OALC Newsletter

September 2020

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**Training Programme 2020** <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

All our training sessions for the rest of this year and next year will be delivered on line.

**See page 26 for details of new courses for November and December.** There are only 20 places per course so they fill up quickly

**Vacancies**

* Chesterton PC – Clerk
* Wendlebury PC – Clerk/RFO
* Milton u Wychwood PC – Clerk/RFO
* Woodstock TC – Clerk
* Abingdon TC – Properties Officer and Committee Clerk

## latest corona virus advice

**PLEASE read this section and check the latest** [**central government guidance**](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) **as it is constantly evolving**

1. Some parish councils despite advice to the contrary are holding physical meetings

**NALC and SLCC still strongly advise local councils to continue to meet remotely.** As restrictions continue and localized outbreaks arise we can only stress very strongly that holding public meetings is not advisable. Regulations are in place to allow virtual meetings so please use the technology. Please don’t attend meetings whilst driving - [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-54117802](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-54117802%20)

Councils may argue that they are able to put in place social distancing and mitigate all identified risks. I hope that this is the case and the council can show the risk assessment, and the steps taken. Your council meetings are public so you are not able to gauge in advance how many people may turn up. The argument runs that no-one ever turns up normally so it’s not a problem. Unfortunately the response to covid is as divisive as Brexit. There are those who feel the rule of six and other restrictions are draconian and an infringement on personal liberty and those who believe we should unselfishly protect others by protecting ourselves. Whatever your view the parish council is a local authority and should act responsibly within the law.

We have been asked about **hybrid meetings**, for example allowing the council to meet physically but restricting the public to joining virtually or allowing ‘healthy’ councillors to attend but more vulnerable ones to join virtually.

At the moment two groups of experienced and knowledgeable people - Lawyers in Local Government and the Association of Democratic Services Officers have concluded that hybrid meetings are unlawful because they do not meet the exemptions set out in the relevant Regulations - Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392 and The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020.

Further guidance related to COVID-19 can be found on the NALC <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus> and [SLCC websites](https://www.slcc.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/).

1. The Regulations on virtual meetings – [The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (No.392)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents/made) came into force on 4th April 2020. All member councils have received NALC briefing L01-20 explaining what the Regulations mean in practical terms. The Regulations apply to town and parish council meetings until 7th May 2021.
2. **Updated health protection regulations**  
   The [Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2020](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/986/contents/made?mc_cid=058af33dc0&mc_eid=421b189d4f)came in to force on 14 September. They amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020 so that people may not participate in social gatherings, in any place, in groups of more than six, unless they are members of the same household, two linked households or exceptions apply. NALC’s view is that although the Principal Regulations continue to permit local councils to hold meetings (now as an exemption to the six-person gatherings limit) in COVID-19 secure premises, we recommend councils continue to meet remotely.
3. **NHS Test and Trace**

On 18th September new regulations came into force making it a legal requirement for venues to log details of visitors, customers, and staff. Local Council venues and buildings that allow public access or bookings must:

* [Have a system in place to request and record contact details of their customers, visitors and staff](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace)
* Register for an [official NHS QR code](https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster) and display the official NHS QR poster from 24 September 2020.

 The NHS has provided more [information on the QR code and posters](https://faq.covid19.nhs.uk/category/?id=CAT-01027) for organisations, as well as [further information on the NHS COVID-19 app](https://covid19.nhs.uk/index.html).

Collecting contact details and maintaining records for NHS Test and Trace is a legal requirement and failure to comply is punishable by a fine.

1. **Community Halls and sports**

From Thursday 24 September, it will become **a legal requirement** for all community halls (along with a wide variety of other venues) to display the official NHS Test & Trace QR poster.  Venue-specific QR Codes can be generated via the [NHS Website.](https://covid19.nhs.uk/venue-check-in-businesses.html)

On 24th September the government issued updated guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities  The guidance includes revised advice on applying the ‘Rule of Six’, and what types of activity are acceptable in a community/village hall. ACRE issued its sixth update on its advice for Village Halls. The advice and support is available from [Community First Oxfordshire](https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/)

On 30th September the government issued updated [Guidance on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-phased-return-of-outdoor-sport-and-recreation)

The guidance includes revised advice for a number of named sports and activities.  Local support and advice is available from [Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association](http://www.opfa.org.uk/about-us.html)

1. **Elections, referendums and by-elections**

Due to the coronavirus, the Government postponed all elections scheduled to take place on 7 May 2020. The Government has now confirmed that in England no by-elections or Neighbourhood Plan Referendums will take place until 6 May 2021. The Police and Crime Commissioner election, County Council all out elections and postponed district and parish council elections will take place next year.

1. **Parish Meetings** have been allowed since 1st August to meet virtually

[*‘The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Amendment Regulations 2020’*](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/808/contents/made)were laid in Parliament on Thursday 30 July.  They will come into force on **Saturday 1 August** and apply to local authority meetings held before 7 May 2021.

The regulations extend the definition of “local authority” under the Regulations to include Parish Meetings. The regulations remove the existing requirements for such bodies to hold annual meetings and allow meetings to be held remotely, enabling council members, officers and members of the public to access meetings and associated documents remotely.

1. Check your district council website and the County Council’s too https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19
2. **Covid -19 FAQ’s.** Since 22ndSeptember some restrictions have been reapplied. If you are confused about what you can and can’t do, go to this government website – it outlines the businesses/premises which can reopen including play areas, outdoor gyms, community centres, museums. However, they are still expected to follow covid-19 safety measures – **updated 22nd September**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

1. **Reopening your own offices** (if you have one!). Please follow the government guidance on safe working - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres> and **latest advice updated on 29th September on use of council buildings** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings>
2. **Charities,** as many councillors are charity trustees you may find this government advice for the charity sector helpful **-** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector?utm_source=833eb9e6-213d-4b07-a327-d894223d0126&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily>

## OALC - HELPFUL hint – Publication scheme

Does your council have a publication scheme? If not, why not?

The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority (this includes town and parish councils) to have a publication scheme, approved by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), and to publish information covered by the scheme.

The scheme must set out your commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information.

To help you do this the ICO has developed a model publication scheme - <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf>

The information covers –

* **Who we are and what we do**. Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
* **What we spend and how we spend it**. Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.
* **What our priorities are and how we are doing**. Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
* **How we make decisions**. Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.
* **Our policies and procedures.** Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.
* **Lists and registers**. Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.
* **The services we offer.** Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

## Oxfordshire County Council



Please refer to the County Council website for their latest information and their specific Covid-19 webpage <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19>

**Planning ahead – please update your winter resilience plan. If you haven’t got one please start writing!**

Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning team are working in response to Covid but also looking forward towards winter. Normal disruptive events will still occur during Covid for example flooding, snow, gales, power cuts, water supply disruption. Over the last year in Oxfordshire we have dealt with over 10,000 homes with no power during snow for more than two days, 3000 homes with no mains water for three days as well as numerous other incidents. During these events we need to ensure that we can identify those most vulnerable who need support- those over 65, with medical conditions or disabilities and those with children under 5. There is support available for these groups during an incident but we need to know people are there, we need those in these groups to read the leaflet at the link below and ensure that they sign up to the priority service lists for EACH of their utility providers. It doesn’t matter who you pay your bill to or whether you pay the bill you are still eligible. In an emergency these lists are shared with us to provide help.

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/fireandpublicsafety/emergency/Utility_Failure_Complete.pdf>

Everyone can help themselves to be prepared by having a small stock of food, a bottle of water, a wind up torch and a ‘flu friend’ someone who could collect shopping, collect prescriptions and assist in an emergency.

We can supply resilience bags of information to vulnerable groups to distribute, if any groups would like a supply of these please contact [emergencyplanning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:emergencyplanning@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Also template for resilience plans can be found here <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/emergency-planning/community-resilience>

**Volunteer Fix My Street Super Users**

Following on from last month’s OALC update of the Fix My Street Volunteers, the volunteer coordination team have received several additional parish/towns expressing an interest in undertaking the FMS SuperUser role.

We have amended our training process and are now ready to re-start the FMS-SU training program again. We are looking forward to working with you, if you are interested and have not yet contacted us or would like to find out more information, please email us: [volunteercoordinationteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:volunteercoordinationteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Or you can also find more information on this and other Highway Volunteering activities via our Oxfordshire Together document - How-to-Guides.

Visit: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/OxfordshireTogether.pdf>

**Oxfordshire’s local outbreak control plan**

The first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK is now beginning to pass, with the number of new cases declining. As national lockdown is gradually eased, local plans have been put in place by local authorities in partnership with the NHS and Public Health England to reduce the spread of infection and manage local outbreaks. This combined effort aims to avoid a second wave anywhere across England.

Oxfordshire’s local outbreak control plan is designed to help return life to as normal as possible for as many people as possible in a way that is safe, protects our health and care systems, and supports our local economy.

It has been developed by Oxfordshire County Council’s Public Health team, working with colleagues from the city and district councils, Oxfordshire Health, Oxford University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health England and Thames Valley Police.

The link to the plan is here -

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19/controlling-local-coronavirus-outbreaks/local-outbreak-control-plan>

## Devolution – oxfordshire and THE WHITE paper we are still waiting …..

Nothing to report yet. But we hope that if/when the White Paper is published that the principal authorities, at district and county level in Oxfordshire will involve town and parish councils in the discussions.

There has been a deafening silence so far.

# Local News

## Councillor covid grant scheme – SODC and vale

Each South and Vale District Councillor has up to £2,000 to make discretionary grant payments to community groups and other appropriate organisations that are directly responding to the Coronavirus pandemic in their ward. Please contact your district councillor directly or email [grants@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southandvale.gov.uk)

## Cherwell DC Councillor Covid Fund

**Cherwell Councillor Covid-19 Priority Grants** – Each Councillor is allocated £2,000 to award to groups with projects responding to or promoting recovery from the Covid crisis in their communities.  Many parish based groups have already benefited, with 54 grants having been awarded, totaling £40,000. Guidance notes and application form are at <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/Coronavirus-grant>.  Any enquiries should be addressed to [grants@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:grants@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

**Reminder: Business Grant Scheme closed down** - The Government grant scheme designed to help small and medium-sized businesses affected by coronavirus closed on Friday 28 August and this includes the ‘Retail, Hospitality and Leisure’ grant, which many community halls and sports pavilions have benefited from.

## THE FUTURE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: ONPA

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10th 10.30am – 12.30

You are invited to attend this webinar at which the current state and future of Neighbourhood Planning will be discussed:

* What is the Government’s position on neighbourhood planning?
* How will the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan and possible local government reorganisation affect neighbourhood plans (NDPs)?
* What can NDP’s do about climate change issues?
* How will the debate over housing numbers in the County play out?
* What should NDP groups be doing now?

Speakers and panellists include:

* John Howell, MP Government Neighbourhood Planning Champion
* Sue Brownhill, Reader in Planning, Oxford Brookes University
* Jo Robb, South Oxfordshire councillor
* Graeme Markland, Continuity Officer, Thame Neighbourhood Plan
* Emily Hadley, planning policy officer and
* Anne-Marie Simpson, cabinet member for planning, SODC and postgrad student

The seminar is free, but you need to book your place. Please go to Eventbrite at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-future-of-neighbourhood-planning-tickets-119085647377>

The event will include breakout sessions and opportunities to question speakers and members of the panel. Please let ONPA know in advance if you have particular topics or questions that you would like to see covered - email us at [info@onpa.uk](mailto:info@onpa.uk)

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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Like much else in these extraordinary times, our plans for marking this milestone have changed somewhat - join our socially-distanced celebrations instead!  We're delighted to invite you, plus anyone else who is interested, to a short series of ZOOM talks. All talks will begin at 19:00, last an hour and be followed by a Q&A session.  Register your interest now - you will receive a zoom link closer to the event. | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Resiliency, Recovery and Truly Sustainable Communities** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | https://mcusercontent.com/4cb95e97937811075fc75802a/images/ae361233-4f90-4721-b03e-52d83f397432.jpg |  |  | | --- | | [Will Hutton](https://communityfirstoxon.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4cb95e97937811075fc75802a&id=2c814bbfc5&e=9fe4cf202d) **Tuesday 6th October** **Post COVID-19 Britain and Oxfordshire: what are the challenges and opportunities for our communities and the economy?**  Will Hutton is Principal at Hertford College. He is a political economist, co-chair of the Purposeful Company, an Observer columnist, and the author of a number of best-selling books on political economy and business.  He is currently leading on a proposed government-sponsored work programme, a Youth Corps, to enable more opportunity for young job-seekers after the coronavirus crisis. | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | https://mcusercontent.com/4cb95e97937811075fc75802a/images/6fe9e782-581e-4040-9e78-f3953581e092.jpg |  |  | | --- | | [D](https://communityfirstoxon.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4cb95e97937811075fc75802a&id=51300fdada&e=9fe4cf202d)[r Friederike Otto](https://communityfirstoxon.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4cb95e97937811075fc75802a&id=e3d2291a38&e=9fe4cf202d) **Wednesday 7th October   The Climate Emergency: The role of communities in systemic change.** Friederike (Fredi) is the Acting Director of the Environmental Change institute and an Associate Professor in the Global Climate Science Programme where she leads several projects understanding the impacts of man-made climate change on natural and social systems with a particular focus on Africa and India. Fredi is co-investigator on the international project [World Weather Attribution](https://communityfirstoxon.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4cb95e97937811075fc75802a&id=563c6eb51a&e=9fe4cf202d) which aims to provide an assessment of the human-influence on extreme weather in the immediate aftermath of the event occurring. | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | https://mcusercontent.com/4cb95e97937811075fc75802a/images/83d0fae4-4c0c-48a3-bcfc-6accbf614aad.jpg |  |  | | --- | | [Anneliese Dodds](https://communityfirstoxon.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4cb95e97937811075fc75802a&id=2a7e0ac8a3&e=9fe4cf202d) **Thursday 8th October  Making housing work for communities, locally and nationally** Anneliese Dodds is the Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Oxford East and the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer.  While in this role Anneliese developed Labour’s ‘Fair Tax Programme’, the Party’s tax avoidance proposals put forward at the 2019 general election.  Anneliese also represented Oxford from 2014 to 2017 as our MEP. In that role, Anneliese served on the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, focusing especially on clamping down on tax avoidance by big companies. She was also responsible for tightening rules on ﬁnancial services, to help prevent any repeat of the global ﬁnancial crisis. | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Click here to register for all 3 webinars**](https://communityfirstoxon.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4cb95e97937811075fc75802a&id=7476ad51f4&e=9fe4cf202d) | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Community First Oxfordshire, South Stables, Worton Park, Witney Oxon.  OX29 4SU[info@communityfirstoxon.org](mailto:info@communityfirstoxon.org) [www.communityfirstoxon.org](http://www.communityfirstoxon.org) | | | | | |

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**Cotswold’s AONB becomes Cotswolds National Landscape**

As a result of Julian Glover’s Landscapes Review published in 2019, from the second week in September, the Cotswold’s AONB will now be known as the Cotswolds National Landscape.

[The Landscapes Review](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf) proposed that National Parks and AONBs should be brought together, as “one family of national landscapes”; it suggested that the title ‘AONB’ should be replaced – with easier-to-understand ‘National Landscape’. The new logo retains the Cotswold Lion sheep, changes the wording and the colour of it.

More information about the Cotswolds National Landscape here <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/>

# National News

## Flexible use on the High Street: key facts

What are the changes?

Before now, property holders would generally need to seek full planning permission or make use of permitted development rights to change the use of their premises, e.g. from a shop into a restaurant, or a restaurant into an office.

The government is simplifying this so that:

* Buildings can convert between commercial, business and service uses – shops, restaurants, services (like banks), gyms, offices, research facilities – and into a mix of such uses – without needing planning permission
* There will be protections for learning uses, such as schools, libraries, art galleries etc, which will be able to change between these functions without planning permission, but will always need planning permission to convert to another use
* There will be protections for community uses, such as small isolated shops, community halls, outdoor sports areas etc will be able to change between these functions without planning permission, but will always need planning permission to convert to another use
* Existing rights to convert buildings into residential will be unaffected until 31 July 2021. Consideration is being given to a new right to change use from the new Commercial, Business and Service use class to residential.

More information here -<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-and-changes-to-the-use-classes-order/flexible-use-on-the-high-street-key-facts-brief>

## Code of conduct

The consultation on the LGA draft Code of Conduct closed on 17th August although there was some run on after that date.

There were 1,600+ responses, two thirds of which came from town and parish councillors. The LGA is going through the responses and there may be some changes to the draft Code as a consequence. However, for those that were hoping for sanctions they will be disappointed. Sanctions will require primary legislation which is not on the horizon.

We expect the final version to emerge at the end of October – early November.

## Carbon footprint

Despite the corona virus the climate emergency is still on the agenda.

Your council might be interested in a couple of websites that offer carbon footprint calculations. After all if you don’t know what the existing footprint is you don’t have a base line to decrease from. The Centre for Climate Change offers this <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx> and one which has been mentioned by the County Officer of Norfolk -<https://zero.giki.earth/>

## The Affordable Housing Commission’s new report ‘A National Housing Conversion Fund: buying properties to boost affordable housing supply’ was published last week

The [report](https://www.affordablehousingcommission.org/news/2020/9/23/report-a-national-housing-conversion-fund-buying-properties-to-boost-affordable-housing-supply) published on 23rd September calls on the government to prepare a National Housing Conversion Fund for England to help struggling tenants and drive the economic recovery. A ring-fenced fund – to enable social landlords and community-led housing groups to buy up private rented housing as well as homes for sale on stalled sites – could be quickly put in place to mitigate the anticipated slump in the housing market. Such an approach has been used in past recessions, including in the early 1990s through the Conservative government’s Housing Market Package.

Lord Best, chair of the Commission, commented that the fund would bring empty and run-down properties back to life, stimulate activity on stalled sites, and assist landlords exiting the market, while addressing the acute shortage of homes at truly affordable rents.

Rural Coalition urges Government to unlock untapped potential of rural communities and economies and to address long-standing inequalities

## Rural coalition Calls for Government to level-up rural areas to support England’s economic recovery from COVID-19

A coalition of thirteen leading rural organisations is urging the Government to commit to more equitable funding in rural areas to support England’s economic recovery from COVID-19.



The Rural Coalition has published [Rebuilding Rural: Growing Back Better](https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/Rural_Coalition_Rebuilding_Rur.pdf), setting out its priorities for a successful recovery by seizing the potential social and economic opportunities across rural England.

Rural areas are home to 9.3 million people – more than Greater London – but they have long faced the challenges of sparsity, remoteness, poor connectivity and a history of unequal funding and patchy service delivery. Some communities which are heavily dependent on tourism and seasonal work are now at risk of being left further behind.

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed weaknesses in the narrow economic base of some of these areas, but also highlighted the opportunities rural economies can make to the recovery. Now, this potential needs to be unlocked through a programme of investment.

The Rural Coalition is calling for the Government to set out its vision for rural England providing:

• Opportunity for all in rural England – Levelling-up access to good quality jobs, homes, education and health services in rural areas with fair funding for public services

• A more resilient rural economy – More investment in skills, retraining and digital infrastructure, to attract new businesses to the area and increase economic diversity

• A major contribution to becoming net zero – Capitalising on opportunities for green rural growth, whilst helping to deliver the nation’s net zero emissions target

## Power for People

At its last Executive Committee OALC gave its support to the campaign and Bill being promoted by Power for People <https://powerforpeople.org.uk/the-local-electricity-bill/> . The Local Electricity Bill was successfully introduced, unopposed on 10th June in Parliament. Should it now pass into law, it will allow consumers to purchase energy from local groups, and not just nationally licensed utilities. As such, the new ‘Right to Local Supply’ for energy will allow communities to sell locally generated electricity directly to local households and businesses.

**How the Local Electricity Bill Could Benefit Oxfordshire’s Communities. Power for the People writes -**

Power for People is calling for the Local Electricity Bill to be made law. This would give community-scale renewable energy projects a massive boost by empowering community energy companies to sell their energy directly to local residents or businesses.

More community-scale renewable energy projects would mean residents in Oxfordshire could buy electricity from a local energy company – this could be a community owned company or a local co-operative – and the electricity would be generated by local infrastructure, like a hydro-power unit in a local river or solar panels on community facilities like churches, schools and community clubs etc. Local communities would enjoy direct economic benefits and local skilled jobs would be supported too.

Think of all the households and businesses in Oxfordshire who spend money on their electricity bills. Where is that money going? It’s going out of Oxfordshire to national or multinational utility companies, rather than to the local economy. If a Town or Parish council, or other community group, wanted they could set up a co-operative or community company, perhaps in collaboration with other neighbouring Town or Parish Councils, and supply locally generated clean electricity to local residents or businesses.

When the local energy generation units weren’t generating any or enough electricity to match demand, then customers would receive electricity via the national grid, as is done at the moment. Any profits could be used for community projects and new local skilled jobs would be supported.

Local communities benefiting from local energy has happened before – local facilities across the UK such as parks, swimming baths and libraries were built from the revenues of municipal energy companies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It could happen again if the campaign succeeds in seeing the Bill passed into law.

Furthermore, there would be less electricity wastage and lower bills. Localised electricity is more efficient than nationally supplied electricity as less is lost as heat whilst travelling along the wires of the grid. The closer the user is to the point of generation, the less wastage. At the moment, the system is very wasteful because electricity must travel long distances and ultimately it is customers who pay for this. The more community scale distributed renewable generation, the less electricity wasted, ultimately resulting in lower prices.

Power for People is coordinating the national campaign for the Bill and a cross-party group of 210 MPs support it so far. To help, please ask your Council to support the Bill and then let Power for People know this by emailing them on [info@powerforpeople.org.uk](mailto:info@powerforpeople.org.uk) . Also you can sign up as an individual supporter and write to your MP via their website, [www.powerforpeople.org.uk](http://www.powerforpeople.org.uk)

## Extension to permitted development rights came into force on 31st August

Two sets of amendments to the [Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/755/made)  mean that homeowners can extend their homes upwards by two storeys, or by creating new self-contained accommodation in the form of flats above existing residential or commercial premises and unused freestanding buildings (flats and certain commercial buildings) can be demolished and rebuilt for residential purposes. This is through a fast track approval process. The rights are subject to a number of limitations and conditions – they need prior approval from the local planning authority. The explanatory memorandum that goes with the alterations states that the rights “could provide more space for growing families, or to accommodate elderly relatives, without having to move house”.

An explanatory note explains that class ZA allows for the demolition of a single detached building, which existed on 12th March 2020. The building must have been used for offices, research and development or industrial purposes; or was a free standing, purpose-built block of flats. The building can be replaced with an individual block of flats or a single detached house of the same footprint.

In addition, there is a set of amendments to the [Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 to](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/757/contents/made) increase flexibility to change the use of premises such as shops and offices. This is a significant change, it is the first substantial overhaul of the Use Classes Order since it was introduced over 30 years ago and it adopts a different approach to changes of use between commercial, business and service uses. The idea behind it is to support a revival of the high street and allow greater flexibility within town centres without the need for express planning permission. Three new Use Classes have been introduced

1. **Class E** (Commercial, business and service) – including retail, restaurant, office, financial/professional services, indoor sports, medical and nursery uses along with “any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business or service locality”
2. **Class F.1** (Learning and non-residential institutions) – including non-residential educational uses, and use as a museum, art gallery, library, public hall, religious institution or law court; and
3. **Class F.2** (Local community) – including use as a shop of no more than 280 sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop, and use as a community hall, area for outdoor sport, swimming pool or skating rink.

 Changes of use within the new Class E will not constitute development and will apply both to high streets and out of town shopping centres. So, it has the potential to result in the introduction of non-office type activities (including retail) in traditional out of centre business parks, and for example a shop to change to an office in a high street.

These amendments which follow from Boris Johnson’s “Build, build, build” speech in which he saw building as a path to post Covid economic recovery were laid before parliament on the same day as the report the government commissioned which concluded that permitted development rights conversions create “worse-quality” homes than those created through the full planning process (reported on page 19, July Update).

## NALC website accessibility publication – deadline was 23rd september

NALC has issued a publication to assist your council to be compliant with the Website Accessibility Regulations <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/952/made> we have put it into the Members Area of our website.

## Furlough fraud

 There have been recent headlines about a crackdown on ‘furlough fraud’. This tends to focus on employers who have provided inaccurate or false information, or who have then broken furlough rules – in the main by having furloughed staff continue to work.

 HMRC does allow organisations to ‘correct’ any over or underpayment. The period of time in which employers can correct any errors and amend claims under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme without incurring penalties has been extended to:

         90 days after the day on which the Finance Act 2020 was passed (22 July 2020); or

         90 days after the day on which the income tax on the payment made becomes chargeable,

 whichever is the later. The previous period was 30 days.

 Councils should be advised to only provide accurate and true information when applying for furlough and to stick within the stated rules of the scheme. If they realise they have made any errors in their claims they should correct this as quickly as possible.

**For councils that have successfully claimed under the furlough scheme:**

 HMRC also provide [information on what you must do following a successful claim](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#after-youve-claimed) which includes the following information:

 Once you’ve claimed, you’ll get a claim reference number. HMRC will then check that your claim is correct and pay the claim amount by BACs into your bank account within 6 working days.

 You must: keep a copy of all records for 6 years, including:

* the amount claimed and claim period for each employee
* the claim reference number for your records
* your calculations in case HMRC need more information about your claim
* for employees you flexibly furloughed, usual hours worked including any calculations that were required
* for employees you flexibly furloughed, actual hours worked
* tell your employees that you have made a claim and that they do not need to take any more action
* pay your employee their wages, if you have not already
* You must pay the full amount you are claiming for your employee’s wages to your employee.

You must also pay the associated employee tax and National Insurance contributions to HMRC, even if your company is in administration. If you’re not able to do that, you’ll need to repay the money back to HMRC.

 You must also pay to HMRC the employer National Insurance contributions on the full amount that you pay the employee. If you have submitted a claim for the employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions, then the full amount you claim in respect of these must be paid or you will need to repay the money back to HMRC.

 Employers cannot enter into any transaction with the worker which reduces the wages below the amount claimed. This includes any administration charge, fees or other costs in connection with the employment. Where an employee had authorised their employer to make deductions from their salary, these deductions can continue while the employee is furloughed provided that these deductions are not administration charges, fees or other costs in connection with the employment.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE, WHITE PAPER - CONSULTATION

There is one planning consultation and a call for evidence open at the moment, in chronological order of their closing dates:

**1. *Planning for the future*, White Paper**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

Consultation closes 29th October. Email responses via [planningforthefuture@communities.gov.uk](mailto:planningforthefuture@communities.gov.uk) or via the website <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

This White Paper is potentially the biggest change in the planning system since Town and Country Planning Act, 1947

Central government perceive the current planning system to be:

* + Too complex
  + Discretionary, not rules based
  + Taking too long to adopt a Local Plan
  + Housing needs assessments, viability and environmental impact statements are too opaque
  + To have lost public confidence
  + Based on old tech
  + Developer contribution negotiations are complex, slow and unclear
  + Not have enough focus on design; and
  + Not enough homes being built

There are 24 proposals in the White Paper, split under three Pillars or headings – Planning for Development; Planning for beautiful sustainable places and Planning for infrastructure & connected places. The numbers in brackets below are the proposals.

**Pillar one - Planning for Development**

The idea is that Local Plans should be simplified, digitized, standardized, slimmed down and their production speeded up and to have a 10 not 15 year life span. All areas to have Local Plans by 2023. They should identify three zones – Growth, Renewal and Protect. (1)

**Growth Areas** – suitable for substantial development such as new settlements, urban extensions and areas for redevelopment such as ex-industrial land suitable for urban regeneration. Automatic outline approval – Permission in Principle would be conferred by adoption of the Local Plan. (5) Detailed permission secured in one of three ways – reformed reserved matters; Local Development Order prepared by LPA in parallel with the Local Plan, linked to Master Plan and design codes or for exceptionally large sites a Development Consent Order under Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

**Renewal Areas** – suitable for smaller scale development, infill, densification and rural areas. General presumption in favour of development established in legislation (plan led system). Consent given for pre-specified forms of development. A new route to automatic planning permission if it meets certain design and other criteria.

**Protected Areas** – Green Belt, SSSI’s, AONB’s, flood risk areas, wildlife sites etc. More stringent control to ensure sustainability but planning application to the LPA.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will be the primary source of policies (2), set nationally along with development control policies, not repeated in the Local Plan which just has the site or area specific policies. Local Planning Authorities to produce local design codes in parallel with the Local Plan.

The Local Plan to be subject to a single sustainability test - “*Will the Local Plan contribute to achieving sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF*”. Abolishing the duty to co-operate between LPA’s, slimmed down deliverability text and remove existing test of soundness. (3)

There will be a standard national method for establishing housing requirements and for distributing the 300,000 new annual homes requirement. The 5 year land supply requirement will go (4)

Faster decision making with firm deadlines; shorter more standardized applications, national digital templates and supporting technical information; standard national conditions and LPA’s to return fees if appeals are successful. (6)

Local Plans to be visual, map based with standardized data sets to a new national template (7)

30 month Local Plan production timetable to be adhered to, 5 stage method. Review every 5 years. Risk government intervention if non-compliance. (8)

Neighbourhood Plans to be retained and supported, more use of digital tools (pilots) (9)

Masterplans should seek to include a variety of development types by different builders to encourage faster build out. Few details (10)

**Pillar Two Building Beautiful, sustainable places**

The White Paper suggests that a slimmed down faster planning system is just the start of high quality development and better place making. It refers to the work of the [Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission) It expects design codes and guidance to be prepared locally and to be binding on decisions. (11). MHCLG will set up a body to support delivery of local design codes and each LPA is to have a Chief Officer for design and place making. (12)

[Homes England](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homes-england) to provide leadership in giving emphasis to delivering beautiful places (13). There will be a ‘fast track’ for beauty for applications which comply with established good design principles, incentivizing attractive and popular development which reflects local character (14)

Amend the NPPF to strengthen but simplify the way the planning system considers environmental issues (15 &16)

Review and update the planning framework for listed buildings, allowing sympathetic changes to support continued use of buildings. Perhaps allowing experienced architectural specialists autonomy from listed building consent. (17)

Introduce ambitious improvements in energy efficiency standards to net-zero by 2050 (18)

**Pillar Three Planning for Infrastructure and connected places**

Consolidated Infrastructure Levy (IL) replaces L both Sec 106 agreements and CIL. A mandatory nationally set rate/s. Abolish planning obligations. (19)

IL to be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development which don’t necessarily create additional floor space. (20) IL to deliver affordable housing on site which CIL currently doesn’t. (21)

More freedom for LA’s on what they spend IL on, 25% for parish councils to be kept. MHCLG is interested in ways to enhance community engagement about how funds should be spent (22)

Proposals 23 & 24 are about providing resources & skills for the planning sector and strengthening enforcement powers and sanctions.

**Observations – Pro’s:**

* Recognition of the need for proper resourcing of the planning system
* Great to have encouragement of Building for Beauty, this has been much neglected by volume housebuilders
* Maintains the foundation of a plan led system
* Continued support for Neighbourhood Plans and parish councils getting 25% of IL
* Good to encourage better use of digitization
* Suggests the reforms will “radically and profoundly re-invent engagement with local communities” which is a pro but can’t see how this will happen in reality (con)

**Cons:**

* Thin on detail
* Narrow emphasis on build to buy ([First Homes](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/first-homes) - 25% of affordable homes, only 5% other tenancies), little about other tenancies and Community Land Trusts. Will affect rural affordable housing (CPRE very critical <https://www.cpre.org.uk/news/major-planning-reforms-criticism/>)
* Massive centralization with government templates for Local Plans, binding housing numbers set nationally, Development Management policies, national body for design codes
* Where is the duty to co-operate, or joined up strategic planning across an area?
* General presumption in favour of development. Development, simplicity or speed of delivery aren’t the answer to everything and probably mean less rigorous and less effective local scrutiny, less democratic engagement
* Only three categories of zoning. Towns and countryside are far more nuanced, three zones is too blunt an instrument. Sub-zones for self-build will be introduced.
* Climate change has slipped down the agenda and environmental assessments appear to be marginalized
* Streamlining or speeding up of the planning permission system is likely to mean less opportunity/time for parish councils to comment.
* Ironic emphasis on ‘beauty’ (subjective?) and place making when current system allows office to rabbit hutch conversions with no windows! Volume house builders have never been known for beauty.

3. A call for evidence to seek **views on proposals to help councils and local communities better understand who controls land in their area** and to assist SME and new entrants to the housing market identity land suitable for development. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907213/Call_for_evidence_on_Contractual_Controls.pdf>

**The call for evidence closes on 30th October,** details of how to respond via the link above.

HM Land Registry (HMLR) is committed to registering all publicly owned land by 2025 and aims to achieve comprehensive registration by 2030. But the information it holds is primarily associated with conveyancing and does not cover all interests in the land such as contractual arrangements—rights of pre-emption, options and conditional contracts.

## Consultation on England’s Economic Heartland’s draft Transport Strategy

The Heartland region is a net contributor to the Treasury and a vital economic asset for the UK, both during its recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and in the decades that follow.

As the region’s Sub-national Transport Body, we are delighted to publish our draft Transport Strategy for consultation. The strategy’s overarching aim is to support sustainable economic growth while achieving a net zero carbon transport system no later than 2050.

The strategy seeks to harness the Heartland’s strengths and sets out how the region will:

* Use the need to decarbonise our transport system as the opportunity to harness innovation and deliver solutions that in themselves generate economic growth
* Champion investment in digital infrastructure as a means of improving connectivity, particularly within our rural communities, in order to reduce the need to travel
* Use delivery of East West Rail as the catalyst for the transformation of our strategic public transport networks, investing in those networks to connect our economic assets and communities in a shared endeavour that unlocks added value
* Champion increased investment in active travel and shared transport solutions to improve local connectivity and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential
* Ensure that our freight and logistic needs continue to be met whilst lowering the environmental impact of their delivery.

As our experience during the pandemic has shown, there is considerable scope to increase our use of flexible and remote working; to challenge received wisdom when it comes to the future for our transport system; to do things differently.

**A formal consultation on the Transport Strategy will run until midnight on October 6** and the survey is on the website, <http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/transport-strategyconsult.aspx>

## West Oxfordshire Planning Policy Consultation - salt cross (Eynsham garden village)

**Salt Cross Garden Village Draft Area Action Plan (AAP)**

You may be aware that land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham has been allocated for development in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan in the form of a new garden village. Known as ‘Salt Cross,’ the garden village will be led by a new Area Action Plan (AAP).

The District Council has prepared a final draft version of the AAP which it will submit to the Secretary of State for examination. The AAP establishes a vision for Salt Cross, supported by a series of core objectives and policies which will guide future development proposals.

Before the AAP can be submitted, it must be published for a statutory 8 week consultation period - **Friday 28th August 2020 until Friday 23rd October 2020.**

The draft AAP and supporting documents are on the Council’s website at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage)

Paper copies will be available in local libraries. WODC would welcome your comments on the draft AAP -

* Online by registering at <http://planningconsultation.westoxon.gov.uk>
* By completing and returning the AAP standard response form which can be downloaded at [westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage)
* By sending an email to [policy@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk)
* By writing to Planning Policy Team, West Oxfordshire District Council, Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB

As the consultation relates to the submission draft AAP, comments should be focused on three main issues; whether the AAP is ‘legally compliant’; whether it is ‘sound’ and whether the Council has complied with its statutory duty to co-operate.

Further information is set out in a guidance note which is available to download at [**www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage**](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage)

All representations received will be made available to the Planning Inspectorate and to the person appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination.

# Financial Briefing

**OALC 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 -

**Decisions by the full council**

Whilst councils have the power (Section 101, Local Government Act 1972) to delegate decisions to committees or officers, a number of key financial functions cannot be delegated to anyone and can only be fulfilled at a full council meeting.

In each case, it is not just important that the decision is made by the council, the minutes of the meeting must also clearly state the decision made. These provide evidence that the council has acted in accordance with the law, if it is challenged at some point in the future.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Decision** | **Legislation** |
| Setting a precept | Section 67, Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Section 101(6), Local Government Act 1972 |
| Determining the council’s  budget/council tax requirement | Section 67, Local Government Finance Act 1992 |
| Borrowing money | Paragraph 2(4) of Schedule 1,  Local Government Act 2003 |
| Considering a Public Interest Report issued by the external auditor | Paragraph 7, Schedule 7,  Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 |
| Considering the findings of the annual review of the council’s internal controls | Regulation 6(3)(a)  Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 |
| Approving the Annual Governance Statement | Regulations 6(3)(b),  Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 |
| Approving the Statement of Accounts | Regulation 12(2),  Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 |
| Approving an investment strategy | Statutory Guidance, issued under  Section 15(1)(a), Local Government Act 2003 |

An investment strategy is required where a council has more than £100,000 to invest at any point in the year and is recommended where councils have more than £10,000 to invest.

**Disclaimer**This guidance is issued to assist in finding and understanding the relevant legislation and guidance. It is not a statement of law, nor does it account for individual circumstances. The Parkinson Partnership LLP accepts no liability for any loss arising from situations where users of this guidance note have not followed the law and HMRC guidance.

# Employment Briefing

Employment law is complex and specialized. OALC can assist with general employment queries but we retain the services of Chris Moses, Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd. to provide expert advice to our member councils. 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 members.

**October 2020**

1. **Does Home Working Work?**

The current pandemic isn’t going to disappear for some time, and it appears we may be heading for further lockdown restrictions.

Home working has been widely used by many town and parish councils during 2020 to accommodate safe working arrangements, and looks likely to continue to be used. Recent research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development indicates that [more than half of workers are reluctant to return to the office](https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/half-of-employees-reluctant-to-return-to-work-despite-firms-spending-millions-on-preparation), however many councils have expressed a wish for their workforce to get back to normal, and resume office working.

To help Councils operate more smoothly under current restrictions, they may wish to consider the following:

* **Listen to your people**

Does the council communicate with its workforce on a regular basis? Having regular staff meetings, either in person or via Zoom / Teams, to ask staff about their physical and psychological wellbeing can help address worries about coming into the office, being in contact with the public, carrying out activities in public areas.

All councils should have produced Corvid 19 specific risk assessments of their workforce’s activities, however these need to be reviewed and kept up to date. Using regular staff meetings to do this can help staff keep abreast of what safety measures are in place, as well as comment on how effective they are and what changes are needed. This can help employees feel that they have a role to play, that their opinions matter, and that the council is taking their concerns seriously.

* **Is home working for everyone?**

Home working can be effective, especially when coupled with performance management, but contact between employees and their management needs to be frequent, structured and focused on objective outcomes.

It has not been uncommon to find that staff who are working from home have had little contact with their employer other than via email. As a consequence some have felt undervalued, isolated, and no longer a part of the council. C19 appears to be a problem that will be with us for several months, and now may be a good time for councils to reflect on how their home working arrangements have performed, and how they can be improved.

* Daily / weekly conference meetings can be a great way to ensure work is allocated, problems are addressed, and people continue to feel connected to the council.
* Reporting into line managers at the start and end of the day helps to ensure that the working day remains structured.
* Providing the employee with a work specific means of communicating, and not relying on their home phone or computer to speak to managers, can ensure that the council has reliable and uninterrupted communication. Providing such means of communication can avoid problems such as ‘the kids were on the phone or using the computer to watch Netflix’, and ensure that staff are available throughout the working day. It doesn’t have to be expensive, a cheap pay as you go mobile phone could do the job.
* **Think outside the box**

Some councils have moved towards a ‘hub and spoke’ model, where offices act as centralised hubs for collaboration, meetings and events, and employees work the remainder of their time from home. This can help provide regular contact between staff and their line managers and colleagues, while at the same time limiting contact and the risk of infection.

**2. 2020/21 NJC Pay Scales**

The new NJC pay rates have finally been published and have resulted in a 2.75% pay increase for those council employees whose terms and conditions are linked to the ‘Green Book’.

Although they were published on the 24th August, they apply to all pay from the 1st April 2020. This means that staff are entitled to a back payment for the 2.75% increase for all pay earned since the start of April.

If employees were on Furlough Leave during this period, and the council was paying their wages through the Job Retention Grant, payments were based on an employee’s average earnings in the 12 months leading up to the 31 March, or the Employees pay for the same month in 2019, whichever was the higher figure. Therefore there is no entitlement to a back payment to cover the period on Furlough Leave, as the 2.75% pay increase for 20/21 doesn’t apply to the figures that were used to calculate Furlough Pay.

The new NJC award has also provided one extra day of annual leave for staff who have less than five years continuous employment, if they are full time. The holiday entitlement for full time staff has increased from 21 days to 22. Part time staff are entitled to a pro-rata increase.

1. **NEW JOB SUPPORT SCHEME from 1st November 2020**

From 1 July, employers could bring furloughed employees back to work for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim CJRS grant for the hours not worked.

From 1 August 2020, the level of grant has been reduced each month. To be eligible for the grant employers must pay furloughed employees 80% of their wages, up to a cap of £2,500 per month for the time they are being furloughed.

More information on the government website here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme/changes-to-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will change f**rom 1st November**

* Implementation period: 1/11/20 to 1/5/21. The current Job Retention Grant will end on the 31/10/20.
* The scheme applies to all workers including employees and agency workers.
* People on the scheme will have to sign an agreement.  This needs to be retained by the Employer as it will be needed in the event of an HMRC inspection to check on applications for the Grant.
* Employee **must work at least 33% of their full / usual time hours of work**.
* The employer pays 100% of the normal rate of pay for the hours worked.
* The employer also has to pay ⅓ of the difference between the employee’s normal working hours and the reduced hours.
* The Governments Job Support Scheme will also pay ⅓ of the unworked hours.

**Example**

* Employee’s normal hours 40 per week and earns £400 at £10 per hour.
* They can now work as little as 13 hrs 12 mins per week (1/3).
* They would get paid £131.20 for those hours worked.
* Of the unworked 26.8 hours, the Employer has to pay 1/3; 8 hours and 50 mins = £88.44.
* The Government’s Job Support Scheme will also pay 1/3; £88.44
* Employee’s total earnings £308.08
* The Job Support Scheme is available to all workers who pay PAYE regardless of whether they have previously been on Furlough Leave.
* *The employee must not be on a redundancy notice.* THE government will not contribute anything under the Job Support Scheme if an employee is working under notice of redundancy.
* Previous advice from HMRC that they don’t expect to receive applications for the Job Retention Grant from publicly funded organisations is expected to apply to the Job Support Scheme.
* To be eligible, employees must have been on the employer's Real Time Information submission on or before 23 September 2020
* The minimum 33% threshold hours for which an employee must work may be increased in months 4-6 of the scheme
* Working patterns can vary, but each short-time working arrangement must cover a minimum period of seven days

The government's grant will not cover Class 1 employer NIC or pension contributions, although they remain payable by the employer

**PROFILE**

Chris Moses LLM Chartered FCIPD is Managing Director of Personnel Advice & Solutions Ltd. He is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and has a Master’s Degree in Employment Law. If you have any questions regarding these issues please feel free to contact him on (01529) 305056 or email [p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk](mailto:p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk)

www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk

## Training and development



1. **NEW OALC CILCA ONLINE MENTORING SESSIONS** starts on 7th October; 3hr Zoom sessions (October, November, January 2021 and March) Cost £275 per person in total for all four sessions.

Please note that the cost for registering with SLCC for the Certificate will go up on 1st October 2020 from £350 to £410. For more information on CiLCA go the SLCC website here - <https://www.slcc.co.uk/qualification/cilca/>

1. NALC’s Rebuilding Communities series of online events are taking place over the next 18 months. The series will bring together national influencers, policymakers and decision-makers, along with people from across the sector to share ideas and good practice on how to build back stronger and more resilient communities. To find out more about the series and the events visit [**www.nalc.gov.uk/rebuildingcommunities**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=1fcc51ae8d&e=2593660dc7).  
     
   [](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=1f4eda41c2&e=2593660dc7)The next one is -

**Health and Wellbeing Week** 26 - 30 October 2020  
Many parish and town councils across England have stepped up to support health and wellbeing in their communities, and now COVID-19 has permanently embedded that role. Health and Wellbeing Week will showcase their importance to community health. The week will feature seven online events. The event themes will cover:

* Local councils and the COVID-19 health agenda
* The future of health challenges post COVID-19
* Community revival through COVID-19
* Collaboration through health and wellbeing
* Local councils and hidden disabilities
* Supporting mental health in your community

Join NALC’s Leaders talk: Collaboration for health and wellbeing online event on 29 October 2020 to find out about how the different tiers of local government are working together to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities. The expert panel features:

* **Danielle Frost**, health and wellbeing officer at the Essex Association of Local Councils,.
* **Dr Mike Gogarty**, director of wellbeing, public health and communities at Essex County Council
* **Justin Newman**, director of strategy and partnerships at Ageing Better

Ticket prices start from £30 for single events and £210 for the full week. Health and Wellbeing Week is sponsored by BHIB Councils Insurance, Blachere Illumination and CCLA.

**In conversation: Frome virtual study tour** 17 November 2020 — 12.00 - 13.15  
NALC member: £30 — Non-member: £40  
[**Register your place**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=e2258cb604&e=2593660dc7)  
  
**In conversation: Biggleswade virtual study tour** 26 January 2021 — 12.00 - 13:15  
NALC member: £30 — Non-member: £40  
[**Register your place**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=b83ed710ca&e=2593660dc7)

## OALC Training programme please read this and take note

OALC has moved all its training online via Zoom

OUR TRAINING COURSES ARE NOW LIMITED TO 20 SO THEY FILL UP QUICKLY AND WE ALMOST ALWAYS HAVE WAITING LISTS.

We are finding that a few councils book places then DON’T PAY AND DON’T TURN UP DESPITE SEVERAL REMINDERS.

This is inconsiderate and unsustainable for OALC. Our training income has halved since the lockdown, we have made refunds of £2000+. We have replaced face to face training with online but we cannot accommodate as many people online. If our training income goes down our subscription for membership has to go up. No shows and no payment only compound our problem.

We have been reasonably relaxed and accommodating of parish councils in the past knowing that you only meet once per month but we have outstanding invoices from training that took place in June! This is not good enough or fair on OALC.

THE RULES

* If you book a place, please put the (council) email address of the participant in the booking form NOT THE CLERKS EMAIL ADDRESS. We need to be in contact with the participant, sometimes at the last minute
* If you book a place, pay the invoice promptly, within 28 days. **No excuses.**
* Please pay by BACS, lockdown has proved that online banking is simpler, easier and so much better for everyone
* We send the presentation and joining instructions to attendees one week before the event**.**

**If the invoice hasn’t been paid one week before the event we reserve the right to cancel the place and give it to someone on the waiting list**

* If you pay and don’t show up that is your problem (except it is a waste of public money), if you book a place and don’t pay that is our problem.

All courses can be booked online here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **subject** | **timing** | **trainer** |
| Wednesday 21st October | Financial management for councillors  1 place left  Budgeting & financial control not Procurement as previously advertised  3 places left | 10.30-12.30am  2-4pm | Steve Parkinson |
| Sat 7th November | Roles and Responsibilities for new councillors and clerks  FULL | 10.30-12.30am with a gap resume at 2-3.30pm | Elizabeth Howlett, Solicitor |
| NEW  Tuesday 17th November | Planning - How Local Councils Fit into the Planning System, Effective responses to planning applications | 10.00 -12 | Phil Shaw, WODC |
| NEW  Wednesday 2nd December | Refresher – Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations. And dealing with vexatious requests | 10.30-12.30 | Elizabeth Howlett, Solicitor |
| We will be posting next year’s training programme next month – watch this space! | | | |

# vacancies

**Chesterton Parish Council require a Clerk**

The job is based at the Parish Office but with some home working. 12 hours per week initially.

Salary based on NJC scale based on skills, experience and qualifications.

The Council is looking for someone who is competent in computer literacy and website maintenance, applicants must have excellent communication and good presentation skills. Experience of local government or parish council work will be an advantage (but not essential). A parish council laptop, printer and mobile phone are provided, with any necessary training available. The well-equipped Parish office is within Chesterton Community Centre.

The role of Clerk to the Parish Council is a rewarding job with our local community and as a parish council we aim for consensus on decision making and this we have achieved over a period of time whilst respecting the individual contributions of councillors to the overall general well-being.  The Parish Clerk is a valued member of our team and will re4ceive the level of support that the post deserves and merits.

For a full job description and other information please contact Philip Clarke at [chair@chestertonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:chair@chestertonparishcouncil.org.uk)

**Please apply by Saturday 24th October**

Interview date to be arranged.

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**Wendlebury Parish Council, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

Applications are invited for the part-time position of Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Wendlebury Parish Council. The parish is a small, but friendly, community on the outskirts of Bicester with an electorate of just under 400 and seven Councillors.

The job description and person specification are available on the Parish Council website at [www.wendleburypc.org.uk/the-council/parish-clerk-vacancy/](http://www.wendleburypc.org.uk/the-council/parish-clerk-vacancy/) together with more information about the Parish Council.

The new Clerk will be required to work from home and must be self-motivated with excellent administration, IT and communication skills. Previous experience is desirable but not essential as training and support will be provided by the outgoing Clerk.

The position is for 15 / 20 hours a month and includes attendance at the bi-monthly evening Parish Council meetings, usually the 4th Thursday of alternate months at the Village Hall, but the hours are otherwise flexible and include the normal personal and statutory annual leave provision.

The salary for the year would be commensurate with experience but on the NALC Scale Range between 7 and 10 (£10.44 per hour to £11.08 per hour) with a review after a successful probation.

To apply please send your CV with a covering letter to the Clerk at:

[clerk@wendleburypc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@wendleburypc.org.uk) or for further information or an informal chat please call the Clerk, Jane Olds on 01869 247171

**Closing Date: 25 October**

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**Milton under Wychwood Parish Council**

Milton under Wychwood Parish Council is looking for a dedicated individual with an interest in the local community to appoint to the role of **Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).**

This is a part-time, home working, flexible role serving behind the scenes in the village.

**Hours**: Part-time 32 hours per month which must include the monthly Parish Council evening meeting every third Wednesday (with the exception of August and December when the Council is in recess). May also include extraordinary meetings from time to time.

**Location**: Work from home as well as monthly meetings in Milton under Wychwood Village Hall. A laptop and printer will be provided.

**Salary**: NJC Clerk salary scale range 13-18 (starting on £11.76 per hour) depending on experience and subject to annual review. In addition you will receive a home working allowance of £26 per month and an optional workplace pension scheme.

**Detail**: The Parish Clerk role involves administration, dealing with queries from members of the public, advising the Parish Councillors on procedural and legal matters, Agenda preparation, Minute taking at meetings, placing orders, writing risk assessments, paying invoices, record-keeping, updating the Parish Council website and supervision of the Lengthperson.

In addition, as the RFO, in collaboration with the Finance sub-committee, you will administer the Council’s financial affairs. This will include managing the Parish Council accounting practices, annual precept application, the annual budget, quarterly financial reports, preparing for the Annual Internal and External Audit, making VAT refund applications.

 The successful candidate will demonstrate attention to detail, initiative, will have good organisational and time-management and possess friendly and professional communication skills. You will have a basic understanding of Receipt/Payment accounts, and good computer skills are essential as is proficiency with Excel spreadsheets and Word. Some experience of cloud storage and document sharing will be useful. Experience of local government or Parish Council work will be an advantage but not essential as training will be provided.

Milton under Wychwood Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

 More details on how to apply and a full job description is available on the Parish Council website: <https://miltonunderwychwood-pc.gov.uk/> or please contact the Parish Clerk on [miltonparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:miltonparishclerk@gmail.com) for further information.

**The closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 9th October 2020** and interviews will be held in week beginning 12th October 2020. The start date for the position will be Monday 2nd November 2020.

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**Woodstock Town Council**

**Town Clerk**

Woodstock is an ancient market town eight miles north west of the city of Oxford with an active business community and tourism to the nearby Blenheim Palace. Woodstock Town Council is looking for a highly motivated individual with an interest in the local community to become its next Town Clerk.

The Town Council manages venues, cemeteries, play areas, allotments, water meadows, nature reserves and property and is a consultee on local planning decisions.

This role includes administration, agenda preparation and minute-taking at meetings, advising Town Councillors on procedural and legal matters, and supervision of the Council’s four part-time workers.

Experience of local government or parish council work is an advantage (but not essential), as is experience of dealing with the public, working as a team and managing efficient administrative practices. Good computer skills are essential.

The job will be based at the Town Hall, Market Place, Woodstock, and requires some evening working (average two meetings a month).

Pay starts at £19,373 pa depending on qualifications and experience for 25 hours per week. This involves five mornings a week and attendance at evening meetings... A workplace pension is provided.

Candidates will be expected to hold CILCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) or be prepared to study for the qualification and obtain it within two years. Training will be provided.

An application pack and supporting information can be obtained from the Town Hall tel. 01993 811216, or by emailing [info@woodstock-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@woodstock-tc.gov.uk) Please use the word ‘Vacancy’ in the email subject header.

The **closing date for applications is 23rd October 2020**. Interviews are expected to be held week commencing 26th October 2020 to be held by Zoom.

Woodstock Town Council is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community

Please advise if you need any reasonable adjustments for any part of the recruitment process



ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

The Council is seeking to recruit two enthusiastic and committed individuals to join the small team at its Roysse Court Offices.

PROPERTIES OFFICER- 25 HOURS PER WEEK

(SCP 24 – 28, £28,672 - £32,234 pro-rata)

The postholder will be a property management professional with responsibility for undertaking the management of all Council owned properties including management of the fabric of buildings, ensuring that all maintenance and improvement actions are properly undertaken and managing relationships with tenants.

COMMITTEE CLERK AND ADMINISTRATION SUPERVISOR FULL-TIME

36 ½ HOURS PER WEEK

(SCP 18 – 23, £24,982 - £27,741)

The postholder will supervise a team of three people and be responsible forensuring comprehensive management of all Town Council and Committee meetings (including publishing agendas and drafting minutes) with responsibilityfor all administrative requirements of the council other than that undertaken by the Town Clerk’s PA and Mayor’s Secretary. The postholder will be a specialist in governance and meetings and be responsible for ensuring that council decisions are managed into the management system.

Further details and application forms are available to download on the Council’s website from Thursday 1st October (<https://www.abingdon.gov.uk/town-council/job-opportunities-town-council>) or e-mail [enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk) for paper copies.

**Closing date: Thursday 22nd October (5pm).** Details of interview dates are on the website and it is anticipated that the appointees will take up the posts as soon as possible.