

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022

To: National Assembly and County Associations

Cc: 109

Dear colleague

It was great to see so many of you face-to-face at last at our National Assembly/Grand Reunion on 12 July.

There were around 25 present and 21 attended virtually for the event held at NALC partner CCLA's prestigious new offices.

As well as allowing National Assembly to conduct its usual business, there was extensive networking opportunities throughout the day including the afternoon to meet with each other and some of our key partners and supporters.

Here is a summary of the National Assembly part of the day:

- The Assembly welcomed new members from Gloucestershire, Councillor Richard Page; and Devon, Councillor Ian Cowley.
- Appointments to vacancies on the Smaller Councils Committee and Policy Committee were agreed.
- There is a vacancy on the Finance and Scrutiny Committee and on the Management Board, interested members of the Assembly should email [nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk) by the end of July.
- It was agreed to hold an informal evening meeting on Ukraine to discuss how local councils and county associations were approaching the issue of accommodating and supporting Ukrainian refugees. We are proposing to hold this meeting on 27 July 18.00 – 19.00. If you would like to contribute a case study or examples to stimulate debate please email [nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalcccommittees@nalc.gov.uk)
- The Assembly received an interim report on the work of the Task and Finish Group (TFG) on governance and discussed how we all could publicise the work of county associations and NALC to encourage people to get involved. It also considered a summary of its recommendations to date, these were broadly supported and it was agreed that the question of adopting the single transferable voting method should be referred to the Annual General Meeting. The continuation of a mix of face-to-face and remote meetings was supported but the exact distribution considered at a future meeting; county associations are requested to consider what the balance of remote and face to face meetings they would like to see. The TFG were also asked to consider any financial implications and to set timescales for the delivery of its proposals.
- Updates from committee chairs were received and it was noted that: the Management Board and Finance and Scrutiny Committee had indicated a likely affiliation fee increase this year of 3%; our external auditors had given our finances a clean bill of health; Management Board had considered the recent survey by the Smaller Councils Committee and CILs David Francis and Mike Drew had been tasked with considering the recommendations in detail; Policy Committee had held an additional special meeting on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill; and the Larger Councils Committee had heard from government officials on their work to simplify the local growth funding landscape.

- There was a discussion item on loneliness and the cost of living crisis to share what county associations and local councils were doing to address these issues. Examples included: Shropshire who had set up a social task force working in partnership with county council and engaging with MPs; Essex with working groups currently set up and they arrange local coffee mornings to encourage people to engage with members of communities; Somerset where councils have set up food banks. Given the limited time for this debate it was agreed to ask Assembly members to address the following questions with their county officers and county association colleagues and send responses to [policycomms@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:policycomms@nalc.gov.uk) by 5 August. The information including any examples/case studies would help inform the next Points of Light report.
- Loneliness: What work is your county association and local councils in your area doing to tackle loneliness, particularly in rural areas? What challenges do you face? What has worked well in your experience, particularly considering the recent Covid-19 lockdowns?
- Cost of living crisis: What impact is the cost-of-living crisis having on your county association and on local councils in your areas? What is your county association and local councils in your area doing to provide any support including to local people and communities?
- A number of questions were posed in the Zoom chat function and these will be attached to the draft minutes next week together with responses or further information where appropriate.

The afternoon session included several short presentations from NALC's partners and stakeholders, here are a few highlights:

- Mark Davies from CCLA welcomed everyone to their new offices, providing an overview of CCLA's work including investment opportunities for the sector
- NALC's president, Baroness Scott of Needham Market, thanked the sector for its work and set out how she and the All-Party Parliamentary Group would continue to promote the sector in Parliament including continuing to press the case for remote meetings and strengthening of the standards regime.
- Steve Trice, chair of Society of Local Council Clerks updated us on their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and plans for the future and stressed the importance of clerks being members of the SLCC and councils members of NALC.
- Lyn Cadwallader, chief executive of One Voice Wales, updated us on developments in Wales including their services and engagement with Welsh Government.
- Katherine Brown from Blachere Illumination flagged up their ground breaking work recycling plastic bottles to make their motifs, highlighting how it takes around 1000 bottles to make one of their feature illuminations. To follow.
- And finally, NALC's vice-president, Cllr Sue Baxter, and former SLCC president, Linda Larter, gave an update on the Civility and Respect project and launched the civility and respect pledge – do please get your councils to [sign-up](#). Presentation Attached.

A feedback form is attached so please let us have your views on how it went and any developments we should consider for the future.

And by way of a reminder, please don't forget to book your free places for November's Empowering Communities conference. This is a time limited offer until the end of July, after that date tickets will be made available for general sale, so please don't miss out! Details on how to book have been sent to you previously but do contact [nalc@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:nalc@nalc.gov.uk) if you have any queries.

Have a lovely weekend!

Kind regards

Jonathan Owen