



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NACO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
held on Tuesday 16 June 2020 via Zoom commencing at 1000 hours**

**Present:**

Gill Allwright Retired Civic Officer Treasurer  
Jim Babbington Retired Member, Vice Chair (first 45 mins only)  
Jacqui Brazil London Borough of Southwark  
Jackie Cansick Stevenage Borough Council  
Christine Christensen, Ipswich Borough Council  
Anita Cund City of Wolverhampton Council  
Ruth Darby Sandwell Council  
Deborah Donovan Peacehaven Town Council  
Sue Dunkley, Erewash Borough Council  
Vanessa Etheridge Sevenoaks District Council  
Tracy Frisby N E Lincolnshire Council  
Alex Kowalczyk Former Civic Officer  
Penny Harrison Retired Member, Secretary  
Margaret Humphrey London Borough of Camden  
Liz McCarthy Adur and Worthing Councils  
Paul Mayhew Brentwood Borough Council  
Paul Millward Nottingham City Council, Chair  
Phil O'Brien Erewash Borough Council  
Alison Orde St Albans City and District Council  
Clare Richardson North Kesteven District Council  
Emara Roth Exeter City Council  
Derek Scott, London Borough of Havering  
Pat Seager Epping Forest District Council Vice Chair  
Andrea Thwaite Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Irene Webster Retired Civic Officer  
Beverley Wilson Retired Clerk to the Lieutenancy

1	<b>Welcome</b>	
1.1	The Chair thanked all for joining in this very different meeting– and welcomed, in particular, Andrea Thwaite, who was attending her first meeting of the Executive.	
2	<b>Apologies</b>	
2.1	Apologies for absence were given by Sandra Robinson from Belfast City Council, during the meeting from Alison Orde, who had unexpectedly not been able to go into work and, after the meeting, from Lynda McElligott who had had to go to her Leader’s garden where the cabinet for North Norfolk met and which meant she was away from her office during the NACO meeting!	
3.	<b>Zoom Meeting Protocols</b>	
3.1	It was agreed that everyone other than the Chair and Secretary would press mute unless they spoke.	
4.	<b>Co-option of member to Executive</b>	
4.1	The Chair said that Emara Roth had been nominated for the election of members of the Executive, which should have been held at the aborted AGM in March 2020. As this was not possible he recommended that she be co-opted to the Executive. The nomination had been made by Phil and seconded by Penny. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Emara to the Executive. The Chairman welcomed Emara to the meeting.	
5..	<b>Minutes of last meeting, 22 January 2020, held in Southwark – accuracy and matters arising</b>	
	<b>Accuracy:</b>	
5.1	The minutes were approved.	
	<b>Matters Arising:</b>	
5.2	3.3 The Chair said he and Phil had still not yet been able to update the fact sheets but would do so as soon as time allowed.	Paul. Phil
5.3	3.4 Pat said she would try and obtain photographs of the Executive to go on the website and the Chair reminded all to send photographs to Pat.	Pat. All
5.4	6.3 Gill said she had not obtained the necessary forms for Tracy to complete to enable her to operate and have access to the NACO bank account, but would do so.	Gill
5.5	12.10 Penny was asked to confirm with Alison that any personal data she held through Survey Monkey had been deleted in line with GDPR either after 6 months or after the first meeting of the Executive held after a Training Event, when the returns were evaluated.	Penny

6.	<b>Chair's Report</b>	
6.1	The Chair said that he had very reluctantly had to agree in March that NACO had no option but to cancel the Training Event to be held in Southwark on 17 March. At the time we had told those attending it was hoped to reschedule the event for the Autumn. He said he thought that even that might not now be possible and we would discuss plans for future events at item 11 on the Agenda.	
	Since March the Chair went on to say the time he was able to give to NACO had been very limited because of his involvement in Emergency Planning and the work entailed by the pandemic	
	He did hope, however, that he had managed to answer all queries sent direct to him and he was grateful to the other officers who had tried to shield him from queries so as to allow him to concentrate on the day (and night) job.	
	The Chair felt that this meeting needed to focus on how we moved forward in the very different situation we now found ourselves and the advice we should give our members.	
	The Chair said that he had been intending to give notice at the 2020 AGM that he would stand down as Chair by the AGM in 2021. This, of course, did not happen but he still felt the time was right for him to stand down and if anyone would volunteer for the position he would happily let them shadow him.	
7.	<b>Secretary's Report</b>	
7.1	The Secretary reported that membership now stood at around 870, and always after a newsletter goes out several new members join. She said she felt it was particularly pleasing that even in the current climate we had had a net increase of around 50 since she last reported to the Executive.	
	Since that meeting of the Executive held in January the first 2 months had been taken up with the organisation of the Training Event which was to have been held on 17 March. That event had been sold out and everything was in place. She and Jacqui Brazil had worked well together over the planning but both were relieved when the decision to postpone the event was taken as they believed very many people would not attend.	
	Our communication system with the delegates worked well and we were able to confirm the postponement at such short notice very easily. The feedback at the time was that delegates agreed we had no choice and many found it helpful as they were concerned about passing infection to vulnerable members of their families. There was no criticism	
	She had been in touch with Purple Spider concerning the questionnaire the Cabinet Office wished to have circulated to all members and between them they designed a form which meant that when members completed the responses they were automatically collated ready for sending on to the Cabinet Office. 90 members responded which was just over 10%. The results were sent to the Cabinet Office	
	Obviously she said it has been quieter than usual since lockdown but queries have been dealt with and a couple of newsletters have been sent out.	
8	<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	
8,.1	The Treasurer's financial statements regarding income and expenditure for the two one day events in November 2019 and the postponed event in March 2020 are at Appendix 3	

8.2	Gill said she would be telephoning the authorities which had not yet paid for the one-day events. She received offers of help with this.	Gill
8.3	The Chair asked if the Treasurer would circulate the annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 to the Executive at the earliest opportunity.	Gill
9.	<b>2020 AGM and postponed Training Event</b>	
9.1	The 2020 AGM should have been held during the Training Event in Southwark on 17 March, just as lockdown was announced and a decision was taken very shortly before to postpone the event. This had proved to be the right decision and the feedback from delegates showed this.	
9.2	The Chair thanked Jacqui for managing to negotiate with the caterers and the sound system company that they would not charge.	
9.3	Jacqui confirmed that she had the NACO logocloth and pull up banner in her office.	
9.4	It was agreed that the situation in the country meant that it would not be possible to reschedule the 2020 Training Event in the autumn as originally planned but it was hoped the next major Training Event would be in March 2021 when a General Meeting would be held. If for any reason it is not possible to hold a Training Event then a virtual General Meeting should be held.	
9.5	It was agreed that the fees being held in respect of the Training Event, which should have been held in March 2020 should be retained and credited against attendance at the training event in March 2021, though if authorities asked that fees should be refunded this should be done. Information about this should be contained in the next Newsletter.	Phil
9.6	Alison had negotiated with Survey Monkey that the fee to be paid in respect of the questionnaire, which would have been sent to delegates in March, should not be paid and she was holding a sum on behalf of NACO for use on the next occasion.	
9.7	Vice Chair Pat thanked the Secretary for her work on cancelling the event with the delegates.	
10	<b>Covid19</b>	
10.1	It was agreed that members would welcome advice on new ways of working both during the present period and as life gradually returns to normal and, indeed, what the future norm will be for Civic Heads.	
10.2	It was agreed Phil would write an article to send out in the next newsletter, which it was hoped to send out within the next week. He would try and obtain examples of good practice and it was clear there were several from amongst the Executive and reference were made to some which were online. All were asked to send these to Phil within the next 2 or 3 days.	Phil All
10.3	Phil's article on making the Civic Office relevant post Covid might include reference to returning to work, risk assessments, plastic screens in civic cars, the restarting of a service.	
11.	<b>Postponed and Future Training Events</b>	
11.1	It had already been agreed at this meeting that no Training Event would be held in 2020 but it was hoped that the usual Training Event could be held in 2021.	

11.2	Information about the cancellation of any Training Event in 2020 and the proposed dates for 2021 should be included in the next newsletter.	Phil
11.3	It had already been agreed to hold a 2 day event in Birmingham on 24 and 25 March 2021 and Pat said she would speak to Anne Kennedy to confirm that the arrangement still held good.	Pat
11.4	It was proposed by Phil and seconded by Paul that the Executive should aim to hold the next Training Event in Birmingham	
11.5	It was agreed it was difficult to make definite plans for how this would be run at this stage and consideration would need to be given to social distancing. This might mean that the numbers attending would have to be limited. It might be necessary to run the event over 2 days, each with the same workshops and speakers or if it was not possible to run the event then to arrange an online training event.	
11.6	The four workshops, which were to have been held in 2020 would still hold good for 2021. These were an Update on OLB, Performance Management, the Relationship between the Civic Officer and the Civic Head and Remembrance Day Planning.	
11.7	Discussions were being held concerning a workshop on how to run a 'green' civic office and Phil would take the lead on setting this up. A workshop would be needed on working virtually and coming out of lockdown. Further discussions about this would be taken forward by Phil.	Phil
11.8	It had previously been agreed to hold fees from authorities for their attendance at the postponed event against their attendance at the 2021 event. If authorities did not send representatives to that event then refunds should be made to them and fees not held any longer.	
12.	<b>Training Report</b>	
12.1	Christine said that a couple of Councillor Skills Training Events had been held prior to lockdown but she had not received reports either from Councillor Skills or any NACO Executive members who had attended one.	
12.2	Christine did say, however, that she had been furloughed for many weeks without access to her office computer and had only realised in the last couple of days that she was not getting anything connected with NACO passed on to her.	
12.3	Penny said she would now use Christine's home email address for all NACO work and would ensure this address was circulated to the Executive.	Penny
12.4	Phil said he had been doing some online civic coaching with some authorities and it was working well.	

13.	<b>Website</b>	
13.1	The Website continued to work well and there seemed to be increasing use of the Message Board.	
13.2	Phil said he would remind members about the Message Board in the Newsletter	
14	<b>Insurance</b>	

14.1	The Treasurer was given authority to renew the Public Liability Insurance when it falls due in November.	Gill
14.2	It was agreed, particularly after discussion with Purple Spider, that Cyber Insurance was not necessary.	
14.3	Event Insurance was discussed and it was agreed that as long as we are holding events in a local authority building this insurance is not necessary but consideration to such insurance should be considered prior to each event.	
15.	<b>Local Training Events</b>	
15.1	It was agreed that in the present climate no action would be taken but Beverley and Phil said they would try and speak to representatives from Scotland and Wales at the next Training Event.	Beverley Phil
16.	<b>Civic Office of the Year Awards 2020</b>	
16.1	Christine and Pat should have met to discuss these but because of lockdown and Christine being furloughed this had not happened.	
16.2	Penny proposed that for the 2020 awards there should be a one-off competition for the COYA relating to how Civic Offices took on a new style of working so that they remain relevant both during lockdown and as the country comes out of it.	
16.3	This was agreed and Christine, Pat and Penny were asked to put together a report as to how the competition should run, ready for a launch in the Autumn. They agreed to meet as soon as practical.	Christine Pat Penny
16.4	It was agreed that anyone submitting examples of initiatives on virtual working, sent to Phil for the Newsletter, should be encouraged to enter the Award for 2020	Phil Christine Pat Penny
16.5	Penny suggested that video entries might be a way forward.	
17.	<b>Newsletter</b>	
17.1	Items would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• date of next training event,</li> <li>• rolling over of the fees for that event,</li> <li>• thanks to members for their patience at the short notice of postponement of the event,</li> <li>• advice and examples of how the Civic Head has operated during lockdown and how they will maintain links with the community and promoting the civic office in the future,</li> <li>• consideration of plans for VJ75 in August,</li> <li>• a plea for delegates to let NACO know how they had been redeployed during lockdown,</li> <li>• advice for members on guidance by Civic Officers to Civic Heads on response to queries about BLM.</li> <li>• a promise that advice on the particular difficulties in relation to Remembrance Day 2020 would be available in a newsletter by the end of August</li> </ul>	
18	<b>Business Plan</b>	

18.1	The Business Plan was now on the Website with a new layout.	
18.2	The Business Plan was due to be reviewed at the Autumn meeting of the Executive as the present plan only goes to 2020 and would need to be on the Agenda.	Penny
19.	<b>Bids for 2022 Training Events</b>	
19.1	No bids for 2022 had yet been received and it was thought it was difficult at present to make plans that far ahead.	
19.2	As Jacqui had agreed with the suppliers who had been cancelled in March 2020 that they would be used at a future event in the Autumn, which would not now happen, she said she would look at the possibility of Southwark hosting the one-day event in March 2022 and report back to the Secretary.	Jacqui
20.	<b>Update on OLB and transitional arrangements</b>	
20.1	Jim had been unable to stay for the whole meeting but the Chair said he would discuss this item with him and report back to the Executive by email.	Paul Jim
21.	<b>Date and Venue/Type of next meeting</b>	
21.1	It was agreed that the Zoom meeting went well though in an organisation with representatives so widely spread it is desirable for them to meet face to face.	
21.2	It was hoped the next meeting of the Executive could be a "hybrid" meeting with some people meeting in person but others joining by Zoom or some other virtual system.	
21.3	It was proposed that the next meeting be held on 6 October in Ipswich (and Christine said she would check on this possibility) and if this is not possible then in Brentwood (and Paul Mayhew said he would check on that) and in both cases it would be a hybrid meeting. The third option would be another Zoom meeting.	Christine, Paul Mayhew
21.4	Christine and, if necessary, Paul Mayhew, should communicate with the Secretary over the possibility of a meeting on 6 October.	Christine Paul Mayhew Penny
21.5	Paul asked Phil to look into how a hybrid meeting would work	Phil
22.	<b>Thanks to Host</b>	
22.1	The Chair thanked Phil for "hosting" the meeting, which had been one of the largest meetings of the Executive.	
23.	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
23.1	Jacqui queried whether NACO should give its members advice on the civic response to BLM queries. It was agreed that Phil and Jacqui should work together this week, to produce guidance, for approval by the Chair and Vice-Chairs, prior to publication.	Phil
23.2	Paul Mayhew raised a query about the LGBT flag as his council was receiving some criticism this was to be flown for 4 weeks over his council building, as	

	opposed to the Armed Forces Day flag which was to be flown for only a week. It was agreed that this was a matter for an individual authority.	
23.3	He also mentioned that Michael's Robes were extending their business by providing civic gifts. Phil said he would discuss with them if they wished to change the information they have on the suppliers' page.	Phil

The meeting closed at 12.40

Penny Harrison,  
Secretary,  
NACO

June 2020





## **NACO Executive Meeting – 16 June 2020**

### **APPENDIX 1**

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## **APPENDIX 2**

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