

**From:** Lindsey Westman lindsey.westman@lalc.co.uk  
**Subject:** FAO: ALL COUNCILS- CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION  
**Date:** 17 March 2020 at 12:15  
**To:** Lindsey Westman lindsey.westman@lalc.co.uk

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**From:** Katrina Evans <katrina.evans@lalc.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 17 March 2020 11:54  
**To:** Lindsey Westman <lindsey.westman@lalc.co.uk>  
**Subject:** FW: FAO: ALL COUNCILS- CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION

## **FAO: All Councils**

We have received the following guidance from NALC to share with you to enable all Councils to keep up to date with the latest advice regarding coronavirus and the work of Town and Parish Councils.

### **Coronavirus**

The coronavirus situation is fast-moving and I know a number of you will be worried about its impact. We have produced information related to the Coronavirus for local (parish and town) councils on a [dedicated page on the NALC website](#). This should not be used as a substitute for government advice, however, there are some practicalities specific to local councils where we hope this information will help you plan and manage your risks.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

### **Coronavirus and cybersecurity**

NALC's partners Microshade have also provided some timely additional advice for local councils in this [blog](#), as fraudsters are exploiting the spread of Coronavirus to facilitate various types of fraud and cybercrime.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/nalc-blog/entry/1420-cybercriminals-exploit-the-spread-of-coronavirus?>

NALC have also confirmed that they are engaging with SAAA about audit and with MHCLG on a range of issues. A summary of their list so far for MHCLG is below.

- Holding of statutory meetings – such as annual parish meeting and the annual council meeting
- Audit deadlines
- Elections deadlines (if the elections are not delayed). Plus, impact/implications if they are delayed.
- Democratic decision making eg if councils are unable to be quorate for an extended period of time. This includes the question of phone/online attendance

### **CURRENT ADVICE BASED ON THE GOVERNMENT POSITION**

1. If an Employee has a high temperature or new continuous cough, Government advice is for them to stay at home for 7 days.

They will qualify for Statutory/Contractual Sick Pay for the whole 7-day period.

If their symptoms develop into illness, they will be treated as being on sick leave and will need a Doctor's note after 7 days. This will have to be supplied at a later date and backdated to the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the illness.

2. If an Employee is advised to self-isolate by either their Doctor or NHS 111, they need to do so for 14 days.

They will qualify for Statutory Sick Pay for the whole 14 day period.

They should receive some notification from the Doctor who advised them to self-isolate, this will need to be supplied to the Employer.

3. If an Employer decides to send staff home without the presence of symptoms or medical advice, the Employees are entitled to full pay.
4. If a business decides to close temporarily, staff would be entitled to a statutory daily guaranteed payment of £29 for 5 days within a 3-month period.
5. If schools close.

Parents who are directly responsible for the care of children up to 18 years old are entitled to Time off for Dependents (Emergency Leave). This is unpaid and would normally entail a reasonable period of **one** day.

For longer periods, staff can either request paid leave, or take up to 4 weeks unpaid Parental Leave, both of which require Employer approval. This can be withheld if too many staff are already absent.

Please note: This information is subject to change depending upon Government announcements.

For further advice please see:

[www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus)

[www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response](http://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

<https://www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk/newsletters.php>

**DATE OF ADVICE – 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020**

Chris Moses LLM Chartered FCIPD

**Personnel**

**Advice &**

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### Coronavirus

Please Note, we can provide information on paying Sick Pay to staff only, during this outbreak please go to:

<https://www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk/newsletters.php>

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For any other information about Coronavirus, please check the following useful websites

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

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[www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk](http://www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk)

Published research can be viewed at <https://ssrn.com/author=2701127>

## FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LALC

First and foremost, my message is please do not panic but follow the guidance as it is released and LALC will ensure that all information is sent at the earliest opportunity and uploaded onto the website. Also public safety and that of members and officers is paramount.

For councils that are already thinking about their Annual Parish Meetings and Annual Parish Council Meetings the advice that I (from LALC) am issuing is the following:

The Chairman could call an extraordinary meeting at the earliest opportunity to discuss and resolve the implications of the council not being able to meet and put a plan in place.

The council could resolve to postpone the Annual Parish Meeting (held between 1 March and 1 June), should the risk of a public meeting become too high and hopefully NALC/The Government will provide further advice in regard to this over the coming days. If it is outside of the legal framework of holding an APM, I would not expect councils to be challenged under the circumstances.

This will also apply to the Annual Parish Council Meeting held in May. Should the council not be able to meet or be quorate to meet and elect the Chairman, this process will need to be postponed until such time when it may be – again we would expect advice from NALC/The Government to dictate this. I would reiterate that public safety and that of the members etc is more important, and the severity of this epidemic should override the legal framework of holding the annual meeting of the council in May.

We have received many phone calls/emails into the office with regard to meetings being cancelled or not meeting the quorum to enable them to meet. Should councils find themselves in a position whereby they are not quorate (3 or 1/3), then the clerk would need to have an email consensus of the meeting being cancelled due to members not wishing to meet due to the risk of the Coronavirus. The clerk would then take the decision to cancel the meeting. The clerk **SHOULD** have delegated powers to make certain decisions in consultation with the Chair & Vice Chair ... round robin email to members ... etc to ensure business continuity. There has been much speculation that during this period, councils may be able to use skype (or other methods) of meeting remotely. This may be an option, as well as email, phone calls – and comments etc collated by the clerk. If it has not been possible to hold an extraordinary meeting to adopt a 'plan of action', then the council would need to remotely agree for the clerk to have delegated powers to act on behalf of the council, to be ratified at the next possible meeting. I would just like to remind members that councillors, including the Chairman, do not have any decision making powers as an individual. Decisions can only be made as a collective. This is why it is essential for the clerk to have delegated powers. Meeting remotely via skype, email etc WILL ONLY BE A

TEMPORARY MEASURE. We cannot alter our Standing Orders to reflect this as it is not what the legislation dictates ... this is why council needs to adopt a plan of action.

Please find attached notes from an extraordinary meeting that was called last night at Mablethorpe & Sutton Town Council. This is an example of what councils could be doing within the next week or so at an extraordinary or any scheduled meeting should you be quorate to meet.

Should councils be quorate to hold meetings, they could pass a resolution to hold all meetings for the foreseeable future, in Closed Session to exclude the public and press. Again, this would be perfectly acceptable under the circumstances. All notes of the meeting should be available for the public to see unless of course, they were of a confidential nature and exempt from the public (eg staffing information).

With regard to office closures, this is a decision for the council to put arrangements in place for home working, who can/cannot work from the office, limitations on visitors and prohibit the public. I appreciate many clerks work from home, and the council as the employer needs to ensure the safety of the officer whether it be at home or in an office.

**The information given above from myself is what the council could do, but it ultimately has to be the decision of the council until such time as MHCLG may issue further guidance of what MUST happen**

We have also received other messages with regard to councils helping their communities. Please see previous email circulated from LRF. Councils may already have provision within their Community Emergency Plan, those that do not and wish to help are able to do so and any cost implications would be s.137 expenditure. Please ensure where volunteers are enlisted that the council's insurance provider is informed and relevant risk assessments are undertaken.

With regard to LALC's training events and meetings, we have taken the decision to cancel all training up to 21 April 2020, when this will be reassessed. Delegates will be informed directly.

I am sure that councils still have many questions and we will try to answer these best we can, however my advice would be to visit the websites as indicated daily and we will endeavour to get information to you all as soon as we can. LALC officers will likely work remotely over the coming weeks and we will take guidance from NALC and the Government as well as our Executive Committee as to what is best for the Association and continuity of business.

For any urgent queries that I may not have covered in this email, please send me an email and I will do my best to answer if I can.

For all other general enquiries, please STAY CALM AND CARRY ON ..... But stay safe!

Kind regards

**KJEvans**

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Chief Executive





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