



West Sussex Association of Local Councils Limited

**Agenda for a Board Meeting to be held remotely by Zoom
on Friday 16th July 2021 at 2.30pm**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85010995850>

Meeting ID: 850 1099 5850

1. Apologies for absence
2. To approve the minutes of meeting held on 30 th April 2021
3. WSALC, ESALC & Surrey ALC update – CEO
4. Financial update – Mark Mulberry (<i>Appendix A</i>)
5. Service delivery arrangements – to receive a progress report, CEO and Mark Mulberry
6. Training update – Anna Beams (<i>Appendix B</i>)
7. Recruitment – to discuss WSALCs role in the recruitment and retention of clerks in West Sussex (<i>Agenda item raised by Martin Beaton, Vice Chair</i>) (<i>Appendix C</i>)
8. NALC Engagement – Chairman and CEO
9. Reports by District Associations <ol style="list-style-type: none">AdurArunChichesterHorshamMid Sussex
10. PCC/WSALC Focus Groups – report on outcome of recent round of interviews, CEO and Mandy Jameson, PCC Senior Communications Manager
11. Armed Forces Covenant – to be briefed on NALC / MoD encouragement to local councils to use the Armed Forces Covenant Grants Fund to support veterans (42,000 in West Sussex), serving personnel and their families. CEO to report
12. Other matters not on the agenda to be raised by Board Members
13. Dates of future meetings

Appendix A:

WSALC Limited – Management Accounts Reporting for the quarter to 30th June 2021.

Income

Subscription income is £78,862 of which £5,082 remains unpaid as at the management accounts date. The original budget was for £84,618; however, eight member councils decided not to renew their subscription. We remain hopeful that they will be persuaded to re-join in time to come

We are not anticipating any additional income to be booked for the remainder of the year, therefore our forecast is to end the year with £108,306 of income.

Expenditure

The costs incurred to date are £39,706 against a total year end budget of £108,093, we are currently forecasting a year-end expenditure total of £86,613. The reduction in costs being due to no planned expenditure on training or special projects, combined with a reduction in NALC costs due to a reduced membership.

All costs are listed within this pack.

Bank & Cash Balances

At the 30th June 2021 there was £98,111 in the current account and £22 in the deposit account. It is anticipated the current account will reduce to circa £67,601 by the year end.

A copy of the bank statement is provided with this pack

Year End Forecast

It is anticipated that there will be a surplus of £21,693 at the year-end date. This will be subject to change as the year progresses and depending also on board decisions re future spending.

Future Forecasts

Based on an annual 2% increase, the surplus would be circa £17k each year after allowing for £5k on special projects spending for the benefit of the membership.

I would therefore propose the following charges per elector

2021/22 £0.3061p per elector

2022/23 £0.3122p per elector {income circa £80.5k}

2023/24 £0.3185p per elector {income circa £82.1k}

2024/24 £0.3248p per elector {income circa £83.7k}

Time Spent

In the three-month period to 30th June 2021 – WSALC have contracted for Mulberry & Co to provide 15 hours per week (on average) service cover. For the quarter this equates to circa 195 hours.

In the period actual time spent was 174hrs. This equates to circa 13.5 hours per week. Time records will continue to be monitored and this should be discussed further at the six-month review period, rather than taking a single period on its own.

Appendix B:

TRAINING REPORT

Mulberry and Co continue to offer a programme of remote training modules and, having completed the first 3 months of the programme, we have extended the offering.

The training programme currently includes:

- **New Councillors & Chairmanship training (trainer – Anne Bott) – suitable for both new and existing councillors – a suite of module sessions designed to be taken individually or as a complete programme.**
- **Councillors Bespoke Session – (trainer – Anne Bott) - for councils/groups of neighbouring councils to book on – can be tailored to the booking councils exact requirements**
- **New Clerks & Officers training (trainers – Steve Trice & Andy Beams) – suitable for new staff or those requiring training/refreshing on a specific topic - a suite of module sessions designed to be taken individually or as a complete programme.**
- **Finance training (trainers – Mark Mulberry & Andy Beams) – suitable for both officers and members, new and existing – a suite of individual sessions:**
 - **Governance & Accountability**
 - **Monthly Reporting**
 - **Preparing for Interim Audit**
 - **Budget Setting**
 - **VAT Update**
 - **Charity & Trustee Management**
 - **Managing Payroll**
 - **Year End Finance & Audit Preparation**
- **Planning training**
 - **Introduction to Planning (trainer – Florence Churchill) – suitable for both officers and members, new and existing**
 - **Bespoke Planning Session (trainer – Steve Tilbury) – for councils/groups of neighbouring councils to book on – can be tailored to the booking councils exact requirements**
- **Communications training (trainers Breakthrough Communications) – suitable for both officers and members, new and existing**
 - **Data Protection for Clerks**
 - **Data Protection for Councillors**
 - **Social Media Skills for Councillors**
 - **Dealing with a Crisis/Crisis Management**
 - **Building a Two Way Conversation with your Community**
 - **Using your Website as an Effective Communication Tool**
 - **Creating Accessible Council Documents and Content**

Breakthrough Communications, NALC's National Partners for advice, guidance and services for council communications and Data Protection, GDPR and Freedom of Information, have been appointed to deliver communications training. We have also appointed Steve Tilbury of Steve Tilbury Consultants to deliver planning training. Steve has a wealth of planning experience in the public sector and is able to provide a customised, bespoke training session to individual member councils on request. We continue to provide the very popular 'Introduction to Planning' training session delivered by Flo Churchill which gives a good overview for those new to the planning system or wishing to brush up on their knowledge.

Any of the scheduled modules are also available for individual councils to book either in the tailored made format or completely bespoke to their requirements, prices are quoted on an individual basis depending on requirements. We are also happy to facilitate requests for topics that are not currently on the programme.

Costs to members range from £35 for a single module to £400 for a completely bespoke 3 hour training session which includes consultation with the trainer and preparation, the fee can be split between a maximum of 2 neighbouring councils in order to share costs.

In quarter 1 we received a total of 142 bookings from West Sussex members

Councillors & Chairmanship: 82

Clerks & Officers: 11

Finance: 2

Planning: 31

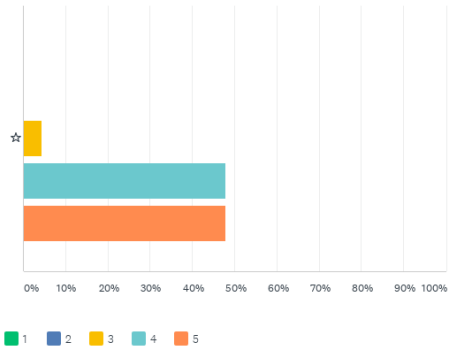
Communications: 9 (2 weeks of figures)

On demand: 7 (2 Councillors, 4 Finance, 1 Planning)

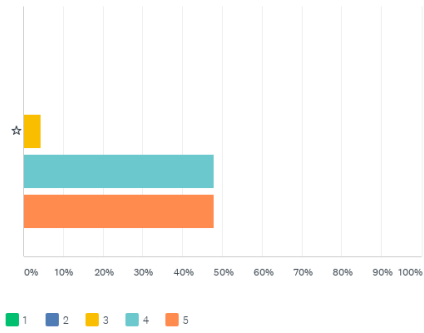
All attendees are asked to complete a feedback form following each session and scores for training content and delivery for each topic are as follows (*results taken from Survey Monkey*):

Councillors & Chairmanship:

Q4 How would you rate the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)

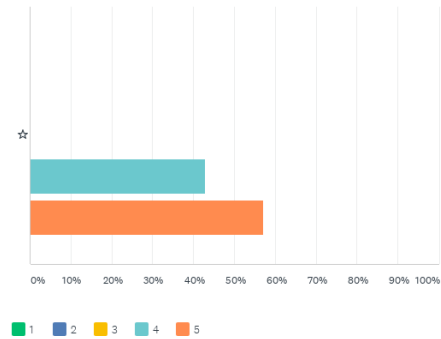


Q5 How would you rate the delivery of the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)

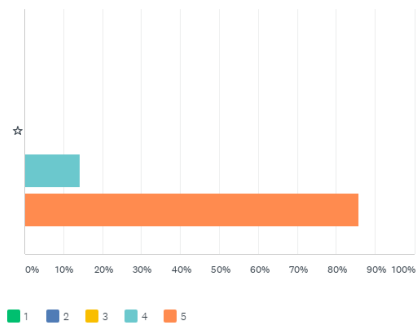


Clerks & Officers:

Q4 How would you rate the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)

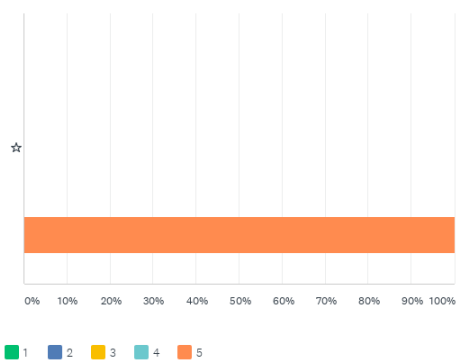


Q5 How would you rate the delivery of the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)

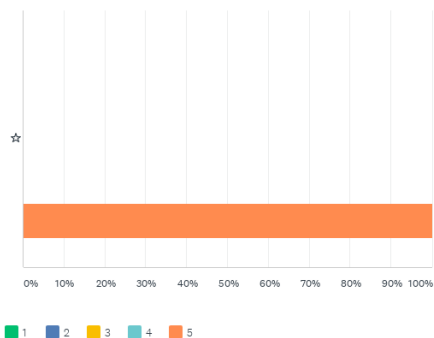


Finance:

Q4 How would you rate the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)

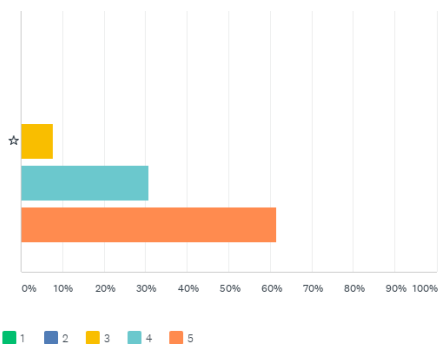


Q5 How would you rate the delivery of the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)

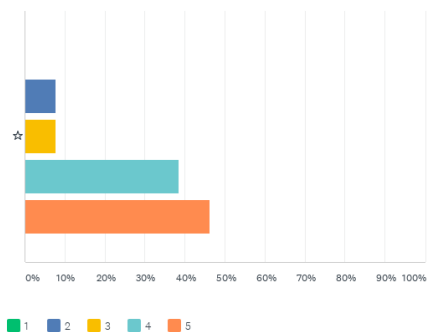


Planning:

Q4 How would you rate the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)



Q5 How would you rate the delivery of the training content? (1 star being poor, 5 being excellent)



In respect of face to face training, networking days and conferences, we will continue to monitor the current situation and will introduce them back into the programme when appropriate. Online training will still continue to be an important part of the programme as it provides the flexibility required by members and enables them to attend training that they may not be able to in person. I am happy to answer any questions.
Anna Beams

Appendix C:

Recruitment and retention of Parish Clerks

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to raise the issue of recruitment of both Locum and Parish Clerks in West Sussex.

Background

The issue of recruitment of locum and full-time clerks in West Sussex has arisen recently in relation to my own Parish of Aldingbourne which has recently struggled to recruit both a Locum Clerk and new full time Clerk.

Contact with WSALC indicated that there were no locum clerks immediately available and an advertisement through the WSALC network for a clerk attracted no applicants. The post was based on 15hr/week at £25 to £30 per hour, depending on experience. Further discussion held with WSALC indicated there were at that time no qualified clerks available at this time in West Sussex.

The Parish Council has now resolved these issues but was faced with an exceedingly difficult position and it raises the wider issue of recruitment and retention of clerks in West Sussex as a whole.

It is undoubtedly the case that the legal, financial, and operational issues surrounding PCs have become more complex and the role of clerk more demanding. Recruiting new Clerks into this role is likely to become more challenging and more expensive and the WSALC Board needs to be aware of and have some strategy in place to address these issues on behalf of West Sussex PCs.

Suggestions might include:

- A brief video providing an overview of the role of Clerk on the WSALC Website to introduce interested individuals to publicise the role – including a summary of the CILCA qualification. (This may have the additional benefit of making councillors and others more aware of the scope of the work now required).
- WSALC might target public sector employees at District and County and “draw back the curtains” to show them what a Clerk does -highlight the skills these employees already have are transferable, contact the recruitment department and request to advertise the Clerk/RFO and admin roles on their internal vacancies page -offer them the same as County and District employees i.e LGPS, continued service and comparable salaries contracts/policies and opportunities.
- Offer taster online free sessions to give an overview of “a day in the life of the clerk” or see if any Clerks would offer an introductory day.
- Encourage broader advertising on well-known jobsites like: just for councils jobs and Indeed, so when people from say a finance or administration background search for jobs they find them. (See Appendix for a list of relevant experience provided by one clerk).
- As part of the advertising should the role be described as Clerk / CEO to reflect the role?
- A request to current Clerks who are retiring to consider being added to a WSALC list of locum clerks.
- Setting a standard payment for locum clerks provided by WSALC.
- A request to current clerks (eg part time clerks) and retiring clerks to act as mentors to new clerks. This might involve WSALC providing some mentor training to existing clerks to assist them.
- WSALC to maintain an online summary of current Clerks pay and rations across West Sussex relating pay to population, precept, facilities managed etc to retain a sense of scale and reflect NALC pay scales.
- Offering CILCA training outside of the PC network as part of separate educational training programme (eg via WSCC Aspire or a FE College).
- Providing guidance on job descriptions which include a comprehensive range of duties that the Clerk has to administer and deal with, and clarity on expected hours to achieve the basic role, guidance on having standard contracts of employment in place including pay and conditions.
- If not qualified, consider they obtain the ILCA first, which gives a general overview of the role, and then CILCA which goes into more depth.
- Address working relationships between clerks and councils – I understand Anne Bott had covered this in the HR & Employment training.

- Discussion item for annual conference

Martin Beaton

Vice Chairman, WSALC.

July 2021

Appendix 1

Experience of one clerk previously employed in local government:

- Finance officer for the Infrastructure/Highways and Education teams
- HR & payroll/Recruitment
- Office services for purchasing and education
- P.A and managerial roles
- Qualifications and experience in private and public sectors including use of Microsoft office and accountancy software
- Understanding the public sector and the rules around using public money responsibly
- Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team
- Some experience of planning
- Some experience of contract administration.