



**National Association of Councillors
Northern Ireland Region
Members' Newsletter December 2020**

For our final Newsletter of 2020 the Officers and Executive Committee of the National Association of Councillors send best wishes to all our members and their families for the festive season. We hope that you have the opportunity to enjoy time with your loved ones over the holidays and that the New Year ahead will bring better times for all.



See over for the latest updates and our meeting dates for 2021, when we look forward to seeing you all again.

Please remember that if you have any problem or query relating to your work as a councillor, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us and we will do our best to assist.



Activities Update

Partnership Panel

Following a decision taken at our last Members' Meeting we have sent a request to the Department for Communities for an NAC representative to attend future Partnership Panel meetings as an Observer.

This follows the request that we put forward in August to be included on the panel, which we have been advised will have to be considered, and if agreed could be a lengthy process due to the requirement for a legislative change.

Ombudsman introductory meeting

A meeting took place by Zoom on Friday 4 December with Ms Margaret Kelly, the new Ombudsman along with Ms Hegarty and Mrs McAleer from the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman's office.

The NAC Chair Ald Tommy Sandford, Senior Vice Chair Cllr Terry Andrews, and Secretary Cllr Joe Boyle attended the meeting representing the NAC and the meeting format allowed them to raise and discuss a variety of matters with a lot of ground covered. Information was provided by Ms Kelly and her staff on the new on-line Adjudication hearing processes.

Details of the meeting were shared with and discussed by the NAC Executive Committee and a letter has been sent to Ms Kelly seeking clarification on a point of concern and to provide her with the background on the Councillors Code of Conduct review process and how the Code was introduced to councillors.

Councillors' Code of Conduct review

Having been informed in September that it was "anticipated that the review of the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors, if agreed by the Minister, would be laid in the Assembly for approval in September/October"; the NAC Secretary, Cllr Boyle has written to Mr Mark O'Donnell, Deputy Secretary, Department for Communities asking for an update.

Councillor Equality

The NAC Executive Committee are preparing for meetings that we have requested with the DfC Minister's Officials and the Assembly Committee for Communities.

NAC Executive Committee meetings

The Secretary, Cllr Boyle sent a thank you letter on behalf of the NAC committee to staff at Fermanagh & Omagh District Council for facilitating their November meeting at the Enniskillen Chambers. The December Executive Committee meeting took place by Zoom in line with the COVID-19 restrictions. The January meeting is also planned to be carried out on-line by Zoom.

NAC Members' Meetings

We encourage NAC members to participate in these bi-monthly meetings as they provide a forum for voicing opinions and concerns, or to exchange information and experiences in relation to the councillor role. They also provide members with the opportunity to hear what the NAC Executive Committee are currently working on and therefore contribute to the discussions and decisions.

The NAC NI Region Members' November meeting took place through the Zoom platform on Wednesday 18th and our next meeting will be in the new year.

The planned dates for our 2021 meetings are listed below and until we can arrange venues to allow us to have 'in person' meetings again these will be carried out On-line by Zoom.



Meeting details will be circulated in advance and posted on [the NAC Website](#)>>

Meeting Dates for 2021

Members' Meetings Wednesday's 11am
20 January
24 March
19 May
21 July
15 September
17 November

Please note that these are the planned dates and may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.



Coronavirus Information

There are various sources of information and advice available in relation to COVID-19 and we have added some useful website links below that can be accessed by clicking on the logos or copying the links below.



www.adviceni.net



<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/campaign/coronavirus-updates-support-your-business>



<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>



<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/>

Avoid COVID-19 Scams

Beware of COVID-19 Online Scams and Threats



For helpful information from NI Direct Government Services and Google on how to avoid becoming a victim of online scams, please click the links below.

