At the start of 2021 it did seem as if the way forward for ESALC might be difficult with the ending of the tripartite SSALC but with the hard work of our strong ESALC Board, and sound advice from Trevor Leggo, ESALC CEO and our President and Vice Presidents ESALC has come through interesting times well.

Our new Finance and Administration Assistant Emily Simpson is proving to be very capable, and many of you will now have had the chance to meet her at virtual training or briefing sessions.

ESALC is pleased to be offering a full programme of training and since 1st April 2021 **XXX** councillors and clerks have attended courses. Our Forums for Clerks and Chairs have proved popular, often featuring a particular topic and speaker, but with a main emphasis on giving people the opportunity to engage with colleagues and raise matters of concern.  Trevor Leggo’s invaluable input to these has been essential.

Our three District Associations, Rother, Wealden and Lewes are all doing well, with increasing attendance at their meetings, each seeking to address issues that affect their member councils locally to good effect.

It is good to be able to welcome Bexhill on Sea Town Council to the “family” in East Sussex, newly minted in May 2021 after a considerable time in the making.

Although we are all having to learn to live with the changes that Covid has brought, and the increasing rather than decreasing complexity of the needed response as absolute requirements in many cases are giving way to a myriad of voluntary suggested responses, all of our member councils are doing their best to navigate a way through that is both practical and prudent.  From correspondence with our councils and discussion with officers there is a good deal of puzzlement as to why virtual meetings have been so decisively curtailed.  We know that the discussion is ongoing with Parliament and hopefully some greater flexibility for circumstances may emerge.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Directors on the ESALC Board for their help, encouragement and support while I have been learning whilst working in this role, our President and Vice Presidents for their wisdom and guidance, and Trevor Leggo for his assistance throughout, which is much appreciated.