

## IWALC TRAINING GROUP

### Minutes of Meeting held at 2 pm on Friday 17 December 2021 via Zoom

**Present:** Diana Conyers (chair), June Davison, Sue Hardy, Mick Lyons, Patricia Redpath, Heather Rowell, Jill Webster, Peter Whiteman.

- 1. Welcome and apologies:** Diana welcomed everyone.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2021 were approved.
- 3. Introduction to Planning training:** Diana reported that Chris Turvey still wanted to hold a face-to-face session to replace that planned for 22 September, which had to be cancelled due to Covid. However, given the current uncertainty over Covid, it was not possible to set a date for this at present. It was decided that Jill will write to those participants signed up to the session who did not transfer to the online course on 29 September, informing them of this and asking them whether they would be willing to attend an online session instead. If sufficient numbers express an interest in an online session, we will liaise with Chris to organise one. **Action: Jill to write to participants as above.**
- 4. Code of Conduct training:** Diana reported that, due to the problems with the online session conducted on 24 November, she had approached both Sue Chilton and Jackie Weaver with regard to the provision of an alternative session (see Paper 1 attached to Agenda for details). It was agreed to ask Sue Chilton to do a face-to-face session when the Covid situation permits and, in the meantime, to ask Jackie Weaver if she would be willing to do a more general online session on public standards in local councils and, if so, how much she would charge. It was considered that, if the charge would not be excessive, this would be a useful and probably popular additional offer. **Action: Diana to write to Jackie Weaver as above and, if necessary, consult with members via email regarding the cost.**
- 5. Equality and Diversity training:** Diana explained why such training was considered desirable and reported the correspondence she had had with Mandy Ainsworth (see paper 2 for details). It was agreed that such a course would be useful and that the charge (£300) was acceptable, but that it would be better to wait until the Spring, when it can hopefully be held face-to-face, budget provision can be provided and it can be properly advertised. **Action: Diana to write to Mandy Ainsworth to that effect.**
- 6. Training for new clerks:** Heather explained that there are a number of new clerks on the Island and, at present, SLCC does not appear to be providing any support for them (see paper 3 for details). It was agreed that Heather will write to SLCC, asking them if they are planning to provide any such training and offering to help if appropriate. **Action: Heather to write to SLCC to that effect.**
- 7. Other training needs:** Heather reported that increasing numbers of councils are applying for loans from the Public Works Loans Board but that the application forms (which have to be sent through her) are not always properly completed. It was agreed that Heather will prepare some brief guidance notes for clerks and RFOs. **Action: Heather to prepare guidance notes as above.**

- 8. Training fees and related issues:** Sue requested that IWALC consider increasing the fees for non-IWALC councillors and the cancellation charges for member councillors who fail to attend without good reason. She reported that they have remained the same for many years and that, at the present rates, there is little financial incentive to join IWALC to get access to training. It was agreed to recommend to the Executive that the fees be increased from £50 to £75 per person for face-to-face sessions and from £25 to £50 for online sessions and that cancellation charges for face-to-face sessions be increased from £50 to £75. It was also agreed to write to all councils in January, reminding them of the benefits of IWALC membership, and to explore the possibility of changing the password to the NALC website to prevent former IWALC councils continuing to access it. **Action: (i) Heather to put above recommendation re changes in fees on agenda of January Executive meeting; (ii) Diana to draft letter to all councils outlining benefits of IWALC membership; (iii) Heather to liaise with NALC re possibility of changing website password.**
- 9. Next meeting:** The next meeting will probably be held in February, depending on need and the Covid situation.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm.

Diana Conyers

## **Paper 1: Code of Conduct Training**

Feedback from participants who attended the 24 November session varies. However, the general opinion is that, in addition to the technological problems, it was not sufficiently geared to the needs of local councils and didn't cover all the information our members need. Non-IWALC participants have not been charged for the session.

I am therefore suggesting that we organise another session with a different trainer. On 2 December I attended NALC's online Future Communities Conference. It included several sessions related to code of conduct, including one by Jackie Weaver, Secretary of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils and famous for her involvement in the Handforth PC case. On a whim I emailed Jackie the following day, asking if she would consider doing an online session for us in the new year. To my surprise, she said she would be happy to do so – either on her own or (her suggestion) in conjunction with a local trainer. The obvious local trainer would be Sue Chilton. I have therefore written to her, asking if she would be able to do it, either alone or with Jackie Weaver. She has yet to reply but hopefully she will do so before the meeting.

## **Paper 2: Equality and Diversity Training**

Heather, Jill and I consider that there is a need for a training session on the implications of the Equality Act for local councils. There is at least one councillor on the Island with a disability and we know of at least one council that has had a complaint from a member of the public on a disability-related issue. I have found out that Newport and Carisbrooke Community councillors attended such a course recently. It was provided by Mandy Ainsworth of the HTP Apprenticeship College and, according to one of the participants (Shirley Smart), it was very good.

I therefore contacted Mandy. She informed that it was a two-hour session (6.00-8.00 pm) and that it covered the following:

### *Overall Objectives:*

*To understand how equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the workplace and everyday life and the type of language that is appropriate to use*

*To recognise how this training relates to your role*

### *The in parts:*

*The councils code of conduct and how it links to equality, diversity and inclusion.*

*Defining equality, diversity and inclusion*

*The Equality act 2010 and the protected characteristics*

*Discrimination, Victimisation, harassment and stereotyping*

*Under Gender - gender reassignment, pronouns, language around gender, honorifics,*

*Homophobic/Biphobic/Transphobic language*

*Under Race and ethnicity - Language, respect*

*Respect*

*Mental health*

*How to tackle or challenge any unsupportive language or comments*

*How can you help, signposting*

She would be happy to do a similar session for us, online or face-to-face (depending on Covid), for £300.

**Paper 3: Training for New Clerks**

There are several new clerks on the Island and two more will be appointed soon to replace Maxine. Some of the recent appointees have indicated to Heather and Jill that they are struggling to get up-to-speed with all the information they need. They have enrolled in our recent courses but have additional training needs. It appears that SLCC is not providing any training on the Island at present. We are therefore wondering whether we should consider providing some training for them.