. Any Other Business None

9. The next meeting will be virtual focussing on finance in the lead up to the AGM end of July to enable the calling notice for the October AGM. If required there will be another in Sept