



NALC / WALC Summary Report – Awards For All WALC Funding – By Faithful Conteh; At 24/11/16;

1. Introduction

WALC sought funding from Awards for all to deliver a networking and learning event to support local (community, town or parish) councils with the support of NALC.

The project was called ‘Communities in the Lead’ and its aim was to support campaigns groups on a national scale through a process of shared learning and knowledge relating to creation of new councils.

The benefits of local councils are that they engage residents in the community and put residents in the driving seat which gives them an important decision making voice in the delivery of important public services and the wellbeing of their community. It is imperative that communities have this opportunity to influence local decision making and bring desired community changes at district or county level. As the campaign for the creation of a new local council can be lengthy and bureaucratic, the Communities in the Lead project aims to enable campaigners to share their knowledge, form new connections and have access to guidance and support.

2. Event & Logistics

The event took place from 11:00-13:00 Thursday 20 October, 2016 at in Birmingham, at Jury's Inn Hotel as part of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Annual Conference.

The event saw 43 delegates in attendance from the Southwest (Devon Association of Local Councils) to the Northeast (Durham Association of Local Councils).

The format of the session was a follows –

10:45 – 11.00	Registration Refreshments available
11:00 –11:10	The Chair Welcome, introduction and overview of NALC’s ongoing ‘Create A Council’ work from Chris Borg, NALC Policy & Development Manager
11.10 – 11:40	Campaign Spotlight Session – New Parish Council Created Update from Cllr. Rob Pocock, Sutton Coldfield Town Councillor, on the work of the new Sutton Coldfield Town Council
11:40 – 12:00	Campaign Spotlight Session – New Parish Council Created Update from Nina & Miles Hosking, Rickmansworth Campaign Champions, on the creation of a new town council in Rickmansworth
12:00 – 12:20	Campaign Spotlight Session – Petition Submitted



	Update from Lisa Fieldhouse, Stainland Campaign Champion, on progress with the campaign in Stainland
12:20 – 12:40	County Association Spotlight Session Update from Terry Martin, Kent County Officer, on the progress of campaigns in Kent
12:40 – 13:00	NALC Big Lottery Funding Bid Sounding Board Update from Chris Borg, NALC Policy and Development Manager on the NALC Big Lottery new councils’ funding bid and sounding board session
13:00	Feedback Delegate will be provided with a Feedback Form to capture insights and learning from the event Thereafter, delegates are invited to please join NALC Annual Conference delegates in the main refreshment area of the venue for lunch till 14:00

3. Context Of Event In National New Councils’ Work

The creation of new councils enables communities an opportunity to be at the forefront of local decision making and change at county and district level.

In order for a community group to become a local council they must petition, put forward a Community Governance Review and get approval from the principal authority to enact a local council.

There is currently no national funding to support the creation of local councils and support that is provided to campaign groups is limited. Campaign groups have welcomed the idea of meeting other campaign groups, sharing experiences and discussing how campaign groups have overcome challenges. It is essential that knowledge sharing and experiential learning are facilitated to enable the formation of successful campaigns. This project has enabled campaign groups from all over England to come together and support each other in achieving their common goal of giving local communities more of a voice in local decision making.

Data collected from feedback forms after the session will also provide useful insight and learning which can be utilised by future and current campaign groups.

4. Delegate Feedback (See Annex For Detail)

Out of the 43 delegates that attended the event, 30 delegates completed the feedback forms – the responses below are in relation to responses from those 30 delegates.

All delegates agreed that the venue and event location were good. Delegates appreciated the well-presented session on the creation of a new Parish Council by Sutton Coldfield Town Council; which was both interesting and helpful. The session focussing on the



creation of a new Parish Council by the Rickmansworth campaign group provided delegates with useful information. Delegates felt that the Stainland campaign group's petition session highlighted the impact of District Council input, balanced with good humour and useful advice. Also delegates felt that the Kent Association of Local Councils showcased good practice during their session. The information provided in the Big Lottery Funding Sounding Board session was considered informative by delegates. In relation to proposed legislative changes by the Government, the majority of delegates were in favour of the proposed changes as necessary to ensure democratic processes (see Questions 10-12).

5. Conclusions About Event

The pre-event information, location and venue were deemed as good by the majority of delegates. The variety of sessions available were well received and delegates felt they were provided with clear information that was very helpful and relevant. All spotlight sessions were considered as very good by the majority of delegates. Also, the sessions provided insight into different stages and levels of input throughout the process of creating a new council which delegates found useful. Overall the majority of delegates rated the event as very good with the remaining delegates rating the event as good.

6. Conclusions About Future Direction Of National New Councils' Work

In relation to changes the Government and Boundary Commission for England could make to their guidance on Community Governance Reviews, delegates felt it could be clearer and control by principal authorities should be addressed.

In relation to Government legislation in favour of principal authorities holding mandatory resident referendums during Community Governance Reviews to determine objectively the outcome of campaigns, delegates agreed and stated that this legislation would ensure clarity and increase accountability.

In relation to Government legislation in favour a mandatory right of appeal where campaign groups feel that a principal local authority has unfairly rejected the creation of a new local council having ignored objective evidence, delegates agreed and stated that it was long overdue and necessary to encourage democracy.

7. Did the Event Realise The Aims Of The Communities In The Lead Project?

The aim of the Communities in the Lead Project was to support campaign groups wishing to set up a local council as campaign groups have a much higher chance to successfully create a new local council where they can share ideas and experiences and access insider knowledge on how to lead a successful campaign. The project also aimed to bring together campaign groups from all over England in a space where they could learn from one another and increase their chances of success. Furthermore, the lesson learned would be captured and made available for future campaign groups.



Delegates overall rated this event as good or very good due to the ability to hear about campaigns of varying sizes and constitutions throughout the UK. Spotlight sessions enabled delegates to gain insight into the challenges faced by campaign groups whilst hearing from successfully formed new councils. Also, overall delegates were in favour of legislative changes by the Government to support the formation and democratic process of new councils going forward. Lastly, the provision of this report as a source of information is available to future campaign groups to gain insight into the lessons learnt.

Contact Data

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Annex – Summary Delegate Feedback From Attendance At WALC / NALC Awards For All New Councils’ Session On 20 October, 2016 in Birmingham

Question Heading	Overall Feedback Responses (Qualitative & Quantitative)				
	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
1. What did you think of the venue and location of the event?	9	18	3	0	0
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City centre but has a carpark • Meeting room too small • Very well attended – space quite tight • Accessible/central • Room too small. Wrong shape. 				
2. What did you think of the pre-event information and registration today?	9	15	5	0	1
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very informative pre-briefing material • Clear and professional from staff • No idea of this in advance- registration form not large enough 				
3. What did you think of the Welcome by Chris Borg?	12	17	1	0	0
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and professional from Chris 				



	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
4. What did you think of the Spotlight Session – Campaign Spotlight Session – New Parish Council Created by Sutton Coldfield Town Council?	26	4	0	0	0
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest self-praise • Good info • Lots of good tips • Great result • Really helpful to hear the challenges of starting a large new council • Most informative – timeline + current activities + opportunities • Interesting to hear about larger campaigns. Some interesting facts obtained • Well presented, with well-placed humour. Honest appraisal of progress (of lack of) • V. informative- Bristol must learn • Good presentation, but raises problems re size of parishes • Excellent examples of good practice, ambitions, awareness of responsibility to local electors 				



	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
5. What did you think of the Spotlight Session – Spotlight Session – New Parish Council Created with the Rickmansworth campaign group?	19	11	0	0	0
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked the campaign report • Good info • A story of great energy + resilience! • A very professional campaign • Some very useful information • Went over the top • Demonstrated a different but equally effective approach, would not have been achievable without the funding that was available, massive effort put in by campaign team 				
6. What did you think of the Spotlight Session – Spotlight Session – Petition Submitted from the Stainland campaign group?	20	10	0	0	0
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting rural challenge • Good info • Highlighted the ability of district councils to fudge matters • Refreshing and with humour, despite obvious frustrations • Interesting and light hearted, got a good feel about the community really useful advice for those running campaigns on the ground- excellent ideas on translating District Council instructions for local people 				

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
7. What did you think of the County Association <i>Spotlight Session from the Kent Association of Local Councils?</i>	19	10	0	0	0
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuable focus on filling the urban gaps • Good info • Made clear how county associations can get involved • Informative – well delivered • Much depended on the funding which is no longer available. It has taken a long time to germinate in Bristol and may not go ahead without £. • Full of good evidence and statistics • Shared how County Associations can help campaign groups run sound and effective campaigns and maintain momentum in spite of delays and always help District/Unitaries share good practice 				
8. What did you think of the Big Lottery Funding Sounding Board session with Chris Borg?	7	18	1	0	0
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some hope for future funding • Most informative • Too fast and pushed for time! 				
9. Overall, how would you rate today's event?	19	11	0	0	0
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really helpful and relevant to our campaign • Excellent presentations. Relevant material • Inspirational 				



<p>10. What further changes do you think are needed to the Government's and Boundary Commission for England's guidance on Community Governance Reviews?</p>	<p>Delegates felt that there could be a clearer definition of Community Governance Reviews and more guidance for district councils or when a 'top down' approach is employed. At a local level delegates believed that there should be less control by the District Council and that it should be made clear that a positive ballot result should result in the creation of a Parish Council. Furthermore, there should be an appeal against principal authorities' decisions if residents vote for creation of a new council. The means for residents to find out information about processes and the involvement of campaign groups was also mentioned by delegates regarding the Government and Boundary Commission for England's guidance on Community Governance Reviews.</p>					
<p>11. Do you agree that the Government should legislate to make it mandatory for principal local authorities to hold binding resident referendums during Community Governance Reviews which should determine objectively the outcome of campaigns?</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> <tr> <td>26</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No	26	2	<p>The reasons given by delegates in favour of the legislation were that it prevents local politics from getting in the way of the movement as it is a truly democratic process and a public vote should always be the deciding factor. Delegates who were not in favour stated that reducing the matter to mathematics alone is problematic and that a larger group could ride roughshod over a smaller group.</p>
Yes	No					
26	2					
<p>12. Do you agree that the Government should legislate to introduce a mandatory right of appeal where campaign groups feel that a principal local authority has unfairly rejected the creation of a new local council having ignored objective evidence?</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No	30	0	<p>The reasons given by delegates were that this is long overdue and it provides a good safety net. Community engagement and the devolution of processes have to be encouraged if democracy in the UK is to be maintained and developed and there is a need to avoid the prevarication of principal councils negating the work of campaigners.</p>
Yes	No					
30	0					