



## Surrey ALC Ltd.

# Minutes of the Virtual Board Meeting of Surrey ALC Ltd. Held by Zoom on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 9:30am

### Attendance

Cllr Steve Cosser, Chairman  
Cllr Christine Howard, Vice Chair  
Cllr Stuart McLachlan, Director  
Cllr Dr Paul Cragg, Director  
Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper, Director  
Cllr Alan Midgley, Director  
Mark Mulberry, Company Secretary  
Anne Bott, CEO Surrey ALC Ltd.  
Anna Beams, Clerk

#### 1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Cllrs Katia Malcaus Cooper and Alan Midgley and invited all Members of the Board to give a brief introduction of themselves. Following the introductions, the business of the meeting commenced.

#### 2. Apologies

Cllr Graham Alleway and Cllr David Crossley

#### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved as a true record of the previous meeting.

#### 4. Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman

The current Chairman advised that the appointments of Chairman and Vice Chairman should be formally ratified, he further proposed that it be formally ratified that the appointments of Chairman and Vice Chairman are made annually at the first meeting of the Board following the AGM. In answer to a question put forward by Cllr Stuart McLachlan he confirmed that Vice Presidents are Honorary Members and not required to attend Board meetings.

On a proposal by Cllr Dr Paul Cragg and seconded by Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper it was **AGREED** that the existing Chairman and Vice Chairman, namely Cllr Steve Cosser and Cllr Chris Howard respectively, continue in their posts for the forthcoming year.

On a proposal by Cllr Chris Howard and seconded by Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper it was **AGREED** that the appointments of Chairman and Vice Chairman are made annually at the first meeting of the Board following the AGM.

*Mark Mulberry had previously advised that he had to attend a prior engagement and would need to leave the meeting early, therefore at the Chairman's discretion, agenda item 8 was discussed next.*

### Finance Report

Mark Mulberry referred to his report previously circulated with the agenda (*Appendix A*) and added that SALC is in a financially secure position and that he forecasts that the Association will have approximately £42,000 to £47,000 in reserves at the end of the financial year. He confirmed that, following discussions with the Chairman and CEO, he will include a greater level of detail in the service provision timesheet report and he further confirmed that the bookkeeping hours are included in the total service provision agreement.

Cllr Dr Paul Cragg thanked Mark and his team for a seamless transition of the new arrangements and for maintaining a healthy financial position for the Association.

Following questions raised by Cllr Alan Midgley it was confirmed that the recommended reserves held by the Association are 50% of income and that currently membership stands at 82 councils of a possible 87.

#### *10.04 Mark Mulberry left the meeting*

### **5. Setting the Context**

The Chairman reminded the Board of the previous SSALC arrangement of which Surrey was a member along with East and West Sussex. He pointed out that the Sussex counties had functioned in a very different way to Surrey and that the advantage of Surrey now operating as an individual Association meant that the Board could set objectives specifically for Surrey and its member councils. During the initial transition period, objectives were set to ensure that minimum disruption was caused to member councils and that the Association had a robust financial cushion. The Chairman informed the Board that these objectives had been met and that the Association is in a healthy financial position as reported by Mark Mulberry.

The Chairman added that a further objective was to ensure that the organisation is member led and that the new Board should begin thinking about the role of the Association going forward. He suggested that whilst SALC will always be a service organisation, it could also be a representative and campaigning organisation. He proposed that discussions are held at a Board open day proposed to take place in the new year when time can be spent focussing on the way ahead for SALC. Other topics for discussion could include the outcome of the recent member's survey and the involvement that Board Members may wish to have in matters other than general Board meeting business.

The CEO expressed confidence in the future of SALC with the input from a new and strong Board. She advised that although the Association has had a very good year the test will be in the new year when the renewal of membership takes place and that it is vital that the Board engage proactively with member councils. She requested that the Board interact as much as possible with herself and other staff members in order to deliver a seamless service.

Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper thanked the CEO and the team for their recent assistance in a council matter. She communicated that she would like the SALC brand to be stronger and in particular believes that training should be delivered by the County Association rather than an external source. Cllr Malcaus Cooper added that her expertise is in communications and that she would be happy to lead on branding and engagement in her capacity as a Board Member.

The Chairman noted Cllr Malcaus Coopers offer with thanks and responded that during the transition period in early 2021, it was clear that SALC would have limited resources to develop and deliver a significant training programme. Mark Mulberry had indicated at the time that he intended to develop a training programme for local councils and the Board therefore felt it was sensible to enter into negotiations with Mulberry and Co in order to arrive at a solution that was of benefit to both SALC and its member councils. As a result of these negotiations a reduced fee for member councils was agreed and it was also agreed that SALC would receive 50% of all net profits received from Surrey member's attendance at training.

Following further discussions, it was agreed that the matter of branding and training would be discussed at the open day proposed for the new year and the service arrangements with Mulberry and Co would be formally reviewed at the end of the financial year. The Chairman added that generally feedback received from member councils regarding the training programme has been favourable but that there have been some comments regarding the branding.

Cllr Dr Paul Cragg suggested that any communications that are sent from Mulberry and Co could include some wording to indicate that they are being sent on behalf of SALC. He also suggested that he felt it would be useful for the Board to discuss ways that the Association can assist Surrey County Council with their reaction to climate change.

The Chairman responded that he had held a six monthly informal review meeting with the CEO and Mark Mulberry and that Mark had indicated that there would be no difficulty with incorporating the Surrey branding into communications. In respect of climate change he reported that NALC are working on a national level and perhaps SALC could signpost member councils to their work.

Further topics suggested for discussion at the open day were Board Members having dedicated SALC email addresses, peer learning and sharing examples of best practice and practical examples from member councils.

The Chairman thanked the Board members for their input and added that he is encouraged by their enthusiastic approach.

## **6. Chairman's report**

**Unitary:** The Chairman reported that following a bid by Surrey County Council for a unitary authority, he was invited to sit on a group representing the District, Boroughs and other organisations to examine what a subsidiary tier would look like within a Unitary Authority. The bid was subsequently rejected and it is understood that Unitary is no longer on the County Council agenda but that they intend to take advantage of a proposal made by senior Ministers regarding County deals. The County Council have drafted a proposal of key services that they may wish to take on and wish to ensure are delivered at an appropriate level. A Forum has been set up consisting of key service providers including the Borough and District Councils and the Chairman of SALC. The Forum has held its first meeting where the Chairman explained how it is vital that local town and parish councils are seen as key. The Chairman recently attended a meeting at NALC where it was apparent that Surrey are ahead and have a healthy voice compared to other counties.

**SALC AGM & Conference:** The Chairman noted that the feedback following the AGM & Conference was very good but expressed his disappointment at the low level of attendance. He suggested that, along with the CEO, he will prepare a paper for the Board regarding planning for the next conference.

**NALC AGM:** Having recently attended the NALC AGM, the Chairman reported that an interesting presentation was delivered on climate change and a motion to pass County Association income earlier to NALC was rejected. He noted that, as the AGM was held remotely there was little opportunity for networking as in previous years.

**SALC Chairs Forum:** The Chairman stated that he believes the Forums to be an increasingly vital part of SALC where Chairmen of member councils can receive important updates and put questions to the SALC.

Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper advised the Board that her local MP, the Rt Hon Michael Gove, has expressed an interest in working closely with County Associations and local councils. She suggested that he could attend a future SALC Board meeting and stated that she would be happy to invite him. The Chairman agreed that he would be a useful addition to a Board meeting and that he is happy for Cllr Malcaus Cooper to facilitate an invitation whilst also liaising with the CEO and himself regarding dates.

Cllr Alan Midgely suggested that the renaming of parish to an alternative such as community councils could be discussed at the open day which was agreed.

## **7. CEO's report**

The CEO reported that she has continued to have a busy month with the Code of Conduct being a major topic as the District and Borough Councils have begun to circulate new Codes. Recruitment has been high on her agenda with five member councils in the process of recruiting, one requiring assistance with the full process.

The CEO added that she has attended several meetings regarding climate change which has raised the profile of SALC considerably. At a recent NALC County Officers meeting the main topic was climate change and attendees requested that NALC take a proactive approach in their communications by offering practical solutions that member councils can implement.

A SALC Spring conference has taken place in the past and, if the Board would like to hold a conference next year, arrangements will need to be implemented as soon as possible.

It was agreed that Anne and Anna will prepare a proposal for discussion.

## **8. Financial report**

*As previously discussed.*

## **9. Training and services report**

Anna Beams reported that training attendance has improved in the last month and that there were 47 individual bookings in total by Surrey member councillors and clerks plus bespoke training sessions have been delivered to 2 member councils.

A SALC Clerks Forum is due to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> November with 52 clerks registered to attend.

Anna added that the SALC website has been updated to better reflect the joint working arrangement with Mulberry and Co.

The Chairman requested that a report is prepared containing details of the feedback received in respect of training and a breakdown of the costs of delivering the training.

## **10. The way ahead**

It was noted that the content of this agenda item had been discussed under previous items and therefore, at the Chairman's discretion, no further discussion will take place until the open day in the new year.

## **11. Surrey Byways initiative**

Cllr Stuart McLachlan delivered a report that he had previously prepared (*Appendix B*)

The CEO advised that she had previously held discussions with Cllr McLachlan regarding this matter. She added that, as the individual parish has taken legal advice and not the Association, she is nervous about SALC signing up to something not led by the Association and not endorsed by a majority of our Parish Council members. The County Association represents all member councils and therefore can be a conduit rather than a lead. She suggested that the matter is discussed at the open day in the new year.

Cllr Chris Howard agreed with the CEO and suggested that a discussion needs to be held at the open day regarding SALCs position on lobbying. She added that she believes what Capel Parish Council are doing is admirable but that any lobbying role that SALC undertake should be balanced and conscious of resources.

The Chairman suggested that a copy of the report could be passed to the County Council prior to a regular meeting held between the County and the SALC CEO and himself with a view to obtaining input from Rights of Way and Highways Officers.

It was agreed that a discussion will be taken to the open day regarding lobbying and representing member council's interests.

It was further agreed that the report would be sent to Surrey County Council for input and that the matter would be included in next newsletter.

## **12. Renewal of arrangements with Wellers Hedleys**

The CEO reminded Board Members that a six-month agreement had been entered into with Wellers Hedleys in early April 2021 to provide initial legal support to member councils at a very reasonable rate to the Association. She noted that although the agreement had expired in September, Roger Taylor had continued

to provide support at no extra charge to the Association. The CEO reported that during the six- month period, Wellers Hedley had advised member councils on seven occasions, two property matters and five governance queries.

The CEO recommended that the Association extend the agreement for a further six months at a cost of £250 + VAT.

On a proposal by Cllr Dr Paul Cragg and seconded by Cllr Chris Howard it was **AGREED** to extend the agreement with Wellers Hedleys for a further six months until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

**13. Arrangements for future meetings**

The Chairman informed the Board that he would like to hold an away day in early 2022 when the newly formed Board can discuss future initiatives and the way forward for the Association. He advised that he would also like ensure that a programme of dates for the forthcoming year is confirmed at the away day.

The Chairman added that the meeting scheduled for Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December has been cancelled.

It was agreed that the CEO and Anna Beams would schedule a date and venue for the away day.

**14. Any other business**

Cllr Dr Paul Cragg raised the matter of communication amongst Board Members and the team and requested alternative methods to ensure that requests and responses are exchanged promptly. Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper suggested that WhatsApp could be utilised as a useful tool.

**15. Date and location of next Board meeting**

Away day will take place in the new year, actual date, time and location to be confirmed.

*Meeting closed at 11.39*

Signed (Chairman) \_\_\_\_\_ Approved 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX A

**SALC Limited – Management Accounts Reporting for the quarter to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.**

**Income**

Subscription income is £62,079 of which £213.37 remains unpaid as at the management accounts date.

Training income in the quarter for courses completed is £838 (Q1: £621)

**Expenditure**

The costs incurred to date are £47,935 against a total year end budget of £74,425, we are currently forecasting a year-end expenditure total of £75,191.

All costs are listed within this pack.

### **Bank & Cash Balances**

At the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 there was £61,298 in the current account and £511 in the deposit account. It is anticipated the current account will reduce to circa £35K 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 £13,210 at the year-end date. This will be subject to change as the year progresses and depending also on board decisions re future spending.

### **Time Spent**

Surrey ALC have contracted for Mulberry & Co to provide 15 hours per week (on average) service cover.

In the six-month period actual time spent was 420hrs. This equates to circa 16 hours per week. The data is taken from our time sheet records and is summarise din the table below.

In addition to this we have also spent 10 hours (almost) on bookkeeping and accounts and 30 mins on company secretarial work.

Client	SUR002 - West Sussex Alc Limited	Partner	MARK
Id	Name	Job	Time
ANNA	A Beams	GENERAL	255:04:00
ANNA	A Beams	ADMINISTRATION	154:00:00
MARK	M L Mulberry	GENERAL	11:25
			<b>420:29:00</b>
MARK	M L Mulberry	ACCOUNTS-2021-3	02:30
MARK	M L Mulberry	BOOKKEEPIN	04:05
MARK	M L Mulberry	MANACCS	03:00
ANNA	A Beams	BOOKKEEPIN	00:20
			<b>09:55</b>
NATALIE	N Groome	CO SEC YR	00:30

## APPENDIX B

### **The Future for Byways in Surrey**

#### **Introduction**

In Surrey there is a network of some 76 miles of byways or BOAT's (Byways Open to All Traffic). There are 129 byways in total in the county, (Guildford has 36, Mole Valley 30, Reigate and Banstead 16, Tandridge 16, Waverley 29, Elmbridge 4, Spelthorne 3 and Surrey Heath 1). Each byway forms part of the county highways network and are maintained by Surrey County Council. As with all highways, the byways are governed by the 1984 Road Traffic Act and the 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Amongst many other things, these acts define how and when the byways can be used and by whom.

#### **The Problem**

Most of us who live in rural parts of the county are only too aware of the use and abuse of the byways. In my experience, large convoys of 4x4's arrive, often late in the evening, and drive at inappropriate speeds up and down the byways and often illegally onto the surrounding land. They cause a huge amount of damage, which must be repaired by SCC and private landowners at great expense, who are also forced into building expensive preventative measures to attempt to stop them driving off the byways. Scramble bikes with modified exhausts also roar up and down the byways particularly at weekends shattering the peace and tranquillity of the surrounding area. I know from many other people that these problems are repeated throughout the county, particularly up on Ranmore and Hindhead. The police can only act in a reactive mode to 101 or 999 calls and the miscreants are often long gone when they finally arrive on site. Attempts have been made to manage these problems by working with 4x4 and trail riders groups, but the trouble-makers are not members of these groups and have been quite hostile to being approached and challenged.

### **Byway Closure**

Under the afore-mentioned acts, the county council has the power to grant a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which can modify the use of a byway in order to restrict the use it by 4x4 vehicles. About 25% of the byways already have TRO's imposed on a permanent or seasonal basis. None of these TRO's restrict the use of byways to scramble bikes. SCC uses a gateway policy which has to be passed in order to initiate this procedure. This policy is based on the surface condition of the byway and does not take into consideration the eight different criteria which are specified in the 1984 act, these include noise, the detrimental effect on other users, flora and fauna, and one which even mentions the presence of an AONB.

### **The way forward**

Capel parish council has taken legal advice from a leading barrister in the arena of rights of way, who believes that SCC should be challenged in order to change the policy to include all of the criteria specified in the 1984 act. If successful, this would then open up the way for all parish councils in Surrey, or other bodies, to attempt to close byways in their areas should they wish. A paper has been written by the barrister which needs to be signed. I have already got approval from the AONB and CPRE and I would like SALC to also sign it on behalf of all of their parish council members. Having spoken to many parish councillors already I am certain that all would be more than happy for SALC to put its name to this challenge.

**Stuart McLachlan – Deputy Chairman Capel Parish Council**