

CAMBOURNE TOWN COUNCIL

District of South Cambridgeshire

Council Meeting 22nd March 2022

Correspondence

The below schedule is a summary of correspondence circulated by the Town Clerk to Councillors

	FROM	SUBJECT
8.1	Association of Democratic Services Officers (ASDO)	Local Authority Remote/Hybrid Meetings
8.2	National Association of Local Councils (NALC)	Ukraine Financial Support - Town and Parish Councils
8.3	Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue	Ukraine and CamSAR



Local Authority Remote/Hybrid Meetings

Model Motion for Council Meetings

On 5 January 2022, the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) launched a petition calling on the Government to change the law to give councils (ranging from county, district and unitary authorities, through to town and parish councils) the freedom to hold remote meetings when local circumstances suit. This includes hybrid meetings.

This follows the unsuccessful High Court action in 2021 and the subsequent judgement that it was for Parliament to change the law not the courts - as indeed the devolved administrations have done in Wales and Scotland to allow for on-line meetings.

We do not wish to impose remote meetings on councils. You should have the choice to decide how you run your meetings depending on local circumstances. We also accept that some meetings (for example full council meetings) are more suited to physical attendance.

You will be aware that the Government issued a call for evidence on 21 March 2021 in relation to remote meetings. We are still awaiting their response to the large number of submissions from local authorities, relevant organisations and the public.

The period of lockdown showed that remote meetings bring so many benefits to local democracy and residents, apart from the obvious public health safeguards. It is no longer just a response to Covid, although we are aware that some councillors are still not able to attend meetings for health reasons either relating to them or their families.

The wider benefits are:

- Increased attendances at remote meetings by both councillors and the public

- Significant cost savings for some authorities arising from much less travel to meetings
- The environmental benefits of less travel, particularly in the large county authorities
- A better work/life balance for councillors
- Improved equality of access to meetings for all and opening up opportunities for more people to stand for election as councillors
- More transparency and openness for the public to see council meetings
- An option to move meetings online when there are constraints, for example bad weather such as snow or flooding.

We therefore ask Councils to consider passing the following motion and writing to the Secretary of State showing your support:

“This Council supports the petition launched by ADSO and LLG on 5 January with regard to remote and hybrid meetings. We agree to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities calling on the Government to change the law to allow councils the flexibility to hold such meetings when they deem appropriate within agreed rules and procedures.”

Further information about our organisations is attached. For further enquiries on the above motion, please contact John Austin, ADSO Chair – john.austin@adso.co.uk

10 February 2022

More about our organisations

Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO)

Formed in 2009, ADSO is the professional body for Governance and Democratic Services Officers in principal local authorities. We provide professional services, training and qualifications to our members as well as representing them in national and local issues. We also support local authorities in developing best practice in governance and related matters.

Lawyers in Local Government (LLG)

LLG was formed in April 2013 by the merger of the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) and Solicitors in Local Government (SLG). It's primary purpose is to represent, promote and support the interests of its members.

Membership is open to local government legal or governance officers working within a local authority, including Monitoring Officers and their deputies, solicitors, barristers, legal executives, licenced conveyancers and trainees.

Lawyers in Local Government is a limited company registered in England and Wales. Registered Number: 8379439. Registered Office: Sycamore House, Sutton Quays Business Park, Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 3EH.

Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CfGS)

CfGS exists to promote better governance and scrutiny, both in policy and in practice. They support local government, the public, corporate and voluntary sectors in ensuring transparency, accountability and greater involvement in their governance processes. CfGS is a social purpose consultancy and a national centre of expertise. Their purpose is to help organisations achieve their outcomes through improved governance and performance.

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

Established in 1947, the National Association of Local Councils is the national body that represents the interests of 10,000 local (parish and town) councils in England. NALC works in partnership with county associations to support, promote and improve local councils.

Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

Founded in 1972, SLCC represents clerks in over 5,000 parish and town councils in England and Wales.

As the professional body for local council clerks and senior council employees, it ensures that its members are equipped with the necessary knowledge, training and skills to thrive within their role and best support their council and community.

14 MARCH 2022

GENERAL BRIEFING1-22 | UKRAINE

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has joined the Local Government Association (LGA) in endorsing a statement from the political leadership of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), which strongly condemns the multiple attacks and violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

We are in continuing contact with the LGA and government, flagging up the role of local (parish and town) councils and encouraging principal councils to ensure they are liaising with county associations and local councils on local support.

It is pleasing to note that our sector again has stepped up to the plate and is showing solidarity and support through flying the Ukrainian flag and lighting up buildings with its colours, holding vigils or moments of silence including at council meetings, passing motions and statements of support and solidarity, making council and community buildings available for donations of items, organising donations of items including to their twin towns, signposting to information on charities and aid agencies, and making a financial donation themselves.

The minister for refugees, Lord Carrington, has met with NALC's chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, to discuss the Ukraine Local Sponsorship Scheme and Keith has flagged up the potential for the sector to provide support.

What can councils do?

Councils and councillors should consider expressing solidarity through [signing up](#) to the statement from the political leadership of the CEMR.

Councils can fly flags from public buildings in line with the government [guidance](#) on flag flying.

Councils can use social media such as Twitter, Facebook etc to express their support for Ukraine, though as ever councils should consider what you post and how it might be perceived including by local Russian residents.

Councils with the general power of competence (GPC) are able to make a donation to a charity operating overseas. Those councils without GPC cannot as they are restricted by section 137(3) of the Local Government Act 1972. Councils

should always check the legitimacy of organisations being supported. The key national charities and aid agencies are the [Disasters Emergency Committee](#) and the [British Red Cross](#).

Councils may be able to help other local organisations who themselves are able to make donations.

Other Issues

This is a difficult time for everyone, especially for many people with links to Ukraine or Russia. Some communities with Ukrainian or Russian residents might be facing particular challenges or tensions too.

We can expect a number of refugees to be offered support in the UK and again we will be discussing with LGA and the government how local councils can help. Councils without the GPC can use section 137 (3) to fund local charities providing assistance to Ukrainian refugees. We would remind you of NALC's general advice on powers contained in Legal Topic Note 31.

Whilst it is unclear how the current crisis will develop councils should ensure they are cyber prepared against any potential risks and that they are aware of their disaster and emergency plans and considering updating them.

To help our engagement with the LGA and the government, please do let us know what you are doing and if you have any questions or further issues you would like us to consider, please email policycomms@nalc.gov.uk



Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue

Unit 2, Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate, Pymoor, Ely, CB6 2DY
www.camsar.org | charity 1118622 registered in England & Wales

16th March 2022

Dear Town and Parish Council members,

Please forgive this rather generic letter which I am circulating to many local Councils across Cambridgeshire.

I am writing to you on behalf of Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue (CamSAR) to ascertain your opinions and possible support of a project we have been considering for some time, but one which has come to the forefront due to the crisis in Ukraine.

We understand that many people want to help the Ukrainians by donating clothes and similar items and, as an organisation, CamSAR have already helped to enable lorry loads of acceptable items to be transported from our base in Pymoor to Eastern Europe under the auspices of Ukraine Lifeline <https://www.ukrainelifeline.com/>. This organisation is also accepting monetary donations as you can see from their website.

In a similar vein, we had previously been considering the possibility of getting recycling bins placed in parishes e.g. in Community Centres, Council car parks, under the management of a company called Wilcox. This company already have established recycling bins in areas of the UK, and they provide total support in terms of management of the bins with the exception being that the Charity for whom the items are collected for has to find the initial sites for the bins.

We have been advised that the bins would need to be in place for a minimum of two years to make the collections cost effective. In the short term, any items that have already been collected in local areas can be taken directly to our base in Pymoor by the Councils/parishioners themselves, but following on, once the awful situation in Ukraine has been resolved, those sites that were interested in having a (longer term) bin situated in their parish could do so, with the funding generated going to CamSAR, and our logo going on the bins. The items that can be collected in the bins are clothing, paired shoes, handbags, belts, sheets, towels, pillow cases and duvet covers.

I am sure there will be many questions about this project which either/both the representative from Wilcox (in the future) and CamSAR team members would be happy to answer.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue

Anne Ninham

Administrative support and fundraiser (signed electronically)

a.ninham@camsar.org.uk



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

@CamSAR999 on Twitter | @cambslowlandsar on Instagram

CamSAR is a member of Lowland Rescue (charity 1150317)

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