



Dear Member,

As we approach the end of 2021 it is a good time to reflect on how successful you all have been in conducting business in the most difficult of circumstances.

Parish Councils, councillors and staff alike have had to contend with losing the ability to hold virtual meetings after the 6th May, yet still had to comply with all the COVID requirements for safety. Most achieved this which is no mean feat!

Hybrid Meetings - Unquestionably the ability to hold meetings virtually did, in many parishes, enable better connection with the community with increased public attendance at Meetings. However many councillors still feel that face to face meetings enable a better debate and decision making. NALC, with the support of the County Associations, are, therefore, continuing to press the Minister (Michael Gove MP) for an 'Order' to be made which will allow hybrid meetings. Lobbying Government has been planned for the 23rd March – more information in the New Year

Civility and Respect Project led by NALC/SLCC/Government -the objective is to strengthen the ethical framework as nationally there is growing evidence of an increasing lack of respect amongst members that needs to be addresses. As one member has said ' there is a tendency to avoid dealing with poor behaviour and like a

holly bush – avoid it and it grows’.

SALC AGM and Conference - we started the year with uncertainty as to how services would be provided should we separate from Sussex. Our new structure has enabled us to focus on Surrey Parishes. The AGM and Conference not only led to voting in a strong Board but we had excellent presentations from Surrey Police and Surrey County Council plus a ‘climate change’ speaker who has a background of Local Government and was able to show how Parish Councils can take positive actions at a local level to support the climate change agenda.

Chairs/clerks Forums – communication with you is very important to us. The attendance at both forums has been brilliant and we hope that it will continue in 2022. It is not only an opportunity to receive updates but allows networking and sharing of experiences. Please do join us. Dates will be sent out in January. Also the Surrey Board will be looking at other means of communication.

Working with SCC/Police and Crime Commissioner - we have now also established regular meetings with Surrey County Council and also met with the Police and Crime Commissioner who is keen to visit Parish Councils.

County Deals - SCC has, it is believed, not been selected in the first wave of pilots for a County Deal. It is reported that the Communities Secretary (Michael Gove MP) did not feel it appropriate to select his own constituency as there could be a perception of favouritism. However, SCC may consider, in consultation with other organisations including Parish Councils, whether it is feasible to take forward some of the proposals set out in its pilot bid where a change to legislation would not be required. **We will report further in January 2022.**

Levelling up Agenda – this was due to be published in December but we hear that it has been deferred to the New Year.

Thank you for your support and feedback – long may it continue

Anne



Climate Change Agenda

Many parish councils have started initiatives and we would be delighted if these could be shared with other Surrey parishes either directly or through SALC. NALC has been asked by the County Associations to provide guidelines and practical suggestions for Parish Councils based on experiences. The 'Friends of the Earth' publication has also been recommended as a good source.



Surrey Hills AONB

Following many months of submissions from Surrey Hills, Natural England are undertaking a review of the Surrey Hills boundary to establish whether it should be extended. Natural England are gathering evidence and Surrey Hills would like as many of you as possible to complete the Survey.

Further information and a link to the survey can be found [here](#)

The Surrey Hills e-newsletter has been circulated to all clerks and provides easy access to further information.



Queens Silver Jubilee (2nd June 2022)

Apart from lighting beacons there is the national 'Queens Jubilee Green Canopy' which is being led in Surrey by the County's Lord Lieutenant, Michael More-Molyneux. One of the suggestions is for Chairs of Parish Councils to each plant a single tree in their parish with a plaque. Other larger schemes involve creating a 'green canopy' of trees or planting 7 trees in a V formation (as planted for Queen Victoria's Jubilee) marking the Queen's seven decades of service.

The Pageant Master for the UK will be formally publishing guidance on the 2nd January 2022.

The Woodland Trust are providing 'free' trees to communities, you can apply [here](#)



Contracts of Employment – The current NALC model is currently being updated as the current Model has not been amended to take account of changes. Please contact Anne for further guidance if required. anne.bott@surreyalc.co.uk

NJC pay agreement – we have received a number of enquiries as to when this will be settled as Councils are preparing budgets. The Employer's final offer is 1.75% which has not, as yet, been accepted. It is recommended that, pending settlement, Councils budget for c 2.75%..



Contract changes in public contract thresholds

Model Financial Regulation 11.1(c) refers to the Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive.

For public supply and public service contracts the threshold is changing to £213,477 inc VAT and for public works contracts the threshold is changing to £5,336,937 inc VAT.



Training Programme

It has been great to see many of you at training events. It is effectively the same team of trainers that ran the SSALC training. The training is currently modular and being delivered by Zoom with each module lasting on average around 90 minutes. This has proved to be very successful as not only are members happier with shorter time but it has allowed us to have much more focus on particular areas that affect the way a council, and its members, undertake its business. Feedback has suggested that the more established/experienced members have also found it useful as a refresher. More topics are regularly being added to the programme and it is worth checking the website regularly – see further details below.

We believe that the service provides very good 'value for money' particularly as Surrey Members get a discounted price under our arrangement with Mulberry and Co!

Further details, fees and booking forms can be found [here](#)



Other useful links

- [Selling to Government](#): Although not specific to Parish Councils there is some useful information, for example around the use of contract finder and the prompt payment of invoices.
- [Face covering posters](#)



And finally Anne, Anna and the Surrey Board Team wish you all a wonderful Christmas with your family and friends!



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