

Report from the General Secretary

Well! What a year we have all had to contend with, the Covid – 19 pandemic has caused us all extra work, but, as Clerks and Proper Officers we normally find a way through the maze of work load, strange requests, dealing with difficult Councillors and Members of the public; although most of us thought we would see the end of it [Covid] in a few months, the current situation of increasing infections and admissions to hospitals has proved otherwise. However, I am sure we will prevail and come out the other end knowing we have all done the best we could.

So what of the Association? Earlier in the year, the split of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) from the Association of Local Council Clerks (ALCC) finally took place.

Since then the small number of committee Members have been setting up a new website, taking over the accounts of the ALCC and managing the membership.

Paula Heath started the task of sorting out the budget, but at the last AGM of the Committee Lionel took over, I am sure that the work Paula did in the early stages, assisted Lionel with taking this forward. So I would like to thank both of them for the amount of effort they have put in.

David has been great with sourcing the Website and phones, though I do know that there were some people who did have difficulties renewing their membership. Unfortunately, David like all of the Committee Members have their own work-load, so should there still be a few glitches that spring up from time to time, please be understanding if you don't get an immediate response.

I know that some of the other Committee Members have had some personal issues that have prevented them giving the time to the getting things set up, but Gwilym as Chairman this year has taken a lot of the advice calls.

As the General Secretary I have been speaking to other Committee Members and feel that we now need to put in place proper process and procedures. By the time the AGM is here, there will be a formal Complaints Policy.

In 2019 the AGM required 60 people to be in attendance, given the logistics for some Clerks, in getting to meetings, it was agreed to reduce this, but that does not mean we don't want to see you.

We still need to encourage Clerks to join, and I would say here that if you are lucky enough to be employed by a Council who respects and supports you, please do still join the Association, this way we will have the funds to support those who are not so lucky. I am sure that I am speaking to the converted, as this will be on the ALCC website so will not be available to be seen by non

One of the comments at the 2018 AGM concerned the lack of Committee Minutes on the Website; since the split you will see the minutes of these meetings from the interim meeting in 2016 to the current year are now available and so I hope members are feeling more involved.

In my first General Secretary report my vision was that bullying would be a thing of the past, well we are a long way off, but with the new draft Code of Conduct, which I know does not give us any sanctions, it is a step in the right direction. I know the Association, along with the SLCC, will continue to lobby for sanctions; We assist and represent clerks on a daily basis with their issues such as contractual matters, negotiating agreements and myriad other subjects. But our biggest single subject is bullying by councillors. There may be a minority involved but the human costs to the

profession are immeasurable. We are working with Dr Julian Lewis MP on this, to have this raised in Parliament.

We continue to provide trained clerks helping and advising you at formal meetings, although they have of course been nearly all virtual rather than face to face. We assist and represent clerks on a daily basis with their issues such as contractual matters, negotiating agreements and myriad other subjects. But our biggest single subject is bullying by councillors. There may be a minority involved but the human costs to the profession are immeasurable. We are working with Dr Julian Lewis MP on this, to have this raised in Parliament.

Looking forward, the call for nominations provided a few people coming forward, none of the regions will require an election, we have three new Committee Members, so I would like to say a personal welcome and thank you for stepping up, and will introduce them to the wider membership at the AGM on 23rd October. I hope this will be a success and the Committee can move forward on a better footing and look forward to when we can hold the next AGM in person.

Linda Hedley
General Secretary.