



Surrey ALC Ltd.
Minutes of the Board Meeting of Surrey ALC Ltd.
Tuesday 5th July 2022 at 2:00pm
Cranleigh Council Chambers

Attendance

Cllr Steve Cosser, Chairman
Cllr Christine Howard, Vice Chair
Cllr Stuart McLachlan, Director
Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper, Director
Anne Bott, CEO Surrey ALC Ltd.
Mark Mulberry, Mulberry & Co.
Anna Beams, Secretary to the Board

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Dr Paul Cragg, Graham Alleway and Alan Midgley.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

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

The following actions were updated:

Insurance – The matter was deferred with an agreement that clarification would be sought from Cllr Midgley.

Surrey County Council – The CEO reminded the Board that Cllr Matt Furniss has not yet provided a briefing note following his attendance at the Chairs Forum in March.

It was **AGREED** that the CEO would follow up the matter with Cllr Furniss.

4. Chairman's report

The Chairman reported on his following activities since the previous meeting:

Delivery Board – the Chairman recently attended a meeting of the Delivery Board where it was formally agreed that the town and parish councils are represented by the Chairman, Vice-chair and CEO of SALC, with the option of 2 further representatives being appointed if and when appropriate. Timetables are still in the process of being drafted and the Chairman will keep the Board updated.

SALC Chairmans Forum – The Chairman attended the recent forum and was pleased with attendance and content.

5. CEO's report

The CEO advised that the Chairmans Forum had been well attended and that feedback received was favourable. Further dates are being scheduled for the remainder of the year.

Presentations included a briefing from Jim Babbington, Vice Chair of NACO and author of the National Guidance for Operation London Bridge, guidance notes will be shared with member councils by email and on the website once they have been received. The CEO explained that Operation London Bridge is the protocol to be adopted following the death of Her Majesty the Queen.

A suggestion had been made to reduce the length of the forums to under 1 hour.

Following discussions it was **AGREED** that the forums would remain as they are in order to allow sufficient time for presentations, updates and discussion.

The CEO reported that during May and following the start of a new civic year, the majority of queries she received were from new Clerks and Chairmen and were, in particular, concerning procedure and issues involving the election of a Chairman to the Council.

Queries received in June mainly focused on finances and accounts.

Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper queried the wording in the NALC model Standing Orders regarding the election of Chairman and advised that she has received alternative wording from Surrey Heath Borough Council. The CEO suggested that she takes the wording to NALC to consider.

ACTION: the CEO to approach NALC with alternative wording to consider for adoption in the model Standing Orders.

6. Finance report & subscriptions

Mark Mulberry referred to his report (appendix A).

He added that the association is forecast to hold c.£53,000 in reserves at 31st March 2023.

Following a suggestion by the Chairman, Mark Mulberry **PROPOSED** that the Board allocate £10,000 for projects, reducing the reserves to c.£43,000.

It was **AGREED** that the Board would consider the proposal at the next Board meeting.

Mark **PROPOSED** that the subscription rate for 2023-24 is increased by 2%, taking the current rate of 34.35p per elector to 35.04p and that the cap is increased.

It was **AGREED** to increase the subscription rate by 2% to 35.04p per elector for 2023-24. The cap increase to be considered at the next meeting.

The Chairman requested that the CEO and Anna draft some wording to send to member councils conveying a positive message regarding the increase in subscriptions. He further requested that Anna Beams circulate details of the Directors expense claim process to Board members.

ACTIONS:

- Anna to circulate claim forms and explanatory note to Board members.
- CEO and Anna to draft wording for member councils regarding subscription rates for 2023-24.
- Agenda item for next meeting – sum of £10,000 to be reserved for projects & confirmation of cap increase

7. Training report

Anna referred to her report previously circulated (appendix B). She added that plans are in place to provide an updated councillor's training programme to be delivered post elections 2023.

In response to a query raised, she explained that, although SALC is a membership association for the council, the training programme also includes clerks training as the Mulberry & Co programme is provided for both councillors and officers.

The CEO suggested that a post-election member's pack could be produced to help raise the profile of SALC.

It was **AGREED** that Anna would research costs of producing a pack and provide a report for the next Board meeting.

ACTION: Anna to research methods and costs for producing a member's pack and report back to the Board.

8. Away Day follow up

The CEO referred to her report previously circulated (appendix C). She highlighted her suggestion that there is a need for a professional newsletter and added that, in her experience, a newsletter may be more widely read than a website. Anna provided copies of previous newsletters and added that she will take guidance from the CEO and Board as to methods and content of communication.

Provision of service/training - It was suggested that SALC should produce an in-house training programme. Mark Mulberry explained that SALC currently benefit from outsourcing training as the costs are shared.

Data sharing – Mark Mulberry explained that Mulberry & Co do not process any personal data other than in respect of providing information regarding a specific training booking where contact details have been provided.

Communications – Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper suggested that there is a need to update the profile of the association including refreshing the website and having a better social media presence. She added that the website could contain more useful information and be more professional.

Mark Mulberry advised that Mulberry & Co are contracted to provide and maintain a website and that the content is agreed by the Board. The website was initially designed as a signposting site to documents and news items from associated organisations such as NALC.

Following a full and open discussion the following were **PROPOSED and AGREED**:

- SALC to explore the option of a new website
- SALC to update the newsletter as a priority before a new website is commissioned
- Cllrs Katia Malcaus Cooper and Chris Howard to work with Anna Beams to update the current newsletter and website
- The CEO and Anna to draw up a Working Proposal to bring to the Board

ACTION:

- Anna to organise a meeting with Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper and Chris Howard to discuss the newsletter and website
- The CEO and Anna to draw up a Working Proposal.

9. AGM arrangements

Anna advised that speakers and a fee need to be agreed for the half day conference following the AGM.

The following were **PROPOSED** by the Board:

- the fee is set at £25 per person and that the fee also applies to Board members
- the following are approached to attend as guest speakers:
 - a representative from Twenty's Plenty
 - a County Council representative to speak on Twenty's Plenty
 - a representative from Highways – Matt Furniss or an officer
 - a representative from the Police – Gavin Stevens or another suitable representative

The above items were **AGREED**

ACTION: The CEO and Anna Beams to arrange and book speakers

10. Surrey Hills Society – Board representation

The CEO reported that in previous years a SALC representative had been appointed to the Surrey Hills Society Board, although that had not happened at the last AGM in October. Correspondence has recently been circulated directly by the Surrey Hills Society to SALC member councils inviting them to attend a joint Surrey Hills and SALC conference. The CEO explained that correspondence of this nature would usually be disseminated through SALC and that she was not aware of this conference before the invitations were circulated.

She requested that the Board address the matter of whether SALC wished to appoint a representative to Surrey Hills and for clarification as to the role of SALC within the organisation.

The CEO **PROPOSED** that the Board elect a representative to the Surrey Hills Society.

Following discussions, it was **AGREED** that the Chairman would initially undertake the role of representative while the role is clarified and relationships re-defined with Surrey Hills. It was further **AGREED** that the Board will then elect a representative at a later date.

11. Legal provision & support

The CEO reported that Roger Taylor of Wellers Hedleys has indicated that he is keen to continue to provide legal support to SALC and that invoices will be issued shortly. He will advise the CEO of provisions he intends to put in place to ensure continuous support to member councils when he is away from his office.

It was suggested that quotes should be sought from alternative providers as a contingency.

It was **AGREED** to defer the item until further information has been received from Roger Taylor.

12. Recruitment of Directors

The CEO advised that an approach has been made by Cllr Michael George of Horley Town Council to join the SALC Board.

The CEO **PROPOSED** that Cllr Michael George is appointed to the Board as he is an active Councillor who has been supportive of SALC. Cllr George is also based in the east of the county, an area not currently heavily represented by the Board.

It was **AGREED** to recommend to the AGM that Cllr George is appointed as a Director on the Board.

Following a full discussion, it was **AGREED** to delegate the recommendation of Directors to the Chairman and CEO before the AGM on 30th September and that, following the AGM, recommendations will be made by the Board.

It was further **AGREED** that skills audits would be carried out in future recruitment exercises but that the current priority is to represent the whole county.

13. Analysis of CEO working hours

The CEO referred to her report previously circulated and suggested that Board members seek clarification on any matters directly from her if necessary.

14. CEO appraisal – key objectives 2022

The Chairman advised that he has undertaken an appraisal with the CEO along with the Vice-chair, Cllr Chris Howard. A list of key objectives was agreed and shared with the Board and the Chairman suggested that if any Board members have any comments regarding the objectives that they raise them with him directly.

He added that an interim informal appraisal will be held after 6 months with a full appraisal taking place after 12 months.

11. Date and location for next Board meeting

Monday 3rd October 2022 @ 10am by Zoom

16:24 Meeting closed

Signed (Chairman) _____

Dated _____

SALC Limited – Management Accounts Reporting for the quarter to 30th June 2022.

Income

Subscription income is £62,756 of which £20,149.26 remains unpaid as at the management accounts date. Statements will be issued after the board meeting.

Expenditure

The costs incurred to date are £30,104 against a total year end budget of £75,434, we are currently forecasting a year-end expenditure total of £75,304. The largest cost item is NALC fees at £16,233, followed by salaries and Ni at £7,375.

All costs are listed within this pack.

Bank & Cash Balances

At the 30th June 2022 there was £72,542 in the current account and £511 in the deposit account. It is anticipated the current account will reduce to circa £52,811 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 £11,846 (2022: £10,975) 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 £13k each year. I would therefore propose the following charges per elector going forward

Actual 2022/23 £0.3435p per elector {income circa £62.8} – Capped at £1,750

2023/24 £0.3504p per elector {income circa £64.6k} – Capped at £1,775

2024/24 £0.3574p per elector {income circa £65.9k} – Capped at £1,800

2025/25 £0.3645p per elector {income circa £67.2k} – Capped at £1,825

Time Spent

In the three-month period to 30th June 2022 – SALC have contracted for Mulberry & Co to provide 12 hours per week (on average) service cover (2021 15hrs). For the quarter this equates to circa 168 hours.

In the period actual time spent was 95hrs. This equates to circa 7 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.

Training Report for Surrey Board 2022-23 Quarter 1

Programme

Dates until 31st March 2023 have been published on the Mulberry & Co website.

Topics currently included on the programme are:

New & refresher Councillors training – delivered by Andy Beams, Mulberry & Co

- The Role of Parish Councillors
- Governance & Compliance
- Community Advocacy & Engagement
- Local Government Finance
- Effective Chairmanship & Meetings

New & refresher Clerks training – delivered by Steve Trice, Town Clerk & SLCC Chairman

- New Clerks Programme includes:
 - Roles, Responsibilities & Working Relationships
 - Meetings for Clerks
 - Co-option, Elections & Annual Meetings
 - Council Powers & Duties
 - Council Policies
 - Financial Management for Clerks ****delivered by Andy Beams****
- The modules above are bookable as either a full programme or individual sessions

Planning training – delivered by Steve Tilbury MSc AssocRTPI, Steve Tilbury Consulting Ltd

- Introduction to Planning
- Local Plans & Policy Making
- Latest Developments in Planning

Finance training – delivered by Mark Mulberry & Andy Beams, Mulberry & Co

- Budget Planning & Precept Setting
- Introduction to VAT Workshop
- VAT Partial Exemption Workshop
- Year End Finance & Audit Preparation
- Council as a trustee ****to be added soon****
- Financial Management for Clerks
- Local Government Finance for Councillors

Discussions are taking place with Breakthrough Communications to improve the communications training offering and dates will be added to the programme as soon as they are available.

Bespoke training is available for all topics on request.

We are currently planning training on the process of elections for Clerks and Officers for late 2022 / early 2023 and also an updated New Councillors training programme to take place following elections in 2023.

Costs

Fees range from £35 - £50 depending on the length of the session.

£300 - £450 for bespoke training depending on preparation time required and the length of the session.

The clerks training is available to book as a full course at £200.00.

A breakdown of costs for Surrey during Q1 is as follows:

	TOTAL	Clerks	Cllrs	Finance	Planning	On Demand
Surrey income	£3,885.00	£340.00*	£800.00	£0.00	£800.00	£850.00
Surrey pro-rata costs	£1,847.43	£251.85	£50.89	£0.00	£325.93	£421.81
Surrey surplus/deficit	£2,037.57	£88.15	£749.11	£0.00	£474.07	£428.19
Contribution to SALC	£1,018.78	£44.07	£374.56	£0.00	£237.04	£214.09

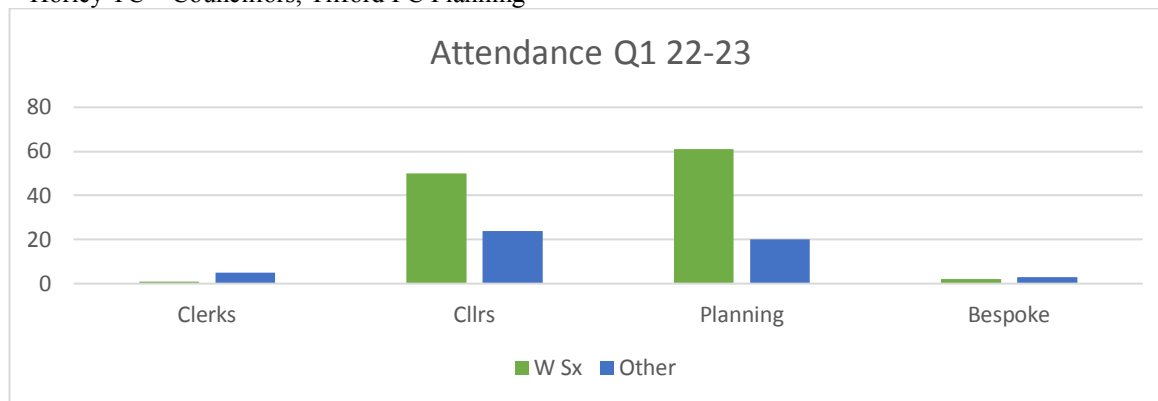
*includes 1 clerk taking full course @ £200.00

Attendance

Breakdown of Attendance during Q1

	Surrey	Other	Total	Surrey % of total
Clerks	5	1	6	83.33%
Cllrs	19	55	74	25.68%
Planning	20	61	81	24.69%
Bespoke	2*	3	5	40.00%
Total	46	120	166	27.71%

* Horley TC – Councillors, Tilford PC Planning



Feedback

A printout of completed feedback forms will be shared at the meeting however I have attached a letter received from Horley Town Council which they were happy to be shared.

The training programme is regularly amended and modified following feedback received and we have plans to update and relaunch the training section of the Mulberry & Co website.

Anna Beams
Mulberry & Co

HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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Andy Beams
Mulberry & Co.
By Email: Councils@mulberryandco.co.uk

28 April 2022

Dear Andy

LG Training Event for Horley Town Council

On behalf of us all at Horley Town Council, I am writing to thank-you and congratulate you on the excellent bespoke Local Government Training Event you provided for Members and Staff earlier this month.

Those present were very impressed with your delivery of the training and found the session to be both comprehensive and very informative. The topics covered with a key focus on Powers & Duties; Roles & Responsibilities, Meetings & Agendas/Minutes were all found to be both relevant and met all the training objectives we had anticipated. We found the whole exercise to be very interactive and especially so with the many opportunities given to be able to raise questions relative to the way we conduct council business and it is most encouraging to know that we do this exceptionally well. Additional comments I have received on the training event are as follows:

"As always, Andy provided a very comprehensive training session covering all aspects of the roles of a town councillor and how they relate to members of staff."

"I think his vast experience as a locum clerk adds to the quality of the training."

"I look forward to the next session on finance."

"The council's decision to engage Andy in providing bespoke training was a very good one".

We were also pleased to be able to circulate the training presentation slides to those unable to attend and to refer back to the guidance notes as and when required. We now feel it would be most helpful to book in the Finance part in the Autumn, around the time of our precept setting discussions and I will contact you nearer the time to arrange this.

Once again, thank you for all your assistance in this regard and we would have no hesitation in recommending such bespoke training events to other local authorities like ourselves as hugely beneficial for all the reasons we have stated in this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Walsh'.

Joan Walsh
Town Clerk
Horley Town Council



Away Day – Follow up

Provision of Service/Training

Agreed to set up Working Group to look at future provision having regard to the points raised at the Away Day – supplier of choice/ balance of external provision/direct/ shared and the 'wording' on website.

Action: Board to agree membership.

Data Sharing

Risks attached to the sharing of SALC data

Action: Mark to initially advise Board on his views.

Communications

Action: Agreed Katia and Chris, having set a direction of travel, will look at how some of the proposals could be achieved, the resources required and will report to the Board.

Areas for consideration included 'one stop' shop, improved communication links including a more professional Newsletter rather than bland bulletin, an enhanced Logo for more impact, provision of a breadth of services to raise profile. Full details are in the Notes of the Away Day.

In order to take this forward, it has become clear from discussions that there needs to be further formal clarity and direction from the Board on this process, not least a provisional figure for budget purposes.

Newsletter

One of the areas for change was to redesign the Newsletter.

I do believe there is a pressing need for a 'professional' Newsletter. It would initially be a cost effective and a reasonably quick means of enhancing our communications, raising SALC's profile. It would include, amongst other things, the opportunity to have newsworthy items from Board Members, staff, Parish Councils/other organisations, a focused councillors/clerks area to welcome new members/clerks, acknowledge qualifications/ awards etc., key NALC information that needs action...

Anna has offered to work on a framework for a Newsletter in July. It would be ideal to have this go out in early September so that we can also promote AGM/Conference. An alternative would be to consider initially sourcing someone independent with professional expertise to provide the template which Anna can then manage going forward. (I have a potential contact who has 30 years of local government communications experience in Borough and Town/Parish Councils).

Anne -June 2022