

## **A personal view from an ALACE Council member - why to continue being a member of ALACE and how you can help**

What has ALACE done for me lately?

I volunteered to write a short piece about why I strongly recommend to senior Local Government Officers to be part of ALACE and how, in my opinion, it represents real value for money. My experience, albeit a very personal one, is actually echoed up and down the country by other members. ALACE is a recognised professional Trades Union body as does a great deal of work for us behind the scenes.

I wonder if I, like some of us, may have been a bit naïve. I suppose I thought I wouldn't need a Trade Union or have the need to be represented. I am root and branch local government officer, cut my teeth in local government in 1988 in a London Borough working on Compulsory Competitive Tendering, DSOs etc and I am now a serving Chief Executive and had been for 9 years at the time. I was sure I was perfectly capable of looking after myself and didn't really want to be in a union, not my bag!!

That was until the unexpected happened. I was completely wrong footed to be handed a written motion which questioned my good standing and reputation. Not only was I totally shocked to have this handed to me very late on the Thursday evening after a difficult council meeting, I was also coping with a recent bereavement which was known.

I phoned ALACE on Saturday morning. I simply confirmed where I worked, that I was a paid up member and that was that. The person I spoke to was actually on holiday but passed my details on to one of the tremendous consultants who works for ALACE. I was contacted on the Monday morning and I never had to pick up the phone again. ALACE did all the follow up work, the real peace of mind of having someone to talk to who really understood local government – who had real experience and who could offer current, practical and helpful advice was absolutely priceless at that time of need, as it is today.

During that difficult period I not only received advice but also felt as though there was an element of “pastoral care “ which I found enormously helpful and looking back needed.

ALACE are a friend whether you are in need or not, like most things you get out of things what you put in, and there are ways we can contribute to ALACE, What we are all getting out at the moment is a tireless campaign and effort of a small number of busy people who are making time, from where I know not, to challenge the introduction of the £95k cap something SOLACE are not challenging.