

From: **National Association of Local Councils** newsletter@nalc.gov.uk
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To: clerk@waddingham.gov.uk



Chief executive's bulletin

NALC website

Due to the high volume of traffic on the NALC website (our dedicated coronavirus page continues to be updated regularly and has around 70,000 hits), this week we moved to a new web hosting with greater capacity. As a result, you may have experienced problems accessing the website over the last few days, this is now resolved so thank you for bearing with us!

Coronavirus examples and impact

More and more local (parish and town) councils have been sharing with us what they are doing to support their community at this time. We've updated and republished our [Coronavirus case studies](#) publication to include over 150 examples, but please do keep sharing with us what you are doing through our [simple survey](#). And next week we really do need your help by telling us the financial impact on your council, so please keep an eye out for that survey and respond as quickly as you can.

Accounts and audit deadlines

One of the (many!) issues we have been raising with the government in recent weeks has been statutory accounts and audit deadlines. This week we responded on behalf of the sector to a rapid consultation – working closely with a range of bodies including the Society of Local Council Clerks – on proposed regulations which would extend the deadline for the inspection/publication requirements in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. You can [read our response](#) and be rest assured we are continuing to press the government on this issue.

Local authority meetings regulations

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There has also been quite a lot of activity this week on the regulations regarding local authority meetings. We provided feedback to the government on draft regulations which you can [read here](#). Charlotte Eisenhart, head of member services and Jane Moore, senior solicitor and legal services manager have been involved in a number of calls with a group of local government bodies including the Local Government Association, Association of Democratic Support Officer, Lawyers in Local Government and Centre for Public Scrutiny, about support to councils on holding remote meetings. And yesterday the regulations were laid and made and will come into force on 4 April. We have already published on the Coronavirus page a [legal briefing](#) on our interpretation of the regulations, as well as practical guidance on how to hold effective council meetings.

County officers weekly meeting

NALC was pleased to coordinate a Zoom call with over 30 county associations on 1 April. These weekly calls were set up in response to the pandemic so that all of us can coordinate our support to members as swiftly and seamlessly as possible. This week we discussed a wide range of issues including the new remote meetings regulations, government furloughing scheme, the financial impact of the pandemic on local councils and other issues of relevance to our members.

NALC Policy Committee

NALC's Policy Committee held its first-ever remote meeting via Zoom on 1 April, here are a few highlights:

- The committee thanked NALC staff for their work under difficult conditions and endorsed the approach agreed by the Management Board to prioritise Coronavirus and focus on support to councils and county associations and engaging with the government; they also commended our work so far and noted that work on other projects and campaigns would be impacted
- Councillors noted feedback received so far on the draft report on the experience of parish elections in May 2019, and progress on the climate change project including recent telecon of the task and finish group
- The committee considered a number of policy motions from county associations, with a motion from Cheshire on sustainable development not supported; two motions from the Kent regarding elections supported; and motion from Suffolk on major infrastructure projects, also supported
- Other issues covered included Lobby Day which the Committee praised and said was quite an achievement in the circumstances, and a reintroduction to Parliament of the Toilet Tax legislation but that second reading date had been affected by events and early Easter recess.

And finally...

I wanted to express some birthday wishes to some new local councils for whom the 1 April is now worth marking, including Weymouth Town Council and other councils set up last year who celebrate their first birthday, and Northampton Town Council, Shipley Town Council and others who were born this week - congratulations to you all!

Jonathan Owen



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