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NATIONAL ALC UPDATE – CORONAVIRUS

Local council meetings: Under the Coronavirus Act, the Secretary of State has published meetings regulations which remove requirements to hold annual meetings and allow virtual meetings up to 7 May 2021. These are contained in (snappily named) [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#).

To help you, National ALC has launched two documents — a [legal briefing note](#) on their interpretation and also practical guidance on [how to hold effective remote council meetings](#).

National ALC has also responded further to the government, over some practical issues for our sector – more can be found in the engaging with government section on their web page: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Government Job Retention Scheme: Under this, some employers will be able to apply for grants of 80% for 'furloughed employees' (employees on leave of absence), provided they keep them employed. The guidance states that "the government expects that the scheme will not be used by many public sector organisations, as the majority of public sector employees are continuing to provide essential public services or contribute to the response to the coronavirus outbreak". National ALC feels that the government guidance at this point is still not clear on whether local councils could reclaim or not, such as for community halls, and is seeking more detail from the government to clarify this situation.

Accounts and Audit (coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2020: NALC has responded to proposed regulations from the government which would extend deadlines under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for principal councils. However, at 30th March, the government had said it was not planning to amend the requirements for town and parish councils! NALC is 'on the case', working with the different sizes of local councils, and also the SLCC—[read NALC's response on behalf of the local council sector](#). Once resolved, we should be able to receive final guidance from PKF Littlejohn.

Funerals, burials and cremation: If applicable for you, Public Health England has published [guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus](#). It includes advice on maintaining social distancing at funeral services and shielding vulnerable individuals from contact with bodies of those who had confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Crematoria and cemeteries should now be closed to the public,

We will continue summarise the guidance provided for you on the National ALC web page: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus> in the coming weeks.

NORFOLK UPDATE

Norfolk Community Foundation have reported that, as of 1 April, £330,000 had been raised for their Covid-19 Community Response Fund. Although the fund had only been open for one week, they have awarded more than 60 grants, including many via town and parish councils. Click here to get [funding details and application forms](#) and follow this link to give a donation to support [Norfolk's Covid-19 Community Response Fund](#).

We also continue to hear about a lot of great work across the county- well done to all those town and parish councils delivering great practical help to residents at the present time!

CONTINGENCY PLANNING – CLERKS

We are ready to help any clerks who might become unwell and unavailable. We have been hearing about clerks who have contingency plans, such as for having a buddy clerk as backup and being ready should they fall ill. Contact us if any concerns/difficulties arise.

CLERKS PAY

Around this time of year, we normally announce the new pay scales for local council clerks for the upcoming financial year. You might be aware that these pay scales are based on the local government pay scales negotiated by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. However, the Employers offer of 2% was rejected in February, and we still await details of the final settlement.

From 6 April 2020, the working from home allowance will increase to £26 per month. See: <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim32815>

DATA PROTECTION

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has published 'Data protection and coronavirus: what you need to know': <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-coronavirus/>. We can offer Free Data Protection Advice to Covid19 Community Groups. Inevitably, well-meaning volunteers are collecting personal data, some of which may be sensitive. Although data protection laws do not prevent anyone from helping others in need, collecting, storing and sharing somebody else's personal data is a responsibility that is best thought about, so Phil Brown, our local data protection specialist, is offering his services free to those who would like guidance, please contact him by email: pa@datamardler.co.uk, and he will then call you.

LATEST (3 APRIL) COMMUNITY ACTION NORFOLK (CAN) NEWSLETTER

As usual, the latest CAN newsletter contains useful advice for us, and is worth subscribing to if you do not already see it. The latest edition includes guidance for those with charities over having to change the way they carry out their activities to comply with

KEEPING IN TOUCH – ZOOM MEETINGS THIS WEEK

We will again be holding our Zoom conference calls this week.

Wednesday 8 April – Clerk Conference calls

South Norfolk, Broadland and GYBC member councils at 2pm.

North Norfolk, Breckland and KLWN member councils at 3.30pm.

Wednesday 8 April – Chairman Conference calls

South Norfolk, Broadland and GYBC member councils at 5pm.

North Norfolk, Breckland and KLWN member councils at 7pm.

Please email Russell for a link at countyofficer@norfolkalc.gov.uk (saying which one, please!)

TRAINING WEBINARS

For this week, we have also scheduled webinars covering employment aspects of the coronavirus virus with our colleagues at Cambridgeshire ALC. These will be for about an hour, covering: HR basics, protecting the workforce, sick pay and SSP, staff planning, business continuity, staff mental health and well-being issues. To book, please contact Samantha Sharp at office@capalc.org.uk Your time options are:

Tuesday 7 April. 3pm

Weds 8 April. 10am

Weds 8 April. 12 noon

Thursday 9 April. 8am

Thursday 9 April. 5pm

Cost – £20 for members, £40 non-members

Using Zoom

Gabbie is also pulling together some pointers to help clerks who are thinking of using Zoom for their meetings. Contact her to obtain her summary at trainer@norfolkalc.gov.uk

Other Training

What other webinars would you like? Email Gabbie and help us build our training programme to really match your needs for the coming weeks.

AND FINALLY....

Thanks for reading our newsletter to the very end! Hope it was useful.

Remember to stay safe and that we are here for you as usual in the coming week.

To book a training course click [here](#)

Click [here](#) to view the Calendar for more Events & Training

To view the current Parish Clerk Vacancies in Norfolk click [here](#)



Click [here](#) to access news from Breckland Council

Click [here](#) to access news from Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

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