



Chief executive's bulletin

NALC/SLCC meetings checklist

Following the government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4 July, both NALC and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) strongly advise local (parish and town) councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face-to-face contact. If the council wishes to consider returning to face-to-face meetings there are a range of issues which need to be addressed before this can take place. This week we jointly published a [checklist for holding an in-person council meeting](#) to ensure this decision is made in accordance with relevant regulations and requirements. Further guidance can be found on the [NALC](#) and [SLCC](#) websites.

Second reading of Toilets Bill

I'm delighted the Toilets Bill had its second reading in the House of Commons yesterday, especially as fast-tracking this legislation to exempt local councils from paying business rates on public toilets was among our asks of the government to help alleviate current financial pressures. Our head of policy and communications, Justin Griggs, shared the headlines from the debate on [Twitter](#), you can also read the debate on [Hansard](#) or watch again on [parliamentlive.tv](#). Remaining stages in the Commons are on 3 September before the Bill moves to the House of Lords.

Letter from JPAG on accounts and audit

To help clarify a range of queries since the publication of the Practitioners' Guide, the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) has written a letter to local councils which you can read [here](#).

NALC National Assembly

NALC's National Assembly – comprising councillors representing each of the 43 county associations – met remotely on 14 July, here's a summary:

- Our chairman, Cllr Sue Baxter, and I thanked county association and NALC staff for their continuing support to our councils and each other, noting our weekly remote meetings with county officers have helped build closer relations, our councillors have taken to remote meetings so effectively which we're grateful for, and as a wider team, we've done well and are very proud of everyone!
- Councillors agreed to hold the annual general meeting (AGM) remotely on 29 October and recommend the continuation of our current auditors for another year and an affiliation fee increase of 3%.
- Our new look report on our work over the last quarter received positive feedback (do check it out in agenda papers which are in the [member updates section of the NALC website](#) (login required)).
- Each of the committee chairmen gave an overview of their remote meetings held over the last few months including non-coronavirus activity in their work programmes.

Keep planning local

Keep planning local was the message to the government in a joint letter from NALC, the Local Government Association (LGA) and other national bodies this week, published by *The Telegraph* – you can read more [here](#).

Code of conduct consultation and webinars

Staying on the [proposed new national code of conduct](#), a reminder that the closing date to respond to the [consultation](#) is 17 August. The LGA is also holding three special online events for local councils, you can register on [one of the sessions for free](#) and the dates and codes are 29 July (MMCC2907), 30 July (MMCC3007) and 5 August (MMCC0508).

In and about

- On 16 July, Justin joined a webinar organised by YourNeighbour.org which launched [Engaging Locally: a toolkit for working well with your local authority](#). I know many of you already have good links with faith organisations and churches in your areas and will find this toolkit of interest.
- Thanks to the Essex Association of Local Councils for inviting me to their remote executive committee on 16 July to update them on the work of NALC, it was also good to hear about their business continuity and finance plans, plus some robust views on the current consultation by the LGA on the code of conduct!

And finally...

A huge congratulations to NALC's partners [BHIB Councils Insurance](#) for scooping two awards at last night's virtual ceremony for the Broker Innovation Awards. Ashwin Mistry won Director of the Year recognising his achievements in leading the business and the work he does influence the insurance market. The wider team won Digital Broker of the Year recognising their work developing and launching a new online product and brand for freelancers called [Create](#). Here's a great comment from Michelle South, schemes director: "We are incredibly proud of our achievements, it was great to participate and have a bit of fun at a virtual awards ceremony at what has been and continues to be a

have a bit of fun at a virtual awards ceremony at what has been and continues to be a very uncertain time, especially when you're based in Leicester!"

Jonathan Owen



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