OALC Newsletter

July 2019

# The headlines

**Sensible tip of the month -** page 2 – Minutes 101

**Oxfordshire County Council** – page 3 – Oxtog, Priority Funds still available & FixMyStreet Superusers

**It’s time to embrace electronic banking** – page 3

**Oxford-Cambridge Expressway** – page 4 –BBOWT judicial review rejected

**New parish council for Headington** – page 5 Oxford City consultation

**Oxford History Centre** – page 6 advice on what to do with council records

**Local Govt. Pay** –page10

**Two planning articles, one good one bad** – page 11

**NALC Points of Light –** page 15 – lots of example of interesting of innovative work, read, learn and apply

**Health and well-being** – page 18 two articles

**Consultations** – page 21 three for your council to respond to

**Employment Briefing –** page 24 Holiday pay

**Financial Briefing** – page 25 publication of financial information

**OALC Training programme, conferences and other training opportunities** – page 26

**Vacancies** – page 29

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**Training Programme 2019**

* **Roles & Responsibilities** –13th September, Didcot
* **Budgeting & Finance for Cllrs** 2nd October, am Begbroke
* **VAT for Clerks** 2nd October, pm, Begbroke
* **Planning** 21stNovember am, West Oxfordshire DC

**Vacancies this month**

* Sandford St Martin PC – Clerk
* Lower Slaughter PC – Clerk
* Thame Town Council – Town Clerk & RFO
* CFO – Community Led Housing leads

## Sensible tip of the Month – minutes, things to bear in mindImage result for Minutes of meetings

* All councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 are required by [law](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388541/Transparency_Code_for_Smaller_Authorities.pdf) to publish on a website, draft minutes of all council meetings (including committees) within a month of the meeting taking place, even if still draft.
* Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting (some use the colloquial term "AGM") are approved at the next meeting of the parish council, NOT a year later at the next Annual Parish Council Meeting.
* Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting are not approved by the parish council because the Annual Parish Meeting is not a parish council meeting but a meeting of the parish (subtle difference and the wording is unfortunately designed to be confusing), they are approved at the next Parish Meeting, which is usually an annual event
* Council meetings do not approve minutes of committees or sub-committees, they simply receive them. The committee or sub-committee approves its own minutes.
* Decisions made in council meetings are immediate and do not need the minutes to be approved before they are enacted.
* Parishioners should not be named in minutes as attendees or in terms of representations made unless necessary for the performance of a council's statutory duties, functions, and contracts. Doing so creates Data Protection issues and as parishioners are not formally part of a parish council meeting doing so serves no purpose.
* Parish councils could be liable for defamation caused by the contents of their minutes. Comments made by parishioners should be recorded very generally (e.g. "*a parishioner raised an issue regarding planning enforcement in relation to an unauthorised development in the parish"* rather than *"Mrs Smith said that Mr Jones' extension was illegal and was another example of his antisocial behavior in the village, and that she'd heard he was about to start work on another one of his rental properties, and she was sure he didn't declare his income on any of them anyway*"……a real example!).
* For the same reason, and many others, minutes should be a record of decisions made with a sentence or two, at most of contextual (factual) information. They should never be a verbatim record of what individual councillors have said, and rarely is it necessary to record details of debate (examples of when it would be material to do so would be in evidencing that appropriate advice had been considered, or risks assessed in relation to decisions).
* There is no such thing as confidential minutes, ALL decisions taken in council meetings MUST by law be recorded but discretion in the choice of wording is to be encouraged if personnel issues have been discussed.

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* **Councillor Priority Fund**

In February 2018, Council agreed to set aside £945,000 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for a Councillor Priority Fund. Each Councillor has been awarded a Councillor Priority Fund Budget of £15k per annum for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

To date just over half of available funds have been spent from the Councillor Priority Fund. This includes £206,100 given to Parish or Town Councils. Projects have included restoration works to buildings and monuments, equipment for village fetes and events, Highways maintenance, traffic calming measures including signage and white gates.

**Organisations have until January 31st 2020 to submit their application.**

Applications should be discussed with your local County Councillor beforehand. You can find the application form and further details on the Councillor Priority Fund website [here](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/thriving-communities/councillor-priority-fund?utm_term=90432&utm_content=).

* **Oxfordshire Together, where are we now..?**

**New guidance coming soon.** We are currently producing new guidance to enable and empower Town & Parish Council’s to complement the core highway services we already provide. This guidance is based on the results of the Town & Parish Survey circulated earlier this year and is targeted to reflect your local priorities. Thank you so much to everyone who has responded so far!

**Missed the deadline?** If you would like to be involved we still want to hear from you…please contact [Rose.Sutton@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Rose.Sutton@Oxfordshire.gov.uk) for a questionnaire.

**Want to get involved?** We’re always on the lookout for new volunteers with training sessions available in August & September, please contact [volunteercoordinationteam@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:volunteercoordinationteam@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)  for further information.

**Something you’d like to do, but not sure where to start?** We’re always keen to hear from communities so if there is an idea you would like to explore further please contact [volunteercoordinationteam@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:volunteercoordinationteam@Oxfordshire.gov.uk).

* **FixMyStreet Super Users**

As part of Oxfordshire County Council’s commitment to working with town and parish councils, having tested FixMyStreet Superusers, we are now moving to a formal pilot scheme over the next 6 months with around 21 users.  If you would like to be part of the pilot and are not yet involved please contact [volunteercoordinationteam@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:volunteercoordinationteam@Oxfordshire.gov.uk) for further information…we have training sessions available in August and September!

The aim of the scheme is to allow volunteers to assess and request certain repairs (potholes, drains, flooding as a result of blockages, etc.) directly to our maintenance contractors. Volunteers are trained by our Highways Inspectors and provided with PPE and equipment as required.

## It’s time for councils to embrace electronic banking

This is the 21st century, there is a thing called the internet and email. Councils can send agendas electronically and they can do their banking on-line too.

So why have less than 30% of councils in Oxfordshire embraced the brave new world?

Yes, we all know that dealing with banks can be a pain. OALC had a few problems with a bank beginning with B but we got there eventually, life is easier now and we are in a much better position to embrace Making Tax Digital.

It isn’t a question of size, we know of at least seven Parish Meetings that have gone electronic. With the correct safeguards in place we would encourage all councils to move towards electronic banking. After the initial pain there are cost and time savings which represent the gain.

Suitable draft Financial Regulations are in our Members Area. Many councils have gone before you. It is time to drag parish councils in the 21st century.

# Local News

## Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting cancelled

The Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday 30July has been cancelled.  The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday **24 September at 14:00 at Didcot Civic Centre**.

More information on the Growth Board here: <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/> and minutes of previous meetings here <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/meetings/>

## Oxford-Cambridge Expressway - WILDLIFE Trust Judicial Review rejected

[Local Government Lawyer](https://localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/transport-and-highways/443-transport-and-highways-news/40971-transport-secretary-defeats-high-court-challenge-over-decision-on-oxford-to-cambridge-expressway) reports more on the grounds of the judicial review brought by Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and their rejection -

The claimant's grounds for judicial review were that, prior to the decision, the defendant (Highways England) unlawfully failed to carry out:

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment, under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; and

2. Habitats Regulations Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Transport Secretary’s response was that there was no legal requirement to undertake these assessments at this early stage, when no definite decisions on corridor or route had been made. The environmental impacts of the Expressway Scheme, including the choice of corridor and routes within a corridor, would be assessed as part of the forthcoming Development Consent Order process, which would comply with Directive 2011/92/EU and the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Rejecting the challenge, Mrs Justice Lang said in relation to ground 1 that the claimant had not succeeded in showing that the decision in this case came within the scope of the SEA Directive. “Even adopting a purposive construction, the decision under challenge does not meet the specific criteria set out in the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations 2004.”

The judge also addressed the claimant’s reference to other road projects in which assessments under the SEA Directive had been undertaken, and its submission that it was inconsistent to adopt a different approach in this case. “I did not accept this submission, as the facts in the other projects were readily distinguishable from this one,” she said.

In relation to ground 2, the claimant submitted that the decision should have been subject to an appropriate assessment under article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, as it was a "plan" which was likely to have a significant effect on European designated sites. The focus of concern was two Special Areas of Conservation – the Oxford Meadows SAC and the Cothill Fen SAC, which are both located to the west of Oxford, within Corridor B1.

However, Mrs Justice Lang said that, on a proper interpretation, article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, was not engaged unless there was a "plan" or "project" in existence.

The judge said: “In deciding whether or not the decision in this case amounted to a plan, it is appropriate to have regard to the same factors as were considered in deciding this question under the SEA Directive….. The decision merely accepted the recommendation of the CAR [Corridor Assessment Report] to take forward to the next stage of development two mutually exclusive preferred corridors, but it did not prevent consideration of routes outside the preferred corridors at a later stage. It was a step taken in the course of the preparation of a project, and not a plan.

“As the decision was not a ‘plan’, article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive was not engaged.”

[BBOWT](https://www.bbowt.org.uk/wildlife/nature-matters/oxford-cambridge-expressway) are taking legal advice as to whether to appeal against the decision.

## Consultation on new parish council for Headington, Oxford City

Headington Neighbourhood Forum has made a formal request to Oxford City Council to hold a consultation on their proposal to set up a community (parish) council.

The Forum has asked the City Council ‘*to create a community council to cover the whole of the Headington Neighbourhood Area, as defined in the Headington Neighbourhood Plan 2017–2032’*. The law requires that a ‘community governance review’ be carried out where a new parish (community) council is requested. The Forum has asked that the new council be called a community council, rather than parish council. A community council has all the same powers and duties as a parish council. The difference is only in the name

Oxford City Council is carrying out a [Community Governance Review](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8312/1527635.pdf). The aim of the review is to judge the public support for the creation of a community council. The area is currently unparished and elects city councillors on a ward basis.

The area has a proposed electorate of around 11,000.

**The consultation document is** [**here**](https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/consult.ti/HeadingtonCC/consultationHome) **on the Oxford City website. The consultation runs from 12th July to 23rd August 2019**

**What will happen after the consultation ends?**

Once Oxford City have received your views it will consider the results of the consultation exercise and a report will be made to Full Council at the City Council in the autumn (October). Full Council that will make a final decision as to whether a community council should be created.

A community council should represent a distinctive and recognisable community. The map in the consultation leaflet on Oxford City [website](https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/consult.ti/HeadingtonCC/consultationHome) indicates that the proposed Headington Community Council would comprise all of the existing Headington ward and parts of Headington Hill & Northway, Churchill, Quarry & Risinghurst and Barton & Sandhill wards.

**How many parish councillors would there be**?

There are no set rules on how many councillors there should be, based on electorate. The community council because of its size would need to be split into wards because it crosses more than one City Council ward. The councillors would then be shared across those parish wards. With an electorate of 11,000 in the proposed area a possible number of councillors could be between 15 – 20.

There seems to be a movement to close what some perceive as a democratic deficit by moving towards more local representation - two towns in Berkshire are currently attempting to establish their own town councils – [Maidenhead](https://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/news/maidenhead/147474/petition-calls-for-new-maidenhead-town-council.html) and [Windsor.](https://www.windsorobserver.co.uk/news/17743122.dozens-sign-petition-calling-for-new-windsor-town-council/) But a move in London, by the community of [Spitalfields](https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/politics/spitalfields-parish-council-plans-rejected-by-councillors-1-6168551) to have a parish council has been rejected by Tower Hamlets Borough Council.

## Oxfordshire History Centre:

## Guidelines for parish councils on retention and deposit of records

The [Oxford History Centre](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/history/oxfordshire-history-centre) has a mixture of bound and unbound minutes in their collection, so are happy to accept both.  However, with loose minutes they can often receive multiple duplicates when they only want the **signed** versions.  It would be appreciated if plastic wallets could be avoided, as they are not archival friendly and have to be removed.

They are happy to accept digital material and have a digital preservation system, which will not only store the records but allow public access to them through their own computers.  There is a digital deposit form which needs to be completed before deposit.  With digital records, duplicates again can be a problem as they can hinder identifying the ‘signed’ final version.

The Oxford History Centre ask all depositors to provide a box list before deposit.  This does not have to be too detailed but it is very helpful in giving them an overview about the records in terms of content and extent.  It also helps to identify any material that they would not accept before deposit.  An appointment should be made with one of the History Centre Archivists (they take accessioning duty on a weekly rota basis) to bring the material in.  At the Centre you will be asked to sign a temporary document receipt and Data Protection Questionnaire.  Then they would send two copies of the finalised receipt in the post with the accession number, one for the Clerk, the other to return to us.  The accession number is the primary means of identifying the records until they are catalogued.  If there are only a few items, the History Centre do not necessarily need a box list, but would still appreciate a phone call to arrange a convenient time for deposit.

**The Oxford History Centre produced these notes for Clerks…**

This guidance is for parish clerks and other officers wishing to transfer their council’s archives to Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) for long-term preservation of and general access to the documents. It assumes that the records under consideration are no longer required by the parish council for legal or administrative purposes.

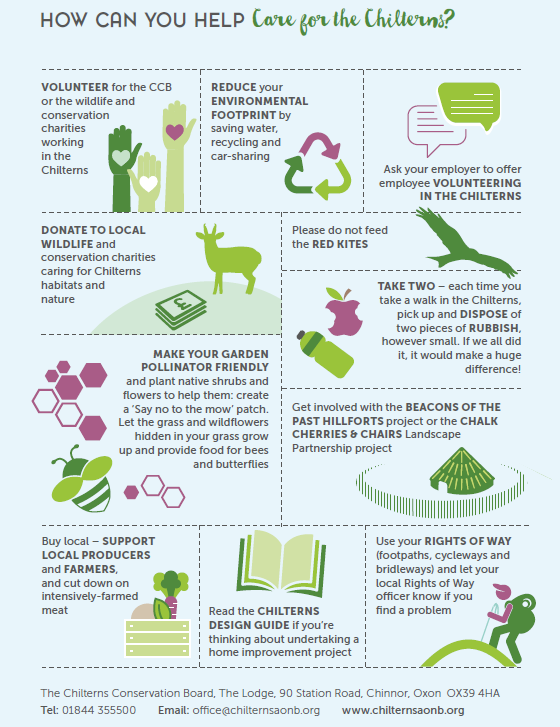
Due to factors of available storage space and staff time, documents in the schedule marked ‘destroy’ should be disposed of by the parish council. Material earmarked for deposit at the History Centre should be box-listed prior to being brought in, so that staff are aware of the potential quantity and types. The parish council retains ownership of the records; any items which following appraisal by OHC staff are deemed unsuitable for permanent preservation will be offered back to the council or destroyed securely, depending on what was agreed at time of deposit.

For any records not covered by the schedule below or for any material held in digital form, please ask History Centre staff for specific advice.

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| **Type of record** | **Action** | **Notes** |
| Minutes of council meetings (signed) | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation |  |
| Draft minutes | Destroy |  |
| Reports and other documents circulated with agendas | Destroy | Unless copies are not included with signed minutes, in which case transfer to OHC for appraisal |
| Councillors’ declarations of office | Destroy |  |
| Nomination forms for elections to council | Destroy |  |
| Registers of electors | Destroy | Already held by OHC |
| Byelaws and orders | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation |  |
| Policy documents | Transfer to OHC for appraisal |  |
| Title deeds and leases | Transfer to OHC for appraisal |  |
| Property registers and terriers | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation |  |
| Maps and plans of council property | Transfer to OHC for appraisal |  |
| Significant correspondence and related papers on local issues & projects | Transfer to OHC for appraisal |  |
| Routine correspondence | Destroy |  |
| Planning applications | Destroy | Copies held by District Councils |
| Press-cuttings books | Transfer to OHC for appraisal |  |
| Precept books | Destroy |  |
| Receipt and payment books | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation |  |
| Cash/petty cash books | Destroy |  |
| Receipts and vouchers | Destroy |  |
| Cheque book stubs | Destroy |  |
| Accounts | Destroy | Unless receipt and payment books do not survive; in which case transfer to OHC for appraisal |
| Bank statements | Destroy |  |
| Records dated pre-1894, now in the custody of the parish council | Transfer to OHC for appraisal |  |
| Photographs | Transfer to OHC for appraisal |  |
| Insurance policies | Destroy |  |

Contact details: Oxfordshire History Centre, St Luke's Church, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2HT  
tel. 01865 398200

[oxhist@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:oxhist@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

[](https://chilternsaonb.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f05efab770494e7fcd4443998&id=10c67a8af8&e=c511c99daa)

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# National News

## Death of a significant national figure

As you may know, NALC have been liaising with the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government over their ‘Bridges’ guidance on marking the death of a senior national figure. The latest (fifth) edition is now out and is in the Members Area of the OALC website.

**Please note the guidance is classified as ‘officially sensitive’ and therefore must be treated with the strictest confidentially. The guidance should not be discussed in an open meeting or quoted in reports or minutes.**

NALC has permission from NACO to share this information with us and member councils. As you will see, the guidance anticipates that principal authorities will take the lead on arrangements and will involve parish and town councils as appropriate. Care must be taken to ensure that any plans made by local councils sit alongside the arrangements already made by principal councils and are made with the knowledge of those principal councils.

## Local government pay 2020

On 24 July the National Employers (LGA) met with the trade unions and received the 2020 pay claim. The unions’ claim is for a 10 per cent pay increase and a minimum wage of £10 per hour; a one-day increase in annual leave; a two-hour reduction in the working week and a review of workplace stress and mental health. NALC’s Management Board will be considering making representations on the pay claim at its meeting on 9 September, and if you have any views please let [jonathan.owen@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.owen@nalc.gov.uk) have them by then.

## Children’s Funeral Fund for England comes into effect 23rd July 2019

Families grieving the tragic loss of a child will no longer have to meet the costs of their burial or cremation.

The fund will be available regardless of the family’s income, and will also include a contribution towards the cost of a coffin.

Under the fund arrangements, no bereaved family will have to pay the fees charged for a child’s cremation or burial or for a number of prescribed associated expenses.

The fund provides for burial authorities and cremation authorities to apply to government for the reimbursement of the fees which would otherwise be charged for the provision of the burial or cremation of an eligible child.

A stakeholder briefing paper is here

## Nalc calls for parish councils to be covered by financial ombudsman

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has called for all parish council financial complaints (particularly those regarding banks) to be heard by the financial ombudsman.

Currently, the financial ombudsman cannot deal with local council financial complaints. NALC has backed a call for this to change. NALC will strongly argue to the financial ombudsman that local councils are public bodies in their own right, not subject to common control by billing authorities and raise taxation of their own as independent economic activity. As such all local councils should be able to have their financial complaints (particularly as regards banks) heard by the financial ombudsman.

This follows intelligence from Kent that a local council in that county had recently sought to complain to the financial ombudsman but told this was not possible. Not only was the council told it was part of a billing authority (which was inaccurate) but it was also told that its banking complaint could not be heard by the financial ombudsman.

Cllr Sue Baxter, chairman of NALC said: “We were shocked when we heard that the financial ombudsman considered local councils to be some kind of add-on to billing authorities, subject to common control. This is not the case. England’s 10,000 local councils are public bodies raising a precept (a form of council tax) which to our mind is independent economic activity. We will be writing to the financial ombudsman in due course to clarify the situation and to the Treasury to request that all local council financial complaints are covered by the financial ombudsman.

## CPRE suggest new definition of affordable housing could cut rural rents

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is calling for [changes to how ‘affordable’ housing is defined](https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/item/5156-redefining-affordability-a-cpre-briefing), it has published an analysis demonstrating how low income families living in communities across the countryside could save more than £31 million a year, if affordable rent levels were set according to the net income of tenants, rather than market rates.

Currently, rents set at 80% of the standard market rate are classified as ‘affordable’, which is still out of reach for many families and those on low incomes. CPRE is urging the government to change this definition and set affordable rents at 35% of net income for the lowest income groups unless 80% of market rate is cheaper.

The full article is [here](https://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/5157-new-affordable-housing-definition-slash-rural-rent-prices-up-to-half)

## Planning – flats with no windows approved! yes really!

Watford Borough Council rejected a Change of Use application to turn a former upholstery workshop in the town centre into 15 flats. The applicant appealed against the decision and won. The applicant did not need planning permission because it was permitted development but the council argued that permitted development rights did not apply in this case because the proposed flats were so small it did not qualify as housing according to government space standards.

Of the 15 proposed flats, 7 would not have any windows. No parking spaces were provided and the flats range in size from 16.5 sq m to 22sq m. ([the minimum should be 39sq m](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Technical_housing_standards_-_nationally_described_space_standard))

The Planning Inspector wrote “*Overall, I recognise that the proposed units are small and that, for example, living without a window would not be a positive living environment. However, the provisions of the* [*General Permitted Development Order 2015*](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/contents/made) *require the decision makers to solely assess the impact of the proposed development in relation to the conditions given in the Order.”*

The planning officers report recommended refusal because the units “*would not provide any meaningful outlook, daylight or even appropriate ventilation,”* they said the “*oppressive environment would have a serious impact on the health of future occupiers.*”

The local newspaper report is [here](https://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/17776352.tiny-flats-no-windows-get-green-light-watford-appeal/)

The Inspector’s report is [here](https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?Caseid=3220904&CoID=0)

The Mayor of Watford has written to Housing Secretary, James Brokenshire (as was, from 24th July it is now Robert Jenrick MP) urging him to review residential permitted development (PD) rights, saying it "beggars belief" that plans to convert an industrial building into a housing scheme featuring windowless flats were allowed on appeal. The Mayor told the BBC:

*"It is a disgrace that central government has set such a low bar for the homes that people are expected to live in. They must review legislation surrounding permitted development to stop similar cases like this happening again."*

## A more positive planning news story about Local Authorities returning to housebuilding

According to the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) it is becoming increasingly recognised across the main political parties and commentators, that one major reason for the 'housing crisis' is that local authorities ceased their role as a direct housing provider in the 1980s. Since then, they state that the shortfall in housing provision has mirrored the scale of the former local authority contribution to the market.

The research can be read [here](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/better-planning/better-planning-housing-affordability/local-authority-direct-provision-of-housing/)

The RTPI commissioned research to explore how local authorities are returning to housebuilding.

The research led by Professor Janice Morphet and Dr Ben Clifford at The Bartlett School of Planning, University College London has reached a number of conclusions:

1. Relying on the private sector to progress applications through the planning system alone will not deliver against the full range of society's housing needs in a particular council area;

2. National Government policies for housing and planning seem to pull in different directions;

3. Each council will find its own way to provide housing, which is evidenced by the range and variety of methods now being used by a majority of councils. In our direct survey to local authorities, 69% of them reported they were directly delivering housing, whilst in our desk survey of local authorities were found that 78% had a housing or property company;

4. Making housing a corporate priority for a council usually leads to more activity;

5. Despite the welcome removal of the HRA debt cap, the HRA still restricts housing delivery;

6. Homes England's role in the provision of all housing types is unclear and would benefit from replicating approaches led by the Mayor of London who is funding Councils to provide social housing accompanied by skills support;

7. The relationships between local authorities and housing associations are increasingly variable;

8. Local economies, as supported by Local Industrial Strategies, need all types and tenures of housing to support their success and this needs to be reflected in Local Plans;

9. Viability negotiations and CIL are not providing the contributions expected or needed;

10. Local authorities need access to development surveyors;

11. Local plans should deliver on all housing needs and be found unsound if they fail to do so;

12. Concern about the quality of housing delivered by some private developers is widespread. Local plans should be standards based to address this and support placemaking;

13. Local Plans must address existing stock and new housing to meet the climate emergency;

14. Care is needed to manage internal relationships within the council, and external relations with communities, when the council or their company is the applicant for planning permission; and

15. It takes time – the rise of council companies found in this research since January 2018 will take at least two years to start development and all local authority companies are starting small to learn from their experiences.

**Key recommendations:**

**HM Treasury**

* Should allow local authorities to borrow against their assets and rent income in the same way as Registered Providers and the private sector.

**Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government**

* Should revise the NPPF so that local plans will be found unsound if it is not clear how they will deliver against the different types of housing need identified;
* Should reform the method of Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) so that is compatible with housing need in the local authority area derived through the housing strategy, homelessness strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment/ Wellbeing strategy;
* Should recognise that the current approach to viability is not working as a test for the delivery of the range of homes required and is not fairly balanced to meet public provision;
* Should require local plans to systematically review the housing needs of older people, in their areas, identify shortfalls and include requirements to meet them;
* The Minister for Housing should provide Homes England with a national target for the provision of housing for older people and establish a funding and support programme to deliver it. This funding should be available to local authorities without an HRA;
* Should act to ensure that where older people have been private tenants for a long period, they be afforded some security of tenure;
* Should review the use classes order for housing and make applicable to the determination of each application and site for housing as for retail and employment uses;
* Should oblige all homes provided to be at lifetime homes standards;
* Should reverse the permitted development rights freedoms which currently allow new dwellings to be developed without planning permission, bringing such developments into full planning control with associated requirements and contributions;
* Should return the provision of public bodies to have first refusal of land being sold by other public bodies at public values;
* Should require monitoring of the delivery of different types of housing including for older people, families, students and PRS are included within annual monitoring reports;
* Should remove Right to Buy (RTB) as a policy for local authority housing. If RTB is not repealed they should allow local authorities to keep all RTB receipts to use to provide replacement housing;
* Should create specific funds for local authority affordable and social house building supported by skills funding as by the Mayor of London; and
* Should establish a funding subsidy programme through grants for local authority direct delivery of housing whether through the HRA or other mechanisms such as an RP or on the general fund.

**Local Authorities**

* Should bring together housing and planning into a housing delivery team to manage the implementation of all housing schemes regardless of the promoter;
* Should establish a housing delivery board to monitor progress and delivery;
* Should establish a housing delivery forum of all providers in the area to meet regularly to discuss progress and problems;
* Should establish a housing intervention fund to help overcome issues on individual sites (funding can be made as a grant, a loan or in return for development equity);
* Should consider how housing provision can support the local economic objectives e.g. PRS for younger professionals and graduates moving to the area, housing for families to encourage them to remain in the area, key worker housing;
* Should assess all sites in council's ownership for the suitability for housing not just those held in HRA or in delivery portfolios; and
* Should include more detailed housing delivery outcomes in the annual monitoring report.

## The ICO has published its new access to information strategy ‘Openness by design’

The strategy sets out five goals relating to the access to information legislation regulated by the ICO – Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015.

The five ‘Openness by Design’ goals are:

* Ensuring that access to information rights is upheld in a consistent and timely manner and operates effectively in a digital age.
* Providing excellent customer service to individuals making requests to ICO and to lead by example in fulfilling its statutory functions.
* Raising awareness of access to information rights and make it easier for the public to exercise their rights
* Promoting the reform of access to information legislation so it remains relevant for our modern society and fit for purpose
* Further developing and sustain international collaboration, learning from the best initiatives around the world.

The ICO will encourage public authorities to comply with the law in the first instance, reducing the need for people to complain to the regulator.

More information [here](https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/news-and-blogs/2019/06/ico-s-access-to-information-strategy-calls-for-better-compliance-by-public-authorities-backed-up-with-enforcement-action/)

## NALC Points of Light

At our AGM on July 1st Charlotte Eisenhart, Member Services Manager at NALC spoke about the good and innovative work councils are doing for their communities. One of the problems is showcasing that work so that others can learn about it and perhaps apply it to their own community or situation.

****NALC has pulled together 150+ case studies of interesting, imaginative and successful schemes for you to learn from. Here are a few of the many examples from the Points of Light booklet which can be found [here](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/2832-points-of-light-2019/file)

* **Art, culture and heritage** - **Leigh on Sea Town Council, Essex**

Electorate: 17,000 Precept: £411,692 Expenditure: £477,571

Promotes and supports local artists and brings art closer to local people. The council appoints an artist in residence to the Studio Loft at Leigh Community Centre (run by the council) on an annual basis. The artist is offered reduced rental costs and a free exhibition space. The community centre is also home to an art wall hosting regular exhibitions from local artists and art groups. Artists are not charged to exhibit and are given bursaries to cover the cost of hiring a workshop room. During exhibitions the artist in residence and other exhibiting artists often run free workshops for adults and children. In addition, the council supports the Leigh Art Trail, providing grant funding to the Leigh Art Trail Association and hosting one of the exhibitions on the trail.

* **Campaigns -** **Cranford Parish Council, Northamptonshire**

Electorate: 392 Precept: £9,000 Expenditure: £18,598

Instrumental in getting Laing Construction to instigate a grant scheme following the development of the Burton Wold Wind Farm. Community groups whose projects benefit residents in the parishes of Burton Latimer and Cranford can apply for grants of up to £5,000 to support existing work or develop new activities for local residents. Examples of projects that can be funded include training and volunteering schemes, pocket parks and green spaces, arts and preservation of local heritage and youth clubs and safety schemes. The council has recently put in its own application for funding which it intends to use on improving footpaths in the village.

* **Canals and rivers - Wallingford Town Council, Oxfordshire**

Electorate: 5,987 Precept: £349,901 Expenditure: £671,374

Manages boat moorings on the River Thames, upstream from Wallingford Bridge. Moorings are free of charge daily from 9am to 7:30pm. During the summer months (April to September) overnight moorings are charged at £7 per boat per night, with fees collected daily by a member of staff from the council. In winter (October to March) boat owners can apply to use the moorings on a longer basis, providing that they are not occupying it for residential purposes.

* **Cemeteries**
* **Community awards, events, safety, transport and venues - Garstang Town Council, Lancashire**

Electorate: 3,575 Precept: £72,692 Expenditure: £91,015

Instigated the Garstang Town Council Awards as a way of acknowledging and rewarding individuals, volunteers and teams for the hard work they do for the town. Categories in the inaugural awards were each sponsored by a local individual or organisation and included sports team of the year, youth group/community team of the year, business in the community award and good citizen of the year. Local residents were encouraged to submit nominations by filling in forms available both online and in prominent locations throughout the town. In total 60 nominations were received and over 70 people attended the awards ceremony, which was held as part of the annual town meeting.

* **Economic development - Henley on Thames Town Council, Oxfordshire**

Electorate: 8,750 Precept: £530,734 Expenditure: £1,715.018

Organises several highly successful markets which are held in the town centre. This includes the weekly Charter Market, currently at full capacity, with stalls selling everything from bread and cakes to bags, fish, fruit and vegetables and ladies fashion. There is also a farmers market in operation two or three times a month and weekend continental style markets.

* **Environmental improvement - Harlington Parish Council, Bedfordshire**

Electorate: 1,831 Precept: £130,916 Expenditure: £107,031

Manages Hornes End Spinney, an area of woodland situated on the site of a former quarry. Since purchasing the site the council has developed a management plan to ensure that the trees are regularly inspected. The council has also created a development plan, the first stage of which saw teachers and pupils from local schools involved in the creation of a nature trail. A teacher from the lower school created an exciting activity book for children to complete when visiting the Spinney whilst two teachers from the upper school created signposts, tags and the plaque.

* **Flood assistance**
* **Grants and funding**
* **Health and wellbeing - Histon and Impington Parish Council, Cambridgeshire**

Electorate: 6,773 Precept: £348,101 Expenditure: £405,624

Developed a community companion course to help young people build relationships with older people in the community. The ten session course, for school children aged 11 and over, covered topics including what makes a good/bad companion, what young and old people think of each other, services available for older people and dementia training. Young people who successfully completed the course were presented with a certificate and the opportunity to volunteer at Histon and Impington community day centre during school holidays.

* **Housing and planning**
* **Libraries - Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, Wiltshire**

Electorate: 16,055 Precept: £1,330,062 Expenditure: £1,384,300

Took over management of Beechcroft Road Library from Swindon Borough Council, saving it from near certain closure. Today the library is a thriving community hub, with local residents invited to grab a “cuppa” at the onsite coffee shop and attend one of the many group meetings taking place at the library as well as borrow books.

* **Parks and open spaces**
* **Partnership working - Bishop’s Waltham Parish Council, Durley Parish Council, Upham Parish Council, Swanmore Parish Council, Hampshire**

Formed the Southern Parishes Group to identify ways of supporting each other with staffing, facilities and bulk-buying. One of the group’s first steps was to explore staffing needs. As a result, Bishop’s Waltham Parish Council, one of the group’s larger councils, contracted out their lengthsman to two smaller local councils, Durley Parish Council and Upham Parish Council. The lengthsman now works half a day at each. Dog fouling, littering, fly-tipping, and flyposting were also picked out as partnership priorities to tackle. The Southern Parishes decided 39 to appoint an accredited community safety officer (ACSO) to deal with these problems and Bishop’s Waltham Parish Council contracted the ACSO out for a third of the time to Swanmore Parish Council.

* **Playgrounds**
* **Pubs - Urchfont Parish Council, Wiltshire**

Electorate: 969 Precept: £47,244 Expenditure: £54,433

Put in a successful application to have The Lamb Inn registered as an asset of community value until 2022. An entry has been made on the Land Register and the owner of the asset cannot dispose of it without satisfying a number of criteria, in consultation with Wiltshire Council. Today the pub is thriving community hub, home to men’s and ladies skittles teams, a petanque court and a monthly quiz night. A variety of organisations also hold meetings in the pub, ranging from the local Women’s Institute to the cricket club and neighbourhood development steering group.

* **Street furniture**
* **Winter readiness**
* **Young people and youth services - Chulmleigh Parish Council, Devon**

Electorate: 1,224 Precept: £29,000 Expenditure: £34,378

Ensures the views of younger residents are taken into account at the monthly council meetings. Students from the local community college are invited to give feedback on the activities of the college and how they feel they are being helped as part of the “public participation” agenda item. The council has reported that this not only assists in the public relations of the college, but also gives the pupils’ confidence to attend a formal meeting and address councillors, something that will stand them in good stead in their future lives.

## Health and wellbeing – 1. chatty bench

Police in the seaside town of Burnham on Sea, Essex have installed “chat benches” in a bid to combat loneliness in the community. Anyone who is feeling isolated or disconnected is encouraged to sit on the benches and strike up a conversation with a friendly stranger.

© Burnham-on-sea.com

*****“The Happy to Chat Bench is a very simple concept where a sign is placed on a bench, typically in a park or a town centre, in a location used by a good cross-section of the community,”* said Burnham-On-Sea Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Tracey Grobbeler

*“The sign simply helps to break down the invisible, social barriers that exists between strangers who find themselves sharing a common place*,” said Grobbeler.

*“Simply stopping to say ‘hello’ to someone at the Chat Bench could make a huge difference to the vulnerable people in our communities and help to make life a little better*.”

© Yahoo Lifestyle

## health and WELLBEING 2. *Reaching out* joint report with lga

NALC has been working with the Local Government Association (LGA) on a joint initiative to tackle issues relating to loneliness.

Perhaps 10 years ago using the words well-being in relation to the work of parish councils would have been slightly odd and some may still think this area of work is not within their remit. But times change, funding changes and town and parish councils need to change too.

A new guide will be launched later this year by LGA and NALC, its purpose is to provide a resource and encourage a partnership approach to tackling one of the biggest public health challenges of our time. The practical outputs will be advice and case studies:

* Recognising the problem and collaborating with other key partners be that principal authorities, charities or social care organisation to address the situation
* Raise awareness of the services and support available
* Provide support to meet the needs of vulnerable groups

Funding has been secured from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to print the guide which will be promoted at a workshop at the [NALC Annual Conference](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/events/annual-conference/2019-8/programme/2957-180719/file) in October, so please come to the conference.

## requirement for Accessible websites for parish councils by next year – **september 2020**

Last November 2018 we brought to your attention the need for parish councils, as local authorities, to have websites that are accessible to all members of the community. NALC issued a legal briefing L09-18 on the [Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/852/contents/made). This briefing is in the Members Area of our website.

That briefing referred to the government’s intention to issue a model accessibility statement.

The Government Digital Service has now created a sample accessibility statement for guidance which can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sample-accessibility-statement?utm_source=Members&utm_campaign=7559769677-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_08_03_15_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_206970988f-7559769677-323671257). County Officers are pressuring NALC to assist with guidance for councils.

**Start talking to your website provider NOW!**

## Tree Charter day– 30th november 2019



A date for your diaries! As you may know, NALC is a partner in the Woodland Trust’s Tree Charter project. This year’s Tree Charter Day will be held on 30 November with a **planned mass planting.** (Planting trees is good for addressing Climate Emergency, see above) You can find out more about how to get involved in the Tree Charter on the project page on the NALC website [here,](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/treecharter) and watch the video too.

Jonathan Owen, CEO of NALC would like to encourage you to sign the Tree Charter [here,](https://sign.treecharter.uk/page/6023/petition/1?locale=en-GB) and to let NALC know at [policycomms@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:policycomms@nalc.gov.uk) about any tree and woods related activity or projects so they can share and celebrate it.

## Ramblers - Charter for Walking neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods that are green and walkable promote good physical health, mental health and wellbeing. They help combat poor air quality and encourage people to get outside and be active.

The Ramblers Charter sets out five things that councils can do to create walking neighbourhoods:

1. Make neighbourhoods green
2. Create a network of green walking routes
3. Prioritise pedestrians
4. Promote walking
5. Reclaim places for communities

More information [here](https://e-activist.com/page/40945/action/1?utm_source=Britain%27s+Best+Walking+Neighbourhood&utm_campaign=5bbdf0b7af-AUTOMATION_BWNA_voters_welcome_journey_4&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_89ef4003bb-5bbdf0b7af-43680783&mc_cid=5bbdf0b7af&mc_eid=70fc104672)

## Charity trustees

Before you agree to be a trustee have a look at this guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>

* About charity trustees
* Before you start - make sure you are eligible
* Trustees’ 6 main duties



* Making decisions as a trustee
* Chair and treasurer trustee roles
* When trustees can be personally liable
* Find out more about being a trustee

## Number of small schools has halved since 1980

The Rural Services Network, The Guardian and The Times all carry reports on the loss of small (rural) schools. There was a debate in the [House of Lords](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-07-17/debates/BEFBB005-8AC8-4F49-8D00-CA3EC6430D48/SmallAndVillageSchoolFunding) on 17th July about this topic too.

[The Guardian reports](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/jul/17/number-of-small-schools-in-england-halves-since-1980)  - the number of small schools in England has halved in recent decades, with those in rural and village settings twice as likely to have shut their doors as those in urban areas, according to research.

The study says primary schools have undergone a dramatic transformation, with children increasingly being taught in “super-jumbo” institutions in towns and cities, many with more than 800 pupils, leaving villages to mourn the loss of a vital community asset.

According to data from the House of Commons library, there were almost 11,500 small primary schools in England with 200 or fewer pupils in 1980, but by 2018 the number plummeted to fewer than 5,500.

Over the same period, the number of primary schools with more than 600 pupils has increased from about 50 to 780 and there are now more than 100 primaries with more than 800 pupils.

Rural schools have been particularly vulnerable. Since 2010, more than three out of five (61%) primary schools that have closed were in rural areas and in the last two decades alone almost 150 rural primary schools have closed their doors, their pupils forced to travel longer distances for their education.

# consultations

## Connecting town halls: consultation on allowing video conferencing

In November 2016-January 2017 the government carried out a consultation on whether joint committees and combined authorities could use video conferring for their meetings.

The government has finally come back with its [response](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817673/Government_response_to_video_conferencing_consultation.pdf) to that consultation.

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 is clear that all those taking part in a council meeting should be physically present in the place where the meeting is taking place. The consultation was undertaken by the government so they could try to understand the appetite for giving local authorities, but not councils as a whole, the ability to hold meetings using video conferencing. There were only 39 responses to the consultation, of which 8 were town and parish councils.

The questions were:

1. **Do you agree that local authorities operating joint committees should have the ability to hold meetings via video conference?**

* 82.1% agreed
* 5.1% disagreed
* 12.8% gave no clear answer

1. **Do you agree that combined authorities should have the ability to hold meetings by video conference?**

* 76.9% agreed
* 5.1% disagreed
* 18% gave no clear answer

1. **Do you agree that the safeguards in paragraphs 14 to 20 [of the consultation document] are sufficient to preserve town hall transparency when these meetings are held by video conference?**

* 51.3% agreed
* 7.7% disagreed
* 41% gave no clear answer

The Government’s response is that it is satisfied that, with appropriate safeguards to maintain transparency, there are clear benefits to giving local authorities operating joint committees and combined authorities the ability to hold formal meetings by video conferencing. This would be on a voluntary basis.

To be clear “*councillors should not be able to take part in their council’s meetings from their own home, or from some other public or private premises*”. This “*would undermine visible democratic scrutiny and public debate. For the avoidance of doubt, it is the Government’s view that only local authority premises suitable for holding meetings with public access, for example a local town hall, should be considered appropriate for holding meetings by video conferencing.”*

The Government is sympathetic to the views of rural authorities expressed in the consultation and recognizes that the arguments in favour of video conferencing also apply to larger rural authorities. The Government therefore intends to speak with the sector before seeking changes to the Local Government Act 1972 with a view to extending the use of video conferencing in formal meetings to other local authorities.

|  |
| --- |
| This is the important conclusion to take from this consultation…  The Government has taken a long time to respond to this consultation but it does give an indication of the way its thinking is going. However, do not get excited this is a **very** long way from allowing individual parish councillors to Skype into meetings because they are on holiday in Barbados. |

## Data sharing

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has issued a new [consultation on the data sharing code of practice](https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/ico-and-stakeholder-consultations/ico-consultation-on-the-draft-data-sharing-code-of-practice/) .  The original code was published in 2011 and is required to be updated by the Data Protection Act 2018.  NALC will be responding.

The [**updated draft code of practice**](https://ico.org.uk/media/about-the-ico/consultations/2615361/data-sharing-code-for-public-consultation.pdf) will explain and advise on changes to data protection legislation where these changes are relevant to data sharing.  The updated code is the result of the ICO consultation with stakeholders in August 2018.   NALC is minded to reiterate the main points from its March 2019 response to the most recent ICO consultation on freedom of information (key to data sharing):

1.  ICO need to continue to work closely with NALC and the wider local council sector over the next three years to ensure that freedom of information (FOI) guidance and regulations are fit for purpose, as well as data sharing guidance;

     2. There are still too many vexatious FoI requests being made to England’s local councils who are not resourced to deal with them; and

3. NALC agrees in principle with transparency but the ICO needs to be aware that FoI, for instance, strains the capacity for local councils in terms of their ability to respond to requests which are not deemed “reasonable”.

**Consultation questions**

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

**Question 1.** Does the updated code adequately explain and advise on the new aspects of data protection legislation which are relevant to data sharing?

**Question 3.** Does the draft code cover the right issues about data sharing?

**Question 11.** Does the draft code strike the right balance between recognising the benefits of sharing data and the need to protect it?

Please email your responses to this consultation to [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) by 17.00 on Friday 16th August 2019.

## Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local PLAN - Revised Statement of Community Involvement

## runs from Wednesday 24th July to Wednesday 2nd October 2019

The County Council wants to make sure that everyone within an interest in Minerals, Waste and County Council developments within Oxfordshire has the opportunity to be actively and meaningfully involved.

The Oxfordshire Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the County Council will engage with and involve people and organisations in the preparation of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and in the consideration of planning applications for Minerals, Waste and County Council developments.

The current Statement of Community Involvement was adopted by the County Council in 2015. Following some recent changes in planning laws and procedures, the Council has decided that the Statement of Community Involvement should be reviewed and updated.

The County Council is now consulting on a draft revised Statement of Community Involvement. Anyone who is interested can make comment and give us their views. To make it easier to see where changes have been made from the current Statement of Community Involvement, we have underlined or deleted where amendments have been made.

The draft revised Statement of Community Involvement and response form can be viewed and downloaded at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/new-minerals-and-waste-local-plan>

It is also available to view at Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND and libraries across Oxfordshire. If you have difficulty accessing the consultation document or obtaining a response form, please contact the County Council using the details below.

If you would like to make comments, please complete a response form and send it to us:

E-mail to: [mineralsandwasteplanconsultation@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mineralsandwasteplanconsultation@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Paper copy to: FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

If you are sending a response to the FREEPOST address, please make sure you write “MWPlans” in the top left hand corner of the envelope to make sure it reaches the County Council.

If you are unable to use the response form, you can send your comments by email or letter and they will be still considered.

Following this consultation, the County Council will review and consider all the responses received and make any appropriate further changes to the Statement of Community Involvement. The County Council is aiming to adopt the revised Statement of Community Involvement by the end of 2019. It will then be published on the Council’s website and will replace the current Statement of Community Involvement.

Minerals and Waste Policy Team, Direct Line: 07741607726 [mineralandwasteplanconsultation@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mineralandwasteplanconsultation@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

# Employment Briefing

Employment law is complex and specialized so while OALC can assist with general employment queries we retain the services of Chris Moses, Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd. to provide expert advice to our member councils. Chris holds a Master’s 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 have retained Chris for four hours per month 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 article is on …

**Holiday Pay**

The issue of how to calculate holiday pay has been in the news at lot since 2014, when the Employment Appeal Court ruled that overtime payments had to be taken into account when working out what an employee gets.

There are Councils who still believe that they can base an employee’s holiday pay solely on their contracted hours, despite the amount of overtime they had done leading up to their leave. This can be a problem if the Clerk has been working regular additional hours to cover meetings and events, or outdoor staff have been doing overtime to keep on top of grass cutting and other seasonal activities. There are Councils whose holiday pay is based on a 37 hours week for full time staff, despite the fact that they have frequently worked extra time.

Such Councils could face a claim at the Employment Tribunal for unlawful deductions from pay, not only for their current leave, but also previous holidays. Back in 2014 when this legal decision was made, a lot of employers were worried about how far back such claims could go, as the legislation which the Court’s decision was based on went back to 1998.

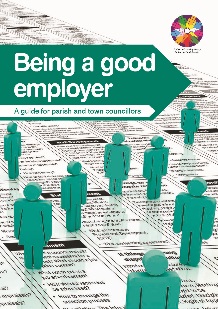
The Court responded to these concerns by limiting claims to up to two years leading up to the employee making their claim. Furthermore, if a gap of three months or more occurred between periods of leave, the ability to link these holidays would have stopped. For example, if an employee made a claim in August 2019 for underpaid holiday they would be able to claim for all leave taken as far back as August 2017, so long as any period in between the holiday taken was less than three months. Once a break of three months or more occurred, the entitlement stopped.

This three-month break has recently been challenged in the Northern Ireland Court of appeal who ruled that the linked holidays could not be broken by a gap of three months.

Consequently, all underpaid leave taken during the two years leading up to the claim could be included, regardless of the amount of time in between the Employees holidays.

Councils who are calculating holiday pay for staff who regularly do additional hours, need to investigate the payroll history, work out what the average weekly pay has been over a period of twelve weeks leading up to the holiday, and pay holiday pay based on this figure, not the contracted hours.

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

# Financial Briefing

**OALC also offers its member councils the benefit of advice from Steve Parkinson, our Finance, Audit and VAT advisor. If you have any problems or queries concerning finance, VAT, accounting process or financial governance we will send them on to Steve so that you can benefit from his extensive experience. Please send us an email (**[info@oalc.org.uk](mailto:info@oalc.org.uk) **) with a clear description of your problem with as much background information as possible. We will send it on to Steve and get back to you with his response.**

As part of his work for us Steve writes a short article each month. We will put these articles in our Member’s Area for reference as well. This month it is on

**publication of financial information**

There are a number of requirements to publish information online and councils don’t always seem to be aware of these. The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 require that the Statement of Accounts (contained within the Annual Governance & Accountability Return) is published online prior to commencement of the period for the exercise of the public’s right to inspect the accounting records. They require that once published, the statement remains available online for a period of five years from the date of publication, so all local councils should have their 2015 accounts and the four subsequent years available on their website, if they have one, or on a website freely accessible by the public.

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (a recommended code of practice for councils over £200,000) and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (mandatory for councils under £25,000) require the publication of additional information. This includes a quarterly list of purchases over £500 (under the main code) or an annual list of payments over £100 (or all payments if you prefer) under the smaller authorities’ code, along with details of land and buildings assets (under both codes). The main code also requires the publication of contracts and tenders over £5,000.

In addition, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires local authorities to have a publication scheme, setting out information that they publish about their activities. Most, if not all councils adopted the model scheme provided by the Information Commissioner’s Office. This includes a category entitled “what we spend and how we spend it”. One of the key items listed is the council’s budget and precept, for at least the current and previous year. For anyone interested in what local councils do, their budget is probably one of the most useful documents for understanding a council’s spending.

What’s on your website?

# Training and Development

The updated OALC training programme is below. Please note that our popular Planning training has been scheduled for 21st November. This is always popular so don’t leave it until the last minute to book.

Please book your places via the website <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| date | subject | Half/full day | trainer | location |
| August | No training – happy holidays | | | |
| Wednesday September 18th | 13. Roles and Responsibilities for new councillors and clerks | Full day | Elizabeth Howlett | Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot OX11 7JN |
| Wednesday  October 2nd | 14. Budgeting and financial management for councillors  15. VAT for clerks (and councillors!) | Half/ morning  Half/ afternoon | Steve Parkinson | Begbroke Science Park, Woodstock Room, Begbroke OX5 1PF |
| Thursday 21st November  NEW | 16. Planning – How local councils fit into the planning system and effective responses to planning applications | Half/ morning | Phil Shaw | West Oxfordshire District Council, Witney, OX28 1NB |

**NALC Annual Conference & Exhibition 2019 – Book Now!**

Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Milton Keynes, 28-29 October 2019

NALC’s Annual Conference and Exhibition 2019 is an essential event for anyone interested in the role of local councils in strengthening their communities. So join them and other parts of the public, private and voluntary sectors to discuss the key policy issues of the moment.  There will be exciting workshop sessions on rural issues, youth engagement, council communications, cybercrime, invest to save, loneliness, health and wellbeing and the comprehensive spending review (with more to be confirmed).  There will also be prominent keynote speakers, a full exhibition catering for your council’s needs, the [Star Council Awards](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/star-councils-awards) dinner and prize giving, as well as a networking drinks reception!

[Click here](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-events/annual-conference-2019) to book and for more information!

****[**How to be a good trustee**](https://civicrm.ocva.org.uk/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=61046&qid=3302934)

**Wednesday 18th September 2019    9.45 am to 1pm**

This course is for new trustees, those thinking about joining a board or existing board members wanting a refresher and update. It aims to provide an overview of the key things you need to know as a trustee. The session will equip you with the knowledge of your responsibilities as a trustee and confidence to know where to go to find out more after the course.

The course covers the role of individual trustees and the nature of their collective responsibility, plus some practical tips about how to be effective and add value to the board. There will also be a chance to find out more about some of the latest developments in the sector.

**What will I learn?** **By the end of this session you will have an overview of:**

* The trustee role and what you are responsible for under charity law
* Understanding your charity
* Personal liability and conflicts of interest
* Governance and management – understanding the difference and building a n effective relationship with staff and volunteers
* Managing your money and risks – key questions to ask
* Thinking ahead about strategy
* Working as a team
* Managing your time
* What’s going on in the sector – latest developments and what they mean

**Date:** **Wednesday 18th September 2019**  
  
**Time:** 9.45 am arrival for tea, coffee and networking for a 10.00 am start. The course will finish by 1 pm.

**Cost:** £30 per person for OCVA members  
£45 per person from a charitable organisation who are not OCVA members  
£60 per person from a non-charitable organisation

**Venue:** OCVA, Oxford Office Furniture Training Suite, The Old Court House  
Floyds Row, St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1SS

**Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)**

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| **Congratulations to Alison Riseley, Clerk to Brize Norton Parish Council on gaining Cilca** |

**Why should your Clerk under take CiLCA?**

[CiLCA](https://www.slcc.co.uk/content/level-3-qualification-cilca/525/) helps the Clerk become more aware of the law and procedures for local councils and helps the Clerk understand the planning system. It checks that the Clerk can manage the council’s activities, its finances and community engagement. In England, a CiLCA-qualified clerk can help the council gain the General Power of Competence and the Local Council Award Scheme. CiLCA helps your council achieve standards of good practice and builds the reputation of local councils in a fast-changing world**. The better your Clerk, the better your Council.**

**What is CiLCA?** CiLCA is like an A-level; it’s a Level 3 qualification tailored for the officers of local councils.

**Who can take CiLCA?** Any officer who needs to know how local councils work can take CiLCA. Councillors can take it too.

**How does CiLCA work?** To prepare for CiLCA, you should attend recognized mentoring. This provides both the knowledge that you need and guidance on completing the tasks to be assessed. You put together a portfolio of work for 30 activities, it takes approx. 200 hours of work. Some tasks involve writing an explanation while others ask for notes accompanying council documents. There are five units covering the five themes:

* Core Roles in Local Council Administration
* Law & Procedure for Local Councils
* Finance for Local Councils
* Management for Local Councils
* Community Engagement

**How can the council help?** As an employer, the council should support the Clerk; it is encouraged to

* Pay all costs (£350 for registration + similar amount for mentoring). The investment is rewarded from the outset.
* Manage your workload. Too many demands can hinder your achievement.
* Provide and protect study time if your hours allow it. It’s worth preventing delay.
* Show an interest in your progress. This is encouraging and demonstrates support.
* Listen to your advice. The aim is to improve the council’s performance

# Vacancies

All vacancies can be found on the [Local News section](http://www.oalc.org.uk/localnews.htm) 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.

**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)

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| **PARISH CLERK TO LOWER SLAUGHTER PARISH COUNCIL**  3 hours per week variable, working from home |
| Salary will be based on the National Association of Local Councils 2019 scale range LC1 (13-17) Salary: £11.45 to £12.39 /hour  £4 per week is payable for the cost of an office/safe storage area for council documentation. Use of your own car is essential for which an allowance of 45p per mile is payable. |
| The position will include attending Parish Council meetings (typically two meetings every two months), taking and writing up Parish Council minutes, writing letters when requested, updating the Parish Council website and advising the Parish Council in respect of the performance of its statutory duties.  Training is available for all aspects of the clerk's role.  The role will also include liaising with the district and county services when required.  The position is home based apart from attendance at the meetings noted above which are held in Lower Slaughter. A laptop will be provided solely for council use along with other necessary equipment. |
| The council are looking for a proactive team player to work with a supportive and friendly team. The successful candidate will be prepared to deal with a diverse range of issues in a 'hands on' manner and be able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with a wide variety of people, have good numeracy skills and be computer literate.  Applicants do not have to have specific experience as a council clerk but must have several years’ experience in a similar role. |
| **How to apply**  Application forms can be downloaded from the parish website at <http://www.lowerslaughter.btck.co.uk/>  **Closing Date for Applications Mid-Day - 30th August 2019** |

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**THAME TOWN COUNCIL**

**Appointment of Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer**

**Initial Salary £39,782 - £47,896 (SCP 37 - 45)**

**or up to £52,869 (SCP 49) for already qualified, exceptional candidates**

**Additional increments up to SCP 54 may be payable once in post and abilities proven**

**Plus Local Government Pension Scheme**

Thame Town Council is seeking a dynamic, forward-looking Town Clerk to replace the imminently retiring current Town Clerk.

The role demands good leadership, self-motivation, administrative, financial and interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, lateral thinking and an ability to forge strong partnerships. You will be determined that the Council meets local government best practice standards and will ensure the efficient and effective implementation of Council decisions. You will also ensure that the Council is prepared for the future and maximises opportunities to serve the community through exploring new opportunities and accessing grants. The successful candidate will have a proven track record in senior administrative and financial management, and will already hold qualified clerk status.

An application pack can be obtained from the Council’s website: <https://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/thame-town-council/about-the-town-council/council-staff/vacancies/>

or by email [recruitment@thametowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@thametowncouncil.gov.uk)

Applications must be returned by 10am on Monday 12 August 2019.

Short listed candidates will be invited to attend a recruitment day

on either Friday 30 August 2019 or Monday 2 September 2019.

**Any enquiries please contact the current Town Clerk, Graham Hunt, on 01844 260495**

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**COMMUNITY LED HOUSING LEADS**

[**Collaborative Housing**](https://collaborativehousing.org.uk/) is a new, comprehensive support Hub for community-led housing groups in the Thames Valley, covering Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. We are seeking a **Communities Lead** and a **Land and Property Lead**. You will have a range of housing-related skills, a flexible approach to self-organisation and an ability to multi-task. You will have great communication skills and be diplomatic, with an ability to take the initiative when opportunities arise. Training and support in the area of community-led housing will be offered.

* **Communities Lead** *21 hours per week. £32,000 per annum pro rata. 18 months (with possibility of extension).*
* **Land and Property Lead** *14 hours per week. £32,000 per annum pro rata. 18 months (with possibility of extension).*

For more information on each post and details on how to apply please visit: <https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/collaborative-housing-recruiting-two-new-roles/>