**NACO LIVE TRAINING EVENT – 24TH MARCH 2021**

**QUESTION AND ANSWER INFORMATION**

1. ***Are the PowerPoint slides available after the presentation?***

So far as the recording is concerned our plan is to put the presentations by Tracy and Phil on the hidden page on the website as soon as we can (we have not yet received the recording) but do have a meeting planned with Cartwrights next week so should have a better idea then when we will be able to do this.  So far as the presentation by Jim Babbington on OLB is concerned for security reasons we feel it not right to put it out, even on the hidden page, but Jim has said that if anyone has queries on this they should contact him on vicechair@naco.uk.com and he will respond to them direct.

As soon as we put the recordings on the hidden page I will email all the delegates to this effect.

1. ***Can we get a copy of the NACO template please?***

[https://www.naco.uk.com/help-and-advice/publications](https://www.naco.uk.com/help-and-advice/publications%20)

Think the delegate is asking for the template to the new scoring document shown yesterday. Is it intended to update the whole document or to add the template to the website, in which case we can add the link, as above. A. The new document is on the website so should be promoted through a link.

1. ***Would you use the same form for receptions being held by the Civic Head***?

It is a worthwhile exercise scrutinising all activity of the Civic Head where there is a cost involved. It ensures openness and transparency of the Civic Office underpinned by values. Suggest if receptions were aimed at particular groups, such as volunteers or workers in NHS scores could be higher

1. ***Can I confirm that it is for the Civic Officer to undertake the scoring for events?***

NACO would strongly recommend this is an exercise undertaken with your Civic Head during planning or diary meetings. Agree in advance with Leader that the points scoring system must be used and write it into the induction manual – put points value of each engagement on an invitation when it arrives so civic head is in no doubt about the worth of the engagement.

1. ***Any advice or tips on how to convince Chairs that fundraising is not the priority?***

Always useful to refer to Article 5 of your Constitution which sets out the role of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. If your Civic Head is wishing to support a charity, they may wish to consider advocating the community to further support the charity by volunteering, for example.

1. ***How do you change the mindset of the incoming Civic Head when they know how it has historically worked and want to do the same?***

Doing things the way they have always been done has been unacceptable in the workplace for years – we should always be looking to instil a culture of continuous improvement. It may be necessary to appeal to ego and suggest that there is a great opportunity to be different, particularly as the pandemic has changed so many things we used to take for granted.

1. ***Given the potential value of increasing relations with cities in other countries, for sharing development information, for building economic ties etc how do we look to reconcile this with the community leadership element of the civic role? Is there value in civic involvement in this, in your view?***

Civic involvement in overseas links can be useful, as long as the principles of value for money and delivering on corporate plan objectives are met. Always work in partnership with portfolio holders and senior officers – do not plough a lone furrow.

1. ***I am a great advocate of civic pride. Visiting town halls in Belfast and Glasgow for example shows the pride they have in their own local culture and history. How can we justify the promotion of civic pride through the civic office (and the cost that goes with that) in these challenging times?***

Civic pride can and should be aligned to community engagement, which will be in every corporate plan. Whist different communities within a local authority area will have unique cultural elements, what unites them is that they live in a given area. Civic pride can and should be the glue that joins them together.

1. ***If the engagement test form showed the event was not appropriate to attend could the Mayor attend in a personal way or would that still reflect badly on the council?***

How will a mayor attend in a private or personal capacity? No chain, no car, no profile. This is unlikely to suit the organiser, who will be wanting the attendant publicity. What a Mayor does as a private citizen is for them to decide.

1. ***Isn't there a risk of politicising the civic office by linking engagements to the corporate plan?***

No – this is a corporate document, voted for at Council by all members. It is the key guide for officers on what they can devote resources towards, to deliver discretionary services. It may be borne out of the manifesto of the controlling group, but is not in itself a political document.

1. ***The Charter Trustees, who run the Lord Mayor, is separate to the council and its corporate plan. The Charter Trustees has developed its own priorities following a public consultation. Do we still have to link to the boroughs corporate plan?***

No – the Charter trustees priorities are what the Lord Mayor should aim to deliver on.

1. ***Should the civic officer be offering guidance to the incoming civic head on what theme they should be putting in place if they are unsure of what to do during their tenure?***

Absolutely – if the incoming civic head lacks focus and direction the civic officer’s professionalism should seek to point them in the right direction ie create a theme and set personal objectives that are linked to the corporate plan.

1. ***Should Civic Heads contribute (attend, sponsor) to other Civic Head's charity raising events?***

No – fundraising should be targeted on the ‘home’ civic head’s area and should not rely on the chain gang contributing for it to be successful. Think carefully about whether your own fundraising is appropriate and certainly don’t be supporting others!

1. ***You mentioned that a civic head's civic service should take place in their place of worship. How would you manage any negative impact from moving away from a Christian cathedral service on the relationship between the city and the civic office?***

In our diverse world in which a mayor might come from any one of half a dozen faiths, or none, should a Muslim not use a mosque, a Sikh a Gurdwara, a Jew a synagogue etc as they pray to their god for guidance in the forthcoming term? Links between civic office and a cathedral are still very important and I am aware that at least one has a brief ceremony to install their civic head in their pew, very early in the term. This can and should be retained, regardless of the faith of the individual. There are likely to be many cathedral events in a civic year, faith based and secular, so the relationship can be kept strong.

1. ***Is there a polite way to discourage continued Civic gifts when revisiting a region or twinned town?***

Before dates are set, work with the twin town to stress the importance of personal contact and interaction, over and above exchange of gifts. If there is an insistence on retaining this element of a visit agree a very modest budget. The key thing is to avoid embarrassment by managing expectations.

1. ***What do you recommend is included in a Civic Induction pack?***

Use the template on the NACO website – full of useful stuff! Start with a potted history of the office, treasures, chain of office etc, before going in on the rules. Get it read and signed off before the start of the term

<https://www.naco.uk.com/help-and-advice/presentations-and-handouts>

1. ***Should the Mayors good cause be within boundary or does it matter if It’s a national charity. Can the civic officer advise or refuse if they feel the charity is not relevant to their council? In a small town, with fewer local charities, they've all had a recent "turn" so the Mayors are looking further afield.***

The charity must have a positive impact on the area if not based within it, to effectively engage with the public. Of course, in the ideal world, fundraising targets would not be a feature of a civic year – support through awareness raising can be more effective and avoid the civic officer becoming a slave to fundraising.

1. ***No one on our council is interested in coming forward to become Mayor this year. Our current Mayor has had an excellent year throughout all lockdowns. How can I encourage Members to come forward?***

By highlighting how they can make a beneficial difference to the borough/district. By setting personal objectives that are aligned to corporate goals, they can also ensure that it is personally enjoyable and fulfilling. All mayors will tell you that they return to the benches, at the end of the term, very much more aware of what makes their area tick.

1. ***Regarding the rules - how do you get an elected member to stick to them if the induction pack/handbook is only for advice and hasn't been signed off by a committee?***

By ensuring that the rules are sensible and that they create accountability. The breaking or ignoring of them then becomes intolerable and an embarrassment if made public. Why not make them such no brainers that a member development panel would adopt them as policy, making a serious breach a code of conduct issue?

1. ***My Chairman would like to give the budget he hasn't spent to his charities. Is this appropriate?***

You will need to check your local rules, which may be in your Members’ Allowance Scheme. If there are no strings attached there, and tax has been paid on the allowance, then it may be acceptable. A problem is that if it is demonstrated that the allowance is not needed to offset the expenses of office, then it should be reduced as a budget saving, which will penalise future office holders. Why not spend the allowance on its intended use and make a personal donation from their own funds?

1. ***Are the newsletters available on the website as I don't always receive them?***

Currently, we do not publish the newsletters on the website. They are sent out via email to all registered members.

1. ***I didn't receive the (training) questionnaire. Do I need to check our IT firewall?***

Yes, always check your junk / spam folders and if you have any blockages it would be worth checking with your local IT. If you are still not receiving them, please get in touch.

1. ***Is there a national statutory civic events calendar resource on the website - forgive me if I have missed one - it would be great to know all national events to see if I have missed any! Flag raising, like Bangladesh 50 years liberation, for example this Friday***

<https://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/british-flags-2/calendar/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying>

Consider using the links above as a guide; however always consider what is relevant and meaningful for your local community.

1. ***How can you encourage those Councillors who don't normally engage with Civic Events to attend them?***

You cannot please everyone all of the time. With each Civic Head, there will be a cohort of Members who will gladly support, and this will change as the Civic Head changes. Consider whether the Councillors are, in fact, the right people you need to have to present to support your event? Embrace the support you do have from those who are happy to offer it.

1. ***For the last 23 years and more there has been a Civic Reception with the Ceremony of Mayor Making for anything up to 350 guests. How can you justify such an event and the expense involved?***

As with any event that will incur expenditure of public money, financial scrutiny has to be applied; after all that is one of the main duties of an Elected Member. The Local Government Act 2000 states that it is the responsibility of the full council, on the recommendation of the executive, to approve the budget. The Act makes it clear that the role of scrutiny in the financial process is to ensure that it’s decisions are in the best interests of the community.

There has to be clear links between budget setting (at service level and therefore individual budget lines within that envelope) and strategic / operational plans.

You might suggest that receptions should be to a targeted audience and not to the great and good at all times and avoid the chain gang.

1. ***When seeking sponsorship and agreeing what will be given to the business for their support, is it right that VAT has to be added to the sponsorship amount? Our finance department insist that because the company are receiving something in return they must pay VAT. This puts a lot of businesses off sponsoring as they just wish to support the event.***

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sponsorship-and-vat-notice-70141>

The above link may be useful, however in the first instance I would also seek advice from your Finance representatives.

1. ***Can you please advise on the protocol of public laying tributes and what should Local Authorities do with them? i.e. do you remove them straight away to prevent spread of covid, encouraging the public not to lay any? Or do you allow them to lay tributes in prominent locations but put in extra precautions?***

If Covid restrictions are in place the public should be strongly discouraged from laying floral and other tributes (such as candles and soft toys). However, as we know, there will always be people who are moved to lay tributes despite best efforts to discourage them. The tributes therefore need to be handled with sensitivity. This may involve moving them to a more appropriate spot if they are causing an obstruction. Staff will need to take all necessary precautions to do this safely, but it may help to contain the tributes in a single place where they are seen, but not under the feet of passers-by and where they can remain in place until after the funeral.

1. ***How can we access the photos Jim referred to?***

<https://www.royalimages.co.uk/>

1. ***Do you know when the nation will celebrate the Platinum Jubilee in 2022, as there is usually a date promoted beforehand when this might happen?***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-bank-holiday-to-mark-the-queens-platinum-jubilee-in-2022> PLEASE NOTE: At the Training Day the dates of the Bank Holiday were incorrectly given as being 3rd to 6th June 2022, but as this link shows, the Bank Holiday will be on Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd June, leading into the weekend of 4th and 5th June.

The late May bank holiday will be moved to Thursday 2nd June 2022, with an additional bank holiday on Friday 3rd June 2022 for Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee

1. ***Can you please clarify if there is guidance available on the proclamation?***

The Guidance Notes set out suggested formats for the ceremony, but the exact wording of the Proclamation will not be available until the first reading on D+1 at St. James’s Palace. It will then be available on the Buckingham Palace website and the Privy Council website, so those reading it at local ceremonies will have 24 hours in which to familiarise themselves with the wording.

1. ***OLB Out of Hours – if announcement is made on a Saturday, for example, presume flag lowering, statements etc should be made as soon as practicably possible, but not slip to next working day?***

Correct! As soon as practicably possible.