



# ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 23/22

14 MARCH 2022

The purpose of this Report is to provide the basis for the Town Council to determine its response to an invitation to rejoin the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC).

## No. DETAILS

### 1) BACKGROUND

- a) IWALC is the Island's County Association of Local Councils (CALC) with 26 of the Island's 33 Town and Parish Councils in membership of it.
- b) Ventnor Town Council was also a member until it decided to withdraw at its December 2017 meeting and become a Development Partner of the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC).
- c) An email to the Mayor on behalf of IWALC's Chair Diana Conyers invited Ventnor Town Council to rejoin IWALC: the email is attached to this Report.
- d) Also attached is the Briefing Note on the issue I circulated to Members on 17 January summarising the reasons why the Town Council of 2017 had opted to withdraw from IWALC, none of which appear to have changed.

### 2) REASONS FOR REJOINING

- a) The email from IWALC's Chair sets out five reasons for rejoining:
- b) *Membership of NALC*: as only Councils that are in membership of their geographically local CALC can be in membership of NALC, the Town Council is currently not. However, the Town Council receives all NALC's Briefings and emails and has access to its website
- c) *Free Training*: IWALC provides regular training across a range of relevant areas that are free to its members with non-members being charged £25 per participant per course. HALC also provides extensive training free to members but participation normally involves the costs of travel.
- d) The other three reasons given - *Relationships with Isle of Wight Council*, *Sharing Experience* and having a *Collective Voice* would not be relevant if IWALC joined HALC. In that case, as the Briefing Notes' Assessment section states:
- e) that would not involve the dissolution of IWALC or the loss of its Island-based strengths as it would become HALC's eighth District Association, retaining its own identity and membership while gaining involvement with and representation on the much larger and better resourced organisation well placed to influence the centres of the range of services so vital for the Island's residents and now increasingly run from Hampshire.
- f) The reasons for the Town Council's decision of December 2017 are, if anything, even more relevant now.

### 3) RECOMMENDATION

The Town Council is recommended to determine its County Association of Local Councils membership.

Dear Colleagues

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a healthy and peaceful break over the Christmas and New Year holiday.

This is the time of the year when local councils are finalising their budgets – and therefore the time when you are probably considering the benefits you get from the money you spend. I thought it might therefore be a good time to remind you of the benefits of IWALC membership.

In my view, there are five main benefits:

### **1. *Full membership of NALC***

Membership of IWALC gives you full membership of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Such membership is only possible through your local county association, which is IWALC. Membership of NALC entitles you to, among other things:

- Direct access to their legal and other advisory services;
- Full access to their website;
- Regular briefings and news updates; and
- Participation in webinars and other training activities, many of which are free.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that all IWALC member councils, not just the larger ones, now have direct access to NALC's legal and other advisory services.

### **2. *Free Training***

IWALC's training events are free for councillors and staff of member councils. Participants from non-member councils are welcome to attend but have to pay a fee. Between May and December 2021 we provided training in *Basic Councillor Skills*, *Chairmanship*, *Introduction to Planning*, *Introduction to Finance* and *Code of Conduct*. Plans for 2021 include further courses in *Planning* and *Code of Conduct*, and courses in *Equality and Diversity* and *Social Media*.

### **3. *Relations with the Isle of Wight Council and other local organisations***

IWALC is a voting member of the Isle of Wight Council (IWC)'s Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Health and Wellbeing Board and a non-voting member of the Planning Committee. We also have regular meetings with IWC representatives and often call upon Cabinet members to attend our 'topic' meetings. This gives member councils the chance to express their views and influence the Council's decisions.

We also send representatives to the meetings of eight other local organisations, including the Voluntary Sector Forum, Local Access Forum and AONB, while many others contribute regularly to our monthly *Bulletin*. Furthermore, we are members of two regional local government organisations: the South East Region County Association Forum (SERCAF) and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association.

### **4. *Sharing experience***

IWALC provides a vehicle for local councils to share experiences and learn from each other. This is particularly important at present, when we are facing many challenges, ranging from Covid and climate change to the pressure to take over, or contribute to the funding of, some

of the IWC's functions. We do this in various ways, including the monthly *Bulletin*, meetings on specific topics and special events. In 2021 we held topic meetings on the local government elections, the Draft Island Planning Strategy and Island Roads, and hosted a workshop on the lessons learned from community mobilisation in response to Covid, while in our December *Bulletin* we launched a debate on the Island's housing crisis.

## **5. A collective voice**

Last but not least, IWALC provides a collective voice for the Island's local councils. Through our relations with the IWC and other organisations, our monthly *Bulletin*, and our topic meetings and special events, we publicise the important work that local councils do and ensure that their voice is heard. Twenty-six (79%) of the Island's 33 councils now belong to IWALC. Needless to say, we would like to have 100% membership! We need to work together, particularly in these challenging times.

For further information, please contact myself ([conyersdiana@gmail.com](mailto:conyersdiana@gmail.com)), our County Officer, Heather Rowell ([heatheriwalc@gmail.com](mailto:heatheriwalc@gmail.com)) or our Communications Officer, Jill Webster ([jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com](mailto:jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com)).

Thanks and best wishes

Diana Conyers  
fIWALC Chair



# VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

IWALC & HALC

BRIEFING NOTE

17 JANUARY 2022

## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) At its meeting of 11 December 2017 the Town Council resolved in Minute 136/17:  
**It was proposed by Councillor Jason Mack, seconded by Councillor Brian Lucas and unanimously resolved that:**
- i) the Town Council will not renew its Membership of IWALC from the 2018/19 financial year and asks its Clerk to inform IWALC's secretary accordingly in advance of the deadline date of 31 December; and
  - ii) asks its Clerk to take the necessary steps for the Town Council to become a Development Partner within the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC).
- b) This Note sets out the reasons for that decision as a basis for any new discussion.

## 2) CONTEXT

- a) Both IWALC and HALC are CALCS - County Associations of LoScal Councils - and both are Members of NALC: the National Association of Local Councils.
- b) NALC operates on the basis of 8 Regions with numbers of CALCS in each ranging from two in Yorkshire & Humberside to eight in the South East and each CALC having a representative on the General Assembly.
- c) The South East Region includes eight CALCs with numbers of Councils ranging from Kent's 305 to IWALC's 26.



## 3) IWALC

- a) IWALC is by far the smallest of the country's CALCs with 26 of the Island's 33 Town Parish Councils in membership.
- b) *Membership:* in 2013 its membership included 32 of the 33 with only Shanklin not signed up; since then six others have withdrawn from membership; Bembridge, Totland, Chale, Calbourne, Whippingham and Ventnor.
- c) *Resources:* its low membership results in limited resources. Its Budget for the current financial year is for Expenditure of £16,717 with income at £13,060 with the deficit drawing on a carried forward balance of £19,283. Its one member of staff is its part time Secretary with a budgeted £5,640 salary.
- d) *Organisation:* it is operated as a not-for-profit membership organisation through an Executive Committee consisting of one councillor from each of its member councils. Currently the Executive Committee meets every other month – with one being its AGM – with Topic Meetings in the intervening months.
- e) *Objectives:* are identified in its Constitution as to promote the health, safety and well being; both material and cultural of the people in its various communities; attract and hold the interests of its citizens; develop inherent strength to deal with, and work with all other tiers of local, regional and national government; adapt itself to change in response to the needs

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of citizens in the local community and protect, consolidate and develop the existing rights, privileges and functions of Local Councils.

- f) *Services:* as listed on its web site IWALC provides representation, infrastructure and support to town and parish councils on the Isle of Wight. IWALC is a part of the national structure of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), which provides centralised legal and other advisory services to parish and town councils. NALC lobby's direct to the National Government. Representatives of IWALC are elected from its Executive Committee to serve on other bodies including the Isle of Wight Council's Scrutiny Committee, the IW Health and Well Being Board, Community Action Isle of Wight Association Forum. One of IWALC's main tasks is to facilitate and finance training for local councillors.

#### 4) HALC

- a) *Structure:* HALC is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board consisting of four Councillor members from each of Hampshire's seven emparished Districts that are its District Association Members: Basingstoke, East Hampshire, Eastleigh, Hart, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester across which are its 262 Town and Parish Councils.
- b) *Development Partners:* the structure provides for involvement by Town & Parish Councils from outside its County area and that is the arrangement adopted by Calbourne, Whippingham, Totland, Chale, Bembridge and Ventnor from the Island.
- c) *Resources (financial):* its Accounts for 2020/21 show income of £196,861 with expenditure of £174,159 and Reserves of £156,799.
- d) *Resources (staff):* it employs seven staff: Chief Executive, Member Services Officer, HR & Employment Officer, Learning & Development Officer, Policy & Comms Officer, Office Manager and Company Secretary.
- e) *Objectives:* as set out in its Memorandum & Articles: protecting and promoting the interests, rights, functions and privileges of members; assisting members in the performance of their duties and in promoting and developing the social, economic and environmental quality of life of their communities; promoting a wide spread and well informed interest in local government; promoting effective local government; encouraging principal authorities to develop effective partnership arrangements and to devolve appropriate services to Local Councils.
- f) *Services:*
- Member query service offering information, advice and signposting to specialists as required.
  - Access to high quality sector specific training and events at subsidised rates. These events provide a variety of information, networking and development opportunities for both Councillors and Officers.
  - HR documents, including a Standard Contract template and Disciplinary, Grievance and Absence policies. Specialist HR advice bespoke to Town and Parish Councils through our LCPD membership.
  - Access to a register of qualified and experienced locums able to cover for your Clerk or other staff members, on a short or long term basis.
  - One hour free support (per query) from our specialist legal advisors, with reduced rates if additional legal work is required.
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- Member advertising space on our website and social media page to help find your new Clerk or other staff.
  - Access to a specialist planning service.
  - Access to a specialist and VAT finance advisory service.
  - Support and monitor your borrowing applications to Government.
  - Access to the National Association of Local Councils services.
  - We have qualified and experienced consultants providing a range of services tailored to help you run your Council better and improve effectiveness.
  - We have contact with all levels of the statutory and community sectors in the county and many links beyond. With strong membership we can shape legislation, policy and guidance that will affect our members and the sector before it becomes law.

## 5) COSTS

- a) HALC's charge for our membership this year in £755. That doesn't include an affiliation fee to NALC as NALC only recognises Town & Parish Councils that are members of their own area CALC. We do however have access to all NALC information via HALC.
- b) IWALC's charge for us if we rejoined from April would be £783.89 for one year only as the NALC charge of £394.31 is being waived for 12 months for rejoining Councils.

## 6) ASSESSMENT

- a) The Town Council's decision of 2017 to move to HALC was based on concerns about IWALC's inevitably small size and consequently limited resources, unsatisfactory decision making structure and unwillingness to consider development of it, absence of policy development and slow advice response times due to reliance on NALC for it.
- b) A further consideration was the increasing move of essential services from the Island to Hampshire. That already applied to Children's Services, Police and Fire Services and is now being extended to the Clinical Commissioning Group and the incorporation of it and related health services into the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Service from July this year.
- c) Strategically, in terms of both resources and public service provision arrangements the case for the Island's Town & Parish Council to be represented by and within the wider organisation of HALC is even stronger now than it was then.
- d) All the more so since if IWALC joined HALC that would not involve the dissolution of IWALC or the loss of its Island-based strengths as it would become HALC's eighth District Association, retaining its own identity and membership while gaining involvement with and representation on the much larger and better resourced organisation well placed to influence the centres of the range of services so vital for the Island's residents.

# NALC

National  
Association of  
Local Councils

County  
Associations

Regions

Councils

