

# OALC NEWSLETTER

## APRIL 2019



### Training Programme 2019

#### THE HEADLINES

**OALC – WANTED** –page 2 -nominations for our Executive Committee and an Hon. Treasurer; subscription invoice reminder

**Sensible tip of the month** - page 3 – when were your Standing Orders last reviewed?

**Oxfordshire County Council** – page 3 – Road repairs, Home Library Service, volunteers needed, community resilience plans

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- **Allotments** – 15th May, Didcot, full day **PLACES STILL AVAILABLE**
- **Roles & Responsibilities** – 19<sup>th</sup> June, Didcot
- **Roles & Responsibilities** – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July, Didcot
- **Chairmanship** – 17<sup>th</sup> July, Didcot
- **Roles & Responsibilities** –13<sup>th</sup> September, Didcot
- **Budgeting & Finance for Cllrs** 2<sup>nd</sup> October, am Begbroke
- **VAT for Clerks** 2<sup>nd</sup> October, pm, Begbroke

### Vacancies this month

- Stonesfield PC – Clerk
- Sandford St Martin PC – Clerk
- Faringdon Town Council – Clerks Assistant
- Sutton Courtenay PC – Clerk
- Radley PC – part time development support office
- Henley on Thames TC – Town Clerk

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - NEW NOMINATIONS SOUGHT
2. HELP! - WE STILL NEED AN HON. TREASURER
3. SUBSCRIPTION INVOICES – A FEW ARE STILL OUTSTANDING

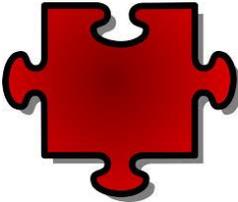
1. Members who serve on our Executive Committee have a four year term which mirrors that of parish councillors. Their term of office comes to end this May.

Our Executive Committee is made up of:

- A Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, Hon.Treasurer (still vacant) a President and Vice-Presidents.
- A representative from each of the district councils (5 in total) and one from the County Council
- Three town or parish council or parish meeting representatives from councils/meetings in each of the district councils (3 x West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Cherwell and Vale of White Horse except Oxford City Council that has 1 representative (13 in total).

It is the representatives from the town and parish councils and parish meetings whose term of office has come to an end.

Do you have the skills to be one of the pieces of the jigsaw that make up the OALC Executive Committee?



We are looking for new and enthusiastic members who want to contribute to the work of our Executive Committee. It meets four times per year on a Monday afternoon in a central location (Kidlington), plus an evening AGM in July. The Executive Committee needs people who can see the bigger picture into which town and parish councils fit, with skills in finance, personnel and local government. We are looking for constructive, collaborative and innovative people that can help to ensure the continued future of OALC

You need to be nominated by your parish council. The nomination form is [here](#)

The timetable for electing the new Executive Committee after 2<sup>nd</sup> May elections is:

- We will seek nominations for new term (2019-2023) of OALC Executive Committee in this Update in April and May. **PLEASE ENSURE THIS IS AN AGENDA ITEM FOR YOUR MAY COUNCIL MEETING**
- Nominations will be open from 1<sup>st</sup> May – 3<sup>rd</sup> June, send completed forms to [info@oalc.org.uk](mailto:info@oalc.org.uk)
- Nominations received will to be reported to 3<sup>rd</sup> June Executive Committee meeting.
- If there are more nominations than places an election will take place at the OALC AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019
- The first meeting of the new Committee will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

2. OALC still needs an Honorary Treasurer, we have tried all routes and avenues we can think of without success, so we ask again – **IS THERE ANYONE OUT THERE THAT CAN HELP OALC AND BE OUR HON. TREASURER?**

3. Thank you very much to all those councils that have paid their subscription invoices, only 39 councils are outstanding at the end of April. We look forward to getting those payments soon. The subscription invoices were sent out by post in mid-February. If your council did not receive an invoice (the dog ate it?) we are happy to supply a copy by email.

## SENSIBLE TIP OF THE MONTH – WHEN WERE YOUR STANDING ORDERS LAST REVIEWED?

Are your Standing Orders up to date? Standing Orders are often only referred to when things go pear shaped or someone starts asking awkward questions about process or governance. Don't be caught out, keep them up to date.

Your Standing Orders should be reviewed regularly and revised to reflect changing legislation. The latest version of the NALC Model Standing Orders is dated 2018 and incorporates changes necessitated by GDPR and the Openness Regulations which allow filming of meetings etc. The 2018 NALC Model Standing Orders are in the Members Area of the OALC website.

To keep life simple adopt the Model version, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Fill in the empty brackets to reflect your council and you have proven rules, written by NALC solicitors, to guide your council's activities. Bingo! Job done!

## LOCAL NEWS



# OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### **Oxfordshire County Council invests an additional £13m in road repair**

Repairing Oxfordshire's roads is a top priority for Oxfordshire County Council.

And, with the need to get the most out of limited resources, the county council has been pairing extra investment with cutting-edge innovation in communities across Oxfordshire.

Millions more means miles more repairs

A few months ago the county council announced an extra £13m for road maintenance for this financial year on top of our existing £18.5m programme of work – this follows last year's additional £12m boost. Last year's extra cash saw more than 37 extra miles of road being resurfaced through a range of methods which also included surface dressing and micro-asphalting – both of which make road surfaces waterproof and extend their life.

This year's additional money will be spent across Oxfordshire's towns and villages on resurfacing, drainage, bridge repairs and footways.

One of the major projects confirmed for later this year will see the A40 from Thornhill to Headington Roundabout (inbound) resurfaced, benefitting thousands of road users every day.

Innovation gets more done

Modern techniques introduced in recent years, along with more traditional daily work done by the road crews, have seen 9500 defects have been completed in the period January – March 2019.

We have been sending our fleet of Dragon Patchers out onto the county's roads for a few years now and their talent for fixing large numbers of rural potholes in a short space of time, and sealing the surrounding surface, is well known.

Their work will continue, but the hunt is always on for new technology and methods to keep the highways in good shape.

Oxfordshire County Council has been working with Highways Workforce to carry out trials of the Roadmender – a special mobile road-repairing machine that heats the existing road surface, combines it with some additional material which is then rolled, leaving seamless repairs.

Sean Rooney, our Service Lead for Highway Maintenance, said: "Money is a major factor when it comes to improving the condition of our roads and we need to do all we can get to get the most out of what we have.

"New ways of doing things need to be tested in real life situations to see how they perform. We have had some real successes which have gone from trials to business as usual, meaning our money goes further."

Old roads come round to a new way of thinking

Normally when a road is resurfaced the old materials are dug up and sent off to landfill. This not only costs money but also could be a waste of valuable materials.

The county council has recently been using a technique called 'Regen' where old surface materials are recycled on site. We are also trialling similar techniques for small scale patching and pothole repairs, see below for information on Roadmender.

Doing this reduces the need to bring in new materials and the number of lorry movements is reduced making an overall Co2 reduction compared with a traditional treatment. These environmental benefits alone have been a great reason to use this process but it is also cheaper than traditional methods. Let us know if you spot a pothole or any other problem on the roads

Our highways team want to hear from you if you have encountered a pothole, blocked road drain or broken road sign.

The best way to report things to us is via Fix My Street. You can simply search for "Fix My Street Oxfordshire" online or go direct to [fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Making your report this way means it goes direct to our team and is visible on the online map for anyone to see. You will also get updates once the area has been inspected and a decision made on whether it needs a repair or not.

Anyone unable to report problems online can call 0345 310 1111.

## Oxfordshire County Council's Home Library Service



Volunteer – [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homelibrary](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homelibrary)



OCC's Home Library Service provides a lifeline for people that are isolated or unable to travel to their local library. Reliant on volunteers to keep going, the service matches each customer (often elderly, unwell or vulnerable) with their own Home Library Service contact person.

There is currently a waiting list of residents in Oxfordshire wanting to make use of this wonderful service, and so we are putting a call out for members of communities to step forward and become a Home Library Service Volunteer. Volunteers work in their own postcode area and can

choose how many customers they would like to have. They

choose a bundle of books from the local library every 3 weeks for each customer and deliver them to their home, using the customer's own preferences of type of book or favourite authors.

Often, the volunteer will be invited in to share a cup of tea and a chat, making a huge difference to lonely and isolated residents, not only with the books, but with a friendly face and human contact. This is a massive benefit to customers' mental health and overall wellness and is often the high point of the customer's week.

Anyone can volunteer for the service: contact 01865 810259 or email

[homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk). As the role means entering private homes, all volunteers must be prepared to go through DBS background checks before starting (unless they are DBS checked already).

Any Oxfordshire library will be able to give you a leaflet about the service, should you be aware of community residents that it would be of use to. Or go to [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries) and click on Home Library Service.

## Community Resilience Plans – do you have one? Is it up to date?

We recently sent out our annual survey out to parishes confirming contact details for parish halls that could be used as emergency reception centres in emergencies.

We ask communities to complete a community resilience plan and share it with us so that we can ensure we provide what a community needs and work with them in the best way possible during an emergency. **Our Emergency Planning Officer is offering for someone from her team to attend a parish council meeting and give advice;** we will also help test and exercise these plans if asked. We can also bring along a selection of our free resources that can be given to communities for them to distribute via local post offices, coffee morning, churches etc. Many of our information leaflets are also available electronically for parishes to add to their own websites and social media.

Community resilience plans aren't just for the winter; if your parish is near a motorway, railway or airport there is potential for a major accident incident. Emergencies come in so many different shapes and forms – fire, flood, crash, chemical/oil leakage etc.

Simple community emergency plans are designed to achieve the following:

- Identification of safe places to use as a refuge for people displaced from their homes in the short term (hours) and how to open them at short notice at any time. These are known as

'Survivor Reception Centre's' by emergency services and it would help if this terminology could be used in your plan.

- Identification of people that can and are willing to help in an emergency.
- Identification of equipment that might be useful for self-help in an emergency.
- Identification of vulnerable or potentially vulnerable people in the community.
- A list of useful contacts for use in a crisis.

For more information look at the County Council community resilience page:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/emergency-planning/community-resilience>

or look at the government advice for communities here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-resilience-resources-and-tools>

### **Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Resilient Community Fund**

The County Council is also promoting the funds that are available to community groups from the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks community fund <https://www.ssen.co.uk/RCF/> if your parish is within the SSE catchment area (85% of the county). These funds can be used to enhance halls used in emergencies but the funds can also improve facilities for the community for example generators in areas prone to power cuts, a gas cooker in a hall, tables and chairs, wind up torches and flasks to distribute hot food in adverse weather, first aid kits etc.

The County Council also promote the In Case of Emergency (ICE) bottles – see attached for those living alone, with dementia, disabled or young mums with small children more information [here](#)

## **ELECTIONS**

### **Where are the missing councillors?**

You will all now know whether you are having a contested election or not. Unfortunately, outside the main towns there aren't many villages with contested elections. Lots of councils have less candidates than seats which is deeply disappointing. Across the four districts, in the councils that are having elections there are, in total, 201 councillors missing – where are they?

The BBC today <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-47947867> has published some interesting (depressing) analysis of the candidates at the upcoming elections:

- David and John are the most common candidate names, as well as Paul, Peter, Richard, Michael, Ian, Andrew, Mark, James, Stephen....
- Councillors are getting older
- The number of women is growing but is still low (male 63%, female 36%)
- The vast majority are white

**If your council is lacking the full number of councillors you have 35 days from the date of the election (2<sup>nd</sup> May) to co-opt without going through the Casual Vacancy process. This is your opportunity to identify possible people to join the council, don't wait for them to come forward, approach them, sell the idea of making a positive contribution to the community and don't take no for an answer!**

	Necessary action
Tuesday 26 March 2019	Publication of Notice of Election & Nominations open <b>PURDAH starts - see notes below</b>
Wednesday 3 April 2019 (4 pm)	Deadline for receipt of nomination papers and withdrawal of candidature
Thursday 4 April 2019 (4 pm)	Deadline for publication of Statement of Persons Nominated
Wednesday 24 April 2019	Publication of Notice of Poll
Thursday 2 May 2019 (7 am to 10 pm)	<b>Polling Day</b>
<b>Tuesday 7 May 2019</b>	<b>Day that councillors retire and new councillors come into office following the elections (this date does take account of the bank holiday)</b>
Between Tuesday 7 May and Tuesday 21 May inclusive	Period during which the annual meeting of the Town or Parish Council must be held
Before or at the first meeting of the Council following the election (which will be the annual meeting)	All councillors to sign declaration of acceptance of office
Thursday 30 May 2019	Last day for delivery of returns of elections expenses <b>(Parishes)</b>
By Tuesday 4 June 2019	All councillors to have completed their registration of interests and returned to the Monitoring Officer of the District or City Council

## Purdah

The provisions of the [Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011](#) apply to all town and parish councils.

During the run up to an election the Code contains relevant provisions which you need to be aware of paragraphs 33 – 35 (see below). This is often referred to as the "purdah" period and will start on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and continue until the election.

*“Elections, Referendums and Petitions. The period between the notice of an election and the election itself should preclude proactive publicity in all its forms of candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election. Publicity should not deal with controversial issues or report views, proposals, or recommendations in such a way that identifies them with individual councillors or groups of councillors. However, it is acceptable for the authority to respond in appropriate circumstances to events and legitimate service enquiries provided that their answers are factual and not party political. Councillors holding key political or civic positions should be able to comment in an emergency or where there is a genuine need for a member level response to an important event outside the authority’s control. Proactive events arranged in this period should not involve councillors likely to be standing for election”.*

During this period no town or parish council should publish publicity relating to particular individuals involved directly in the election. Publicity refers to any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public, or a section of the public, and could include news releases, newsletters, items on websites, advertising etc. The Code of Recommended Practice seeks to ensure that council resources and facilities are not perceived by the public to have been used for election campaigning or political purposes during the purdah period and that the political impartiality of employees has also been maintained.

The Local Government Association (LGA) have published in the past (2018) helpful advice on purdah on their website here <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/purdah> and answers to FAQ’s [here](#), albeit the advice is aimed at councillors of principal councils.

The following points summarise guidance for Councillors and council employees:

#### GREEN LIGHT: Acceptable Practice

Usual Business Matters:

- Publicity with Council quotes from Clerk only.
- Reactive publicity can include Councillors holding Civic positions if commenting in an emergency or a major news event outside the Council’s control.
- Councillors can create their own individual, non-political publicity.
- Councillors can attend events arranged by other organisations, but the same restrictions apply about quoting such events in any Council publicity.
- Decision-making will continue as usual, and the decisions will be publicised, subject to the restrictions about quotes.

#### AMBER LIGHT: Acceptable Practice; Proceed with Caution/ Seek Prior Advice

Quotations (direct / indirect):

- Councillors not involved in the election may make quotes or may be quoted if there are no political tones or references contained within the quotes.
- Avoid proactively scheduling events attracting public and media interest. Events that are unavoidable should not publicise individual councillors or their respective political parties and policies.

#### RED LIGHT: Unacceptable Practice; Do not Proceed

- Councillors involved in the election will not be quoted in proactive news releases issued by the Council.
- Councillors involved in the election should not attend any events organised by the Council that may attract significant numbers of members of the public, or media interest.
- No election materials, political posters or leaflets must be displayed on any Council premises or property (including street furniture, notice boards, market stalls, web-site etc.).

## GET A WELCOME PACK READY FOR YOUR NEW COUNCILLORS

**Book all new councillors a place on one of our Roles and Responsibilities courses**, there are three dates to choose from Wednesday June 19<sup>th</sup>; Saturday July 6<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September book here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

If you have some more experienced councillors re-elected consider pairing them up with a new councillor and asking them to be a mentor for the first 6 months.

The new councillor pack needs to have in it (but adapt to your council):

- A copy of *The good councillor's guide* (available from OALC printed copy £4 + £1.20 p&p) or download from the OALC website in the Members Area under Resources for Councillors
- A copy of your Council's Standing Orders and its Financial Regulations
- A copy of your Council's Code of Conduct, [DCLG Guide on Openness and Transparency](#), Register of Interests, Acceptance of Office and Publication Scheme.
- A map of the parish, with boundaries, footpaths, land owned by the parish, listed buildings, TPO's, AONB, SSSI and other relevant planning designations. Links to Neighbourhood Plan/Local Plan and other current planning documents of your district council
- A list of council policies
- A copy of the council budget, strategy documents and forward plans
- Contact details of councillors, clerk and relevant people at the District Council
- Dates of meetings, terms of reference for any committees
- Training courses available from OALC <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

**When councillors leave office**....don't forget that councillors should clear/delete council business from their home computers if they are no longer councillors after May. This is another sound argument for having generic council email addresses and perhaps changing passwords too.

## GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE – REAFFIRM AT MAY MEETING

Are you a Council that has adopted the General Power of Competence? Then you'll be scheduling an agenda item for the forthcoming Annual Meeting of the Council in May to re-affirm that adoption providing the council still meets the qualifying criteria which are - a qualified clerk (Cilca or better), two thirds of the councillors having stood for election (even if uncontested) and passed a resolution to adopt the Power.

NALC Legal Topic Note 31 tells you more about the scope of the General Power of Competence.

## HEALTH & SAFETY ADVICE WHEN LITTER PICKING

**Following our recent Risk Management training session, insurers Came and Co thought this advice might be helpful to councils...**

### What to bring with you/wear:

- Protective gloves (e.g. leather, gardening gloves)
- Sturdy shoes
- Appropriate clothing for weather conditions (e.g. waterproof jacket, sun hat, sun block)
- Long sleeves and long trousers
- Drinking water
- Mobile phone to contact coordinator if necessary

### Hygiene:

- Protect any cuts with waterproof plasters
- Avoid rubbing the mouth and eye area while working
- Wash hands and forearms before eating, drinking, smoking, using the toilet

### Litter picking on roads

- High visibility clothing/tabards to be worn at all times
- Main roads – litter pick on pavements only
- Only competent adults to be involved
- No personal music players to be used
- Village lanes with no pavements - signs to be placed around the areas to be worked to warn motorists of the activity + cones, if available, to protect workers (*Organisers will provide signs*)

### Hazardous items. If you come across any of the following, report them to your co-coordinator, **do not pick them up.** If in doubt – leave it

- Any needles/syringes
- Any knives/blades
- Unidentified drums, cans or canisters
- Poisons, insecticides
- Clinical waste
- Condoms
- Broken glass
- Other hazardous substances (e.g. suspected asbestos)
- Animal faeces

### Do not litter pick:

- On main roads (only on pavements - or for village lanes, keep on or next to the verge)
- Near unstable banks of ditches/ponds or any boggy wet areas
- Near electric fences (identified by yellow warning signs)
- In streams, bodies of water (you risk catching leptospirosis from water contaminated by rats urine)
- On private land, building sites or business premises

### Bending/lifting/twisting:

- Do not lift large/heavy/awkward items (contact your coordinator)
- Only carry a manageable weight in the bin bag
- Beware of repetitive injuries while bending and twisting – use your litter picker, remember this is only a litter pick not a rubbish collection

## Children: MUST BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES

Only work in pairs or as part of a group and always use your litter picker – if you cannot safely reach the litter, leave it

As a volunteer you have a duty to protect yourself, your fellow volunteers and the general public. If there are any problems – then stop litter picking and contact whoever is in charge.

Do not challenge anyone you see dropping litter.

## VILLAGE HALL IMPROVEMENT GRANT



The autumn 2018 budget announced that, to mark the centenary of the Armistice, the government would make available grant funding to support improvement projects for village halls.

The grant funding will be managed by ACRE on behalf of Defra. The grant aims to help fund the updating and refurbishment of village halls so that they are fit for purpose and provide activities which seek to achieve one or more of the following outcomes for their communities:

- Improved health and wellbeing/reduction in loneliness
- Demonstrates a positive impact on the environment
- Supports the local rural economy

There will be greater emphasis given to applications which have already secured most of the funding. The scheme will fund up to 20% of eligible costs, with a minimum grant of £10,000 and a maximum grant of £75,000 payable. This means overall scheme costs would be between £50,000 and £375,000.

More information: <http://acre.org.uk/our-work/village-hall-improvement-grant%20fund>

## COMMUNITY FRIENDSHIP GRANTS



As part of Oxfordshire Community Foundation's Delivering Impact programme, they are seeking to award grants that bring people from different backgrounds together.

- Amounts available: £1,501–£10,000
- Group annual income: Maximum £1 million
- Type of cost: Work that brings together people from different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds, or different ages
- Timescales: Grant to be spent within the next six to 12 months
- Closing date: 31st July 2019 at midday

More information is available on the OCF website [here](#)

All town and parish councils and parish meetings should have received an email from the external auditor appointed for Oxfordshire, Moore Stephens. Any councils selected for the '5% sample' for 'intermediate' audit will receive a separate email from them.

If you haven't received any email communication, and it will only be email not post, from Moore Stephens please contact them at [Oxon.sa@moorestephens.com](mailto:Oxon.sa@moorestephens.com) or 01733 397300 and make sure they have your up to date email details. As with last year councils which are eligible to certify as exempt from external audit, and do so, are not required to submit information to the external auditor (other than a certificate of exemption) even if they are within the 5% sample.

The councils that have had a public Interest report issued against them for the last financial year are listed [here](#) on the SAAA Ltd website. Thankfully none of them are in Oxfordshire!

**URGENT communication from the Chairman of SAAA Ltd  
PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE**

**4<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

*Dear Colleagues,*

***We have been notified of some early serious failures by some authorities to comply with the law in relation to the submission of 2018/19 Annual Governance and Accountability Returns. Please read the communication below and ensure your authority is complying with the law. Failure to comply with the law will lead to extra costs for your authority.***

- ***Failure to Read Instructions***

*We have been informed by auditors that some authorities are continuing to ignore their instructions and those on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).*

*The flowcharts and the instructions in the AGAR are there to make the completion of the return as simple as possible. The return must be completed by law and is an essential part of demonstrating transparency and accountability for the public funds managed by authorities.*

*Last year the failure of some authorities to read instructions resulted in over 1200 authorities failing to submit a return by the statutory deadline of 30 June. Furthermore, at the statutory publication date of 30 September 2018, 315 authorities had still not submitted a return to the auditors.*

*The consequences of these failures to comply with the law resulted in an increase in costs for authorities, public interest reports being issued and the non-compliant authorities being reported to MHCLG.*

*The 2018/19 AGAR has now been sent to all authorities for completion. As reported by the auditors, authorities are still not reading the instructions for example, they have received AGAR Part 1, from clerks/RFOs before the year end (31 March 2019). This represents a serious failure to comply with the law.*

***The return must be approved and by authorities after the year end (31 March 2019) and NOT BEFORE and be duly minuted and signed by the chair and the clerk/RFO (in the correct order).***

- ***Exempt Authorities***

*In addition to the above breach of the law a number of exempt authorities have emailed auditors believing because the exempted themselves last year they no longer have to submit an exemption certificate. Again, this represents a serious failure to comply with the law and a failure to read clear instructions.*

**Exempt authorities MUST complete the AGAR and a certificate of exemption each financial year.**

*A failure to comply will rightly result in auditors chasing non-compliant authorities. Each reminder letter will cost £40 plus Vat. If reminder letters are ignored this is highly likely to result in the issuing of a public interest report (PIR) by the auditor, at a further cost of £200 plus VAT. If a PIR is issued this year the authority MUST have a Limited Assurance Review next year and cannot claim exemption, at a further cost of at least £200 plus VAT.*

**There is therefore a total potential cost of £480 plus VAT for those exempt authorities failing to comply with the law and to read instructions.**

*Submitting the AGAR to auditors*

*AGARs must be submitted by email, the preferred method, or by post NOT BOTH. If authorities do send the return by post and email, contrary to instructions, auditors have the right pass the cost of undertaking additional work to the authority.*

***It is the responsibility of all councillors to ensure their authority complies with the law. Ignorance is not a defence.***

*It is very disappointing that in this the second year of the new regime these failings have arisen again. All of the above failures and unnecessary additional costs can easily be avoided by reading the instructions and complying.*

*Mike Attenborough-Cox, Chairman – Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited*

## YOUTUBE FILM ON COMPLETING THE AGAR FORM

There is useful material including a training video on the PKF Littlejohn website: <https://www.pkf-littlejohn.com/services-limited-assurance-regime-useful-documents-and-links>.

PKF are not the external auditors for Oxfordshire but nevertheless the YouTube should be of assistance to you.

## COMMONS PROBLEMS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT AUDIT

A [presentation](#) by Howard Midworth to County Officers on 1<sup>st</sup> April about last year's external audit is summarized below:

The **common problems** identified by SAAA in the 2017-8 audit were:

- Change of Clerk/RFO not advised to auditor
  - No authority owned e-mail address
  - Many authorities using personal e-mail address belonging to Clerk
- Late submission after 1<sup>st</sup> July deadline
- Public rights dates confirmation form not submitted
  - statutory requirement to inform the auditor of dates selected

- lack of publication on a website/ incorrect public rights dates
- Incorrect order of signing and approval of accounting statements, amendments not initialed and dated, confusion over bank reconciliation items
- The new category of exempt authority for 2017-18 led to most confusion
- An authority can declare itself 'exempt' from a limited assurance review by the external auditor if it:
  - Meets all the qualifying criteria; and
  - Passes a resolution at a full meeting following the end of the financial year; and
  - Notifies the auditor by completing, signing and returning a Certificate of Exemption

### The common misunderstandings of the exemption criteria were

- ALL income must be included (inc. VAT), not just precept or budgeted income e.g. s.106, CIL, grant income, PWLB
- Auditors received several exemption certificates in March – before the end of the financial year!
- Many thought if exempt they did not need to do anything
  - Must notify the external auditor by completing Certificate of Exemption
  - If not notified, the auditor will chase for an AGAR and charge
- 'Qualification', 'except for' matters, or 'other matters' does **not** prevent an authority declaring itself exempt
- Many councils thought if it opted for a review it would be free if under £25k
  - Standard fee payable if review is requested
- Authorities thought auditor would notify them of exemption. NO - authorities must claim/notify exemption
- Exempt authorities have been sending AGAR and supporting documents
  - with exemption certificate - only certificate required
  - without exemption certificate – then disputing review fee
- Exempt authorities have been chasing the external auditor's report & certificate. **If exempt then no audit therefore no certificate**
- Fees queries – reminder letters are chargeable
- Some think only need to declare exemption once, not every year

### Publication requirements

- AGAR must be fully completed, signed & published on freely accessible authority/public website
  - *Reg. 13, Accounts and Audit Regulations. 2015.*
  - **Many authorities do not maintain or have access to a website, or website has not been updated for 12 months plus!**
- Exempt authorities still required to complete and publish AGAR
  - Only 'exempt' from **submitting** the AGAR to the external auditor for review
  - Public rights and inspection period still apply

### What are the Changes for 2018-9?

- Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements (AGAR) remain unchanged
- **Separate forms for Parish Meetings** – AGAR Part 1PM, Part 2PM, Part 3PM (will only be distributed to Parish Meetings)
- Additional internal audit control objectives:
  - Internal auditor to confirm that authorities claiming exemption in 2017-18 met the exemption criteria and correctly declared themselves exempt;

- Internal auditor to confirm in 2019-20 that the 2019 public rights provision was in line with Regulations
  - N/A for 2018-19, included for awareness to check for 2019-20.
- Reasons for 'No' responses on Annual Governance Statement to be published

### For Parish Meetings

- Separate instruction email sent only to 1,300 parish meetings
- Chairman needs to sign – remains Chairman even if inactive
- Inactive parish meetings/ no Chairman – Monitoring Officer asked for confirmation of status
- Publication – must display documents in the local area for 14 days

### Auditor fees and charges

- Authorities £25k or under requesting a review (by submitting AGAR not Certificate of Exemption) charged standard review fee (£200)
- Where the auditor is required to send a reminder to any authority (including exempt) that has missed the deadline, the auditor will charge the authority £40 for each reminder.
- Fee scales based on income/expenditure for that year, even if additional one-off items such as grants etc.
- Failure to submit AGAR or Certificate of Exemption will incur 2 reminder charges (£40 each), then a statutory recommendation (min. £200) and Public Interest Report (min. £200) – total **£480**
- **Standard fee rates are here on [SAAA website](#)**

### Failure to submit AGAR - sample fees and consequences

- Submission deadline – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019
- 1st reminder letter – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July - £40 plus VAT charge
- 2nd reminder letter – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August - £40 plus VAT charge
- Statutory recommendation issued re failure to submit – Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August
  - minimum £200 plus VAT charge & not be able to claim exemption from a limited assurance review for 2018/19 or 2019/20
- Public interest report re failure to submit – Monday 7 October
  - minimum £200 plus VAT charge & not be able to claim exemption from a limited assurance review for 2018/19 or 2019/20

I am given to understand by Howard Midworth, Chief Executive, SAAA that they have issued an action plan identifying areas for improvement by the external auditors. We will be watching with interest and are happy to receive your comments, feedback and issues with this year's audit by Moore Stephens.

**Note:** an eagle eyed Oxfordshire RFO noticed that Moore Stephens didn't have in the 'Useful Documents' box on [their website](#) a Notice of Public Rights with suitable wording for those councils which want to exempt themselves. The omission has now been corrected by OALC applying pressure in the right places!

## STAR COUNCIL AWARDS 2019 - MAKE **YOUR** APPLICATION BEFORE 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has launched its prestigious Star Council Awards for 2019 to recognise the achievements of the parish and town council sector and celebrate the positive impact councils, county associations, local councillors and clerks make to their communities.

NALC is open to nominations and is calling on councils who have gone above and beyond to serve their community to apply. The awards are looking for individuals and organisations that are making a real and positive difference locally.

Oxfordshire councils have always been represented in the nominations since the award started. What has your council done? Has your council done an interesting or innovative project? Do you have a young councillor (under 30!) that has rocked the boat? What about your clerk, have they passed their Cilca, done something different, made the council think or act differently?

### **PLEASE RECOGNISE TALENT AND INNOVATION, MAKE A NOMINATION.**



This year the categories include:

- young councillor (aged 18-30),
- councillor,
- clerk,
- council
- county association project of the year.

NALC chairman, Cllr Sue Baxter said “This is the fifth consecutive year NALC has run the awards and we are expecting it to be our biggest and best yet. Local councils work on a daily basis to deliver vital services to their residents and the NALC Star Council Awards are a chance to celebrate all they do for their communities.”

“I encourage every council, county association, councillor and clerk who thinks they have done something special for their community to put themselves forward. Have you got what it takes to be a winner?”

**The deadline for nominations is Friday 28 June 2019**, with the awards ceremony taking place at the NALC Annual Conference on 28 October 2019 in Milton Keynes

The application form is [here](#)

## LATEST EDITION OF GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG) met at the end of February and agreed on some small changes to The Practitioners' Guide (usually known as *Governance and Accountability for Small Authorities*) which is issued annually to support the preparation by councils of statutory annual accounting and governance statements found in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The new edition of *Governance and Accountability* for 2019 has been published and is in the Members Area of the OALC website; it applies to financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2018.

## DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS – CLLRS NO LONGER HAVE TO REGISTER WITH ICO

The [Data Protection \(Charges and Information\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2019](#) came into force on 1 April 2019 and have changed the rules around paying the data protection fee. The new Regulations mean that, elected representatives and prospective representatives are now exempt from paying a fee to the ICO if they are exercising the functions expected of elected representatives.

The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) has updated the [local council FAQ's](#) on its website and [data protection fee guidance](#) to reflect these changes. NALC's analysis of the regulations is that this also includes co-opted councillors, and the ICO has indicated it agrees with this view.

NALC has updated its legal guidance. It has issued L02-19 Data Protection Fees which is in the Members Area of our website.

## BREXIT

We are told that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) continues to closely engage with local authorities so that they and their residents are well-prepared for the UK (possibly/probably/ or whatever) leaving the European Union if not on 29 March 2019 then at some point in the near/distant future.

To support this activity, a network of 9 local authority chief executives from across England has been established. They will engage with councils in their region to share information on preparations to support an orderly exit.

Simultaneously, the chief executives will be kept well-informed on national policy on EU exit that could have implications for local services, businesses and residents.

The government has set up what it calls a landing page where information about the potential effects of Brexit can be found - [here](#)

The Local Government Association (LGA) has its own Brexit advice hub for local government [here](#) which has the latest news.

## CIL BRIEFING COMMISSIONED BY NALC

[Planning Futures](#) was commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) Legal team to prepare a briefing note on how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), can help your town or parish council to deliver and support local infrastructure provision.

There was a soft launch of the briefing at OALC Larger Councils Committee on 6 March 2019, hosted by Abingdon Town Council, by NALC solicitor Gurvynda Paddan-White and Hannah David (Director, Planning Futures). This was attended by clerks, officers and councillors, with some lively discussions surrounding planning and decision making in general, as well as CIL experiences within Oxfordshire.

NALC hope members find the briefing both useful and informative, and extend their thanks to Planning Futures for their work and to us for hosting the launch.

The CIL briefing is in the Members Area of the OALC website. We would point out that we feel it is rather light on what powers a council has to spend CIL monies. All too often there is an assumption from principal authorities that parish councils have the General Power of Competence and can therefore spend on almost anything. We think that probably only 25-30 councils out of 249 in Oxfordshire have the General Power of Competence, although there are no records kept on numbers. If your council doesn't have the General Power of Competence and is receiving CIL monies (only in South and Vale Districts) then your council must think very carefully about what powers it has to lawfully spend the levy on.

## RURAL SERVICES NETWORK CALL FOR A RURAL STRATEGY

In February the Rural Services Network (RSN) launched a call to the Government to develop a Rural Strategy. Since the launch on the 1st March, 194 organisations and 314 individuals have backed the campaign.

RSN believe that rural communities are not a focus for Government thinking and are frequently overlooked in a policy environment dominated by urban thinking. As we all know only too well, there can be distinct challenges in delivering to small and spread out settlements or where economies of scale are harder to achieve. It is something that the RSN has discussed many times over the years.



The RSN which is composed of 136 principal authorities, 172 other bodies and organisations is asking people to sign up to the campaign 'Time for a Rural Strategy'

here <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/time-for-a-rural-strategy>

## EMPLOYMENT BRIEFING

For the past 4+ years OALC has offered its member council's free access to the advice of Bethan Osborne, an experienced HR and employment advisor. Bethan has now moved on to another job outside the local government sector. Bethan helped over 57 Oxfordshire councils with substantive advice, guidance and support as well as answering many, many smaller queries on a daily basis. She also worked directly with a number of councils to assist them with complex employment issues. Her monthly employment briefings are collected in the Members Area of our website, if you have a query please check there first the answer may well be in one of those briefings.



To replace Bethan we have sourced another very experienced HR professional to ensure the continuation of this service to our member councils. OALC has contracted with Chris Moses, Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd. He holds a Masters Degree in Employment Law and is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, he has over twenty years front line HR experience.

In addition he has over fifteen years' experience of helping town and parish councils comply with their legal obligations as employers. We will continue with the same level of service as previously. There are four hours per month of Chris's time available free of charge to member councils. OALC pay for this, because we believe it is an important and valuable service to our member councils.

This month's briefing relates to recruitment. We know there is a constant churn of clerks so, if and when, you are recruiting bear this advice in mind...

**Personnel**

**Advice &**

**Solutions Ltd**

### **Beware the Pitfalls of Recruitment**

Employment experts such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and Office of National Statistics (ONS), are finding that a number of employers are experiencing difficulties in finding staff, and town and parish councils are not immune.

Many councils are experiencing problems recruiting seasonal staff, such as landscapers and grass cutters, as well as attracting skilled employees such as Clerks. Such pressures however, do not mean that the recruitment process should be short circuited or that corners are cut in an attempt to get hold of employees. There are a number of golden rules which still need to be adhered to.

#### **1. Who is responsible for recruitment?**

Ultimately the Full Council is responsible for exercising all managerial authority over employees. This responsibility can be delegated to the Clerk when recruiting subordinate staff, but this should be identified in their job description.

A Committee, such as Personnel/Staffing and/or HR may also have responsibility for recruitment delegated to it, however this needs to be clearly spelt out in the Councils' Standing Orders. Under no circumstances can a single elected member assume managerial responsibility over employees, regardless of whether they are a Chair of a Committee, Chair or Leader of the Council. This is a legal principle established in the early eighties (the *Hillingdon* Authority) which prevents any single councillor from concluding any managerial activity on their own, whether its recruitment, discipline or sickness management.

In the case of recruitment, it should be conducted by a delegated panel of 2-3 councillors, or the Clerk if they have authorisation to recruit staff.

#### **2. You don't need to advertise.**

No employer, including town and parish councils, is under a legal obligation to advertise vacancies externally, however it is good practice to do so. If they wish to appoint someone who is already

working for the Council, or someone who has been recommended by word of mouth, or previously worked for the Council through an agency, there is no problem.

**However**, the vacancy should be advertised internally before an appointment is made, to make sure that current staff don't feel discriminated against for not being able to apply.

### **3. Use the recruitment panel/Staffing Committee during the short listing process for senior posts.**

The more people who are involved, the better the decision. It helps to remove bias and reduces the risk of discriminatory decisions. If there are "factions" within the Council, or political differences, the recruitment panel should draw upon representatives from all sides. This could be crucial in preventing allegations of bias and lack of impartiality being labelled on the new recruit.

### **4. Beware of "death by Sherry".**

It's not uncommon when a Council is recruiting a senior employee, such as a Clerk, for the "ideal" candidate or candidates to be invited to meet all members of the council over a drink, in a semi informal setting, before an offer is formalised. This can expose candidates to elected members who may not have HR/employment experience, and may pose the risk of potentially damaging questions being asked.

It's not uncommon for questions about future family plans, the need to balance child care with the demands of a job, or previous knowledge of the candidate's health problems to crop up during such events.

Before the event is conducted members should be briefed about the potential discriminatory effects of questions relating to Age, Marital Status, Pregnancy, Sexual Orientation, Beliefs or Health Problems.

### **5. Ensure the interview location is accessible.**

Many town and parish councils operate from small offices located in difficult to access places such as upstairs, or involve some other obstacle for people with disabilities. The Council's obligation is to ensure that the interview is accessible for all. If problems exist, it may be worth contacting either the District or County to see if they have a spare interview room they can let you use.

If the ideal candidate does have access problems with the Council's offices, the Council needs to investigate how they can be addressed, to enable them to accommodate the employee. [Access to Work](#) is a Government initiative that can provide Councils with equipment and/or finance to address such issues.

### **6. Check that the interviewees are entitled to work in the UK**

It is a legal requirement for all employers to conduct such checks on all staff, regardless of their origins or nationality. Interviewees need to bring their passport, national identity card or birth certificate to the interview, and colour photocopies should be taken as proof that the check has taken place.

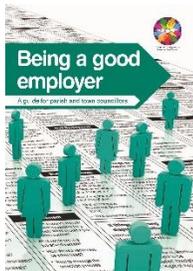
## 7. Find somewhere quiet to conduct the interview

Many smaller councils struggle to find available office accommodation, and often share facilities with other groups and organisations. However, try to ensure that interviews are conducted in a confidential location which is free from disruptions.

We have experienced councils having to conduct job interviews in parish / church halls, which is not a problem except for the fact that the mother and toddler group was in full swing at the other end of the room being used. The explanation for this was that Councillors could only make this time due to work commitments. Clearly this is highly unsatisfactory and not conducive to successful recruitment.

8. **During the interview stick to unbiased questions** about skills, qualifications and ability to do the job, and use the same questions for each candidate. Anyone wanting a copy of a draft list of interview questions to get them started in developing their own, can do so by contacting us a [p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk](mailto:p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk)

Further information and advice for councils can be found by visiting [www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk/factsheets](http://www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk/factsheets)



PS. Don't forget this NALC booklet; it's six chapters cover the complete employment relationship – recruitment, employee rights and obligations, management, staff development, if things go wrong and the end of the contractual relationship. Electronic copy in the Members Area of our website in the Employment section. Hard copies available £4 per copy from OALC

## CONSULTATIONS

The Department for Transport has issued a new [consultation on the vehicle operator licensing system](#) which is due to come into force by 1 April 2020. NALC will be responding.

The Government wishes to introduce formal tribunal rules to allow traffic commissioners to deal with cases fairly and justly. Public Sector Vehicle (PSV) operator licences are considered in chapter

1. Formal tribunal rules are examined in chapter 2. NALC is minded to highlight:

1. Its position that local councils should be statutory consultees at all stages during traffic commissioner cases.
2. Its position that the Government needs to consult with local councils on HGV parking sites in suitably sustainable locations within their boundaries; &
3. Its position that the Government needs to introduce measures to make it easier to de-criminalise breaches of parking regulation for the purposes of allowing local councils to enforce those regulations.

NALC will be responding to the below consultation questions and is interested in the sector's views:

- **Question 1** Do you agree with changing PSV operator licence procedures so that applicants can have operational approval at the earliest opportunity (subject to normal safeguards)?
- **Question 3** Do you agree that introducing formal tribunal rules will be beneficial to the Traffic Commissioner's tribunal functions? If No, you are against tribunal rules introduction because?

Please email your responses to this consultation to [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) by 17.00 on Tuesday 11th June, 2019.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The OALC Training programme until October 2019 is below

Please book your places via the website <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events> We have responded to your feedback, there is more training, in a wider range of locations and we have a Saturday training session suitable for new councillors elected in May 2019.



Pink (or grey if photocopied!) = suitable for new councillors and new (or aspiring) Chairman of councils or committees

date	subject	Half/full day	trainer	location
Wednesday May 15 <sup>th</sup>	9. Allotment management for parish councils	Full day	NAS	Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot OX11 7JN
Wednesday June 19 <sup>th</sup>	10. Roles and Responsibilities for new councillors and clerks	Full day	Elizabeth Howlett	Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot OX11 7JN
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	11. Roles and Responsibilities for new councillors and clerks	full day note 9.30am start	Elizabeth Howlett	Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot OX11 7JN
Wednesday July 17 <sup>th</sup>	12. Chairmanship skills	Full day	Elizabeth Howlett	Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot OX11 7JN
August				
Wednesday September 18 <sup>th</sup>	13. Roles and Responsibilities for new councillors and clerks	Full day	Elizabeth Howlett	Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot OX11 7JN
Wednesday	14. Budgeting and financial	Half/ morning	Steve Parkinson	Begbroke Science Park, Woodstock

October 2 <sup>nd</sup>	management for councillors			Room, Begbroke OX5 1PF
	15. VAT for clerks (and councillors!)	Half/ afternoon		

## NALC ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2019: BOOK NOW & SAVE 20%

Early-bird booking rates are now available for the NALC Annual Conference and Exhibition 2019 at the Double Tree By Hilton Hotel in Milton Keynes on 28-29 October 2019. This is the biggest event in the NALC calendar and is now in its fourth year. Book before 31st July and save 20%.

NALC's Annual Conference and Exhibition 2019 is an essential event for councillors, council officers, county association members and officers as local councils join with other parts of the public sector (including the government and principal authorities), private sector and voluntary sector to discuss the key policy issues of the moment. The event will reinforce the NALC vision that parishes will be the focus of community effort, the natural centres for a range of public activity and service delivery; giving a democratic voice to those communities in the work of other agencies and public bodies. This vision also puts local councils at the heart of building stronger communities in a post-Brexit world, making that critical change in their areas. This will be a brilliant opportunity for councillors, clerks, county officers and members, exhibitors and sponsors to network, share good practice and gain solutions to local issues from a platform which puts local councils at the heart of building stronger communities.



### What's On Offer?

- Dynamic and hard-hitting plenary updates on the latest policy developments affecting local councils (the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government is being invited to the event, as is the Princess Royal). There will also be a plenary session about town centre management.
- Practical and relevant workshop sessions offering cutting-edge solutions to the vital issues affecting your councils (sessions will include networking opportunities, sharing good practice, case studies and updates on national lobbying campaigns).
- Workshops will focus on how local councils can build strong rural communities, healthier and safer communities, and successful town centres along with sessions on improving the way councils work and engage with residents.
- A large sector-specific exhibition showcasing services from brilliant organisations who can support your council's every need.
- Star Council Awards 2019.

For more information about the event and how to book, please click [here](#)

## Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)

**What is it?** [The Certificate in Local Council Administration](#) is one of the recognised qualifications your Clerk needs to attain if your council want the General Power of Competence or gain recognition via the [Local Council Award Scheme](#).

**Why bother studying?** All councils should have a positive attitude towards training for both the Clerk and Councillors. There should be a council training budget. The (CiLCA) qualification provides the Clerk with broad knowledge of all the aspects of council work - roles and responsibilities, the law, procedures, finance planning and community involvement. The better the knowledge of the Clerk, the better they are able to advise the council. Legislation is constantly changing, your Clerk is the professional officer of the council and they keep the council on the correct legislative path.

**How can I get the certificate?** Enrol via the Society of Local Council Clerks website



The National Training Strategy  
for Town & Parish Councils

<https://www.slcc.co.uk/content/level-3-qualification-cilca/525/> and follow the four steps. It costs £350 to enroll and there is a further similar charge for mentoring to assist you through the work which has to be completed within one year of enrolment. It takes approx. 200 hours to complete the five modules. If you are interested in doing Cilca and receiving mentoring please contact OALC.

The guide to the portfolio and the scope of the work is [here](#)

**Congratulations to Janine Howells, Thame Town Council on passing Cilca. Well done!**



OCVA provide a lot of practical training <https://ocva.org.uk/all-courses/> They are mainly aimed at the third sector – charities and community organisations but if your council or village hall needs first aid, food handling or fire warden training they are the organisation to go to.

### [Health and Safety Level 2](#)

**Wednesday 15th May 2019 (6hrs) £95 – £125**

**Please Note: Registration for this workshop will close on 1st May at 12pm**

The QA Level 2 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace (QCF) is ideal for all employees, as it helps candidates develop a greater understanding of Health and Safety issues and the role that everyone plays in maintaining a safe working environment. Candidates undertake 3 practical assessments during the course plus a multiple choice exam at the end of the course. On successful completion of the course, candidates will achieve a Level 2 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace from Qalsafe. The qualification is valid for 3 years but annual refreshers are considered best practice.

Please click on title links for full details and online booking or If you have any further questions or need help with booking, please email [training@ocva.org.uk](mailto:training@ocva.org.uk) or call **01865 251946**

## EXPO 2019

Building on the success of EXPO 2016 working with NALC and a range of partners, LGRC is again staging a major one day EXPO for the local council sector. This will be the largest single gathering of local councils in 2019. We aim to provide an opportunity for Clerks, Councillors and others interested in Local Councils to see the complete range of products and services that a Council might need, all in one place. If you will be looking for a supplier of anything from tractors to IT equipment, or signage to stationery, in the next year or two this is the ideal place to start. If you need to review your banking or insurance, or create a new website, we expect all the major players to be here.

The date is 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019

The location is Chateau Impney Hotel and Exhibition Centre, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire, WR9 0BN

<http://www.lgrcexpo.com/>

## VACANCIES

All vacancies can be found on the [Local News section](#) of the OALC website, scroll down to the very bottom of the page. We do not charge councils to advertise their jobs but we do expect all adverts to provide the basic information in the template we can provide.

### STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Vacancy for a Clerk to the Council and a Responsible Financial Officer

Working from home plus attendance at evening meetings usually held on the second Wednesday of every month. Occasional attendance at meetings held in the community.

15 Hours per week

Salary dependent on experience and qualifications  
Previous experience as a Clerk would be an advantage

The Clerk provides administrative and clerical support to the Council and as the Responsible Financial Officer is required to manage the Council's finances.

Duties will include:

Managing the meetings of the council meetings including preparing the agenda, taking the minutes, monitoring actions and decisions

Ensuring the Council is up to date with policies, assessments, training, and data protection rules.

Ensuring planning applications are considered and responses are submitted to the District Council.

Managing the Parish Council's finances, preparation of accounts and reconciliation, payment of invoices, banking, end of year accounts, submission of accounts for external audit, VAT reclaim, preparing for budget review and precept

Dealing with a variety of correspondence and public notices

Allotments – collecting annual rent

Applicants need to be computer literate, have some administrative experience and able to maintain accurate accounts.

A high standard of oral and written communication skills is required. Proficiency in Microsoft Office especially Word and Excel is needed. be capable of working independently and have the ability to deal with a range of issues. The ability to work independently and handle a number of different issues.

CVs should be emailed to [stonesfieldpc@gmail.com](mailto:stonesfieldpc@gmail.com)

## **SANDFORD ST MARTIN PARISH COUNCIL – CLERK & RFO**

Working from home plus attendance at evening meetings, usually held 4 times a year.

Approximately 8 hours a month

Salary dependent on experience and qualifications. Previous experience as a Clerk would be an advantage

Job description: The Clerk provides administrative and clerical support to the Council and, as the Responsible Financial Officer, will be required to manage the Council's finances.

To apply please send your C.V. with a covering letter to: [Sandfordclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Sandfordclerk@hotmail.co.uk)

Or for further information please email: [sandfordclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sandfordclerk@hotmail.co.uk)



**Faringdon Town Council** requires a part-time **Clerk's Assistant 14 hours per week**

We are looking for a person with flexible and positive attitude to join our team. Candidates must have good communication skills and be computer literate. Relevant experience would be an advantage although training will be provided.

***Duties will include:***

- To minute all Town Council meetings
- To produce action lists
- To update website
- To assist the Town Clerk

**The post includes evening work on a Wednesday 6.30pm to 9.30pm.**

Salary SCP 4 – 8 (£18,426 - £19,945pro rata) depending on experience.

Closing Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

Interviews week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019

For further details on both jobs please visit [www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk) or contact

Sally Thurston on 01367 240281 or by email [sally@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:sally@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk)

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**Sutton Courtenay Parish Council**

**Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

Sutton Courtenay Parish Council wishes to recruit a home-based, part-time parish clerk and responsible financial officer for up to 80 hours per month, to take over from the present clerk later in the year. Hourly salary rate £10.37 - £10.57 dependent on qualifications and experience. The Council will provide office equipment and support training. The Council is undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan with the assistance of a separate steering group. It is planning to renovate its recreation ground which has a pavilion, sports pitches, children's play area, youth shelter, and skate park. It is also responsible for a cemetery.

The successful candidate will have good administrative skills to prepare agendas, minutes, reports, deal with correspondence and upload to the website, as well as financial records, preparing budgets, and managing audit.

For further information or for an informal discussion, please contact the present clerk Linda Martin [info@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:info@suttoncourtenay-pc.gov.uk) or telephone 01865 391833

Closing date for return of applications is Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. Shortlisting and interviews will take place after Council elections in May, and the formation of the new Council. Applicants will be informed of the timetable thereafter.

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## **RADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Part-time development support officer**

Radley Parish Council is looking for an able and resourceful individual to help develop and manage a £1.5m expenditure programme. The programme is to be financed by the parish's share of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts anticipated over the next 7 years.

#### Hours and pay

Hours worked will be part-time and flexible, expected to amount to between 4 and 8 days a month. They will include one evening meeting every 2 months but are otherwise flexible to suit the appointee. The appointee will work from their own premises.

The parish council is prepared to offer a casual employment contract with salary linked to SCP 20, which is currently £14.73 an hour inclusive of pay in lieu of holiday entitlement. A pension contribution and a home working allowance of £150 pa will be paid in addition. 50 days' work a year will be guaranteed, with further hours by agreement.

Alternatively, the parish council would welcome expressions of interest to undertake the work on a consultancy basis, indicating the fee rate sought. The budget set aside is £10,000 a year over 7 years.

#### Job description

Core tasks will be to:

- i. provide general support to the Steering Group through attending bi-monthly meetings, preparing agendas and minutes and keeping the development section of the village website up-to-date;
- ii. prepare a report to the Parish Council annually on the implementation of the Radley Neighbourhood Plan 2031. This sets the framework for the activities of the Development Steering Group.

In addition, to the extent that time/budget permits, it is hoped that the appointee will:

- iii. contribute to the development of firm proposals for individual projects in consultation with the chair or members of the Steering Group. Projects currently under consideration range from a local challenge fund to a new footpath to the construction of a new village hall;
- iv. work with the Clerk on the procurement of projects including the selection, appointment and oversight of contractors;

- v. monitor development activity on the two strategic housing sites in the parish, maintaining contact with the Clerks of Works, liaising as necessary with the planning authority enforcement team and responding to queries from residents.

The balance of work between these various activities is likely to vary over time. Task (iv) in particular is not expected to arise in the immediate future.

### Qualities required

The ideal candidate will have the following skills and aptitudes:

- i. An ability to master unfamiliar and complex issues quickly, and to analyse and present proposals clearly in writing.
- ii. The ability to deal effectively with a range of people, including Steering Group members, local government officers, contractors and members of the public.
- iii. A flexible approach to work, including a preparedness both to have a go at unfamiliar tasks and to undertake mundane tasks conscientiously.
- iv. The ability to organise a wide-ranging work programme effectively without close supervision, ensuring that agreed tasks are delivered on time and that no agreed task is overlooked.

It is expected that the successful candidate will have some experience of broadly comparable work. Experience of work in a government body and/or in the field of planning and development could be helpful but is not essential.

### How to apply

Please apply to the Clerk, Radley Parish Council, email [clerk@radleyvillage.org.uk](mailto:clerk@radleyvillage.org.uk). Your application should provide you:

- Name and contact details
- Academic and any relevant professional qualifications
- Current or most recent employment
- An overview of your employment history
- Why you are interested in this job and what special skills and experience you would bring to it.

If you are interested in undertaking this role on a consultancy basis, please also state the hourly rate you are able to offer.

Please also provide names and contact details for two referees. These will be approached only if we are considering appointment.

The deadline for applications is 10 May 2019.



## **Henley-on-Thames Town Council**

### **Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

**Salary LC4 new SCP 46 – 54**

**£49,101 - £61,099 per annum**

**SCP above 54 may be available for an exceptional candidate.**

Henley-on-Thames Town Council is one of the largest and busiest town councils in the country. The Council provides a wide range of quality services including parks, recreation grounds, open spaces, sports and arts facilities, allotments, burial land, moorings, car parks, a visitor information service and community buildings. The Council is fortunate in having an extensive property portfolio and significant financial investments under management.

We are seeking an executive leader of the highest calibre to lead our dedicated staff team, and to work actively with elected members to help develop existing services and to ensure that all legal, financial and other governance requirements are achieved.

We invite applicants who have a demonstrable track record of service achievement and innovation, who are highly committed to public service, motivated, community focused, and who possess sound managerial, communication and organisational skills.

Application form and further details from Mrs Janet Wheeler, Town Clerk, Council Offices, Town Hall, Market Place, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 2AQ. Tel: 01491 630074; email [j.wheeler@henleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:j.wheeler@henleytowncouncil.gov.uk)

or visit our website: [www.henleytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.henleytowncouncil.gov.uk) Applications must be received by 5.00pm on 13 May 2019.