OALC Newsletter

December 2020



# The headlines

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**Financial briefing –** council tax base

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**Training Programme 2021**

<https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

All our training sessions will be delivered on line.

**See page 28 onwards for details of next year’s courses**

**VACANCIES**

* + **Appleford PC – Clerk/RFO**
	+ **Salford PC – Clerk/RFO**
	+ **Chipping Norton TC - Clerk/RFO**

## latest corona virus advice - all the updated advice is below

PLEASE read this section and check the latest [central government guidance](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) as it is constantly evolving. **The headings may look familiar but there are links to all the latest updates.**

1. **Oxfordshire remains in Tier 2**, High Alert after the review of 17th December

This link (below) sets out what your council and community needs to know about what is or isn’t allowable under Tier 2, High Alert restrictions -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

Tier 2: High alert means -

* you must not socialise with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place
* you must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden or a public space – this is called the ‘rule of 6’
* businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs
* pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
* hospitality businesses selling food or drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
* provide table service only, in premises which sell alcohol
* close between 11pm and 5am (hospitality venues in airports, ports, transport services and motorway service areas are exempt)
* stop taking orders after 10pm
* hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
* early closure (11pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres and concert halls can stay open beyond 11pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
* public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
* public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, subject to social contact rules and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
* places of worship remain open but you must not socialise with people from outside of your household or support bubble while you are indoors there, unless a legal exemption applies
* weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and receptions, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events such as wakes or stonesettings.
* organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue
* organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
* you can continue to travel to venues or amenities which are open, but should aim to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible
* if you live in a tier 2 area, you must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through a tier 3 area as a part of a longer journey
1. **Meetings**.

Any lingering hope that you may be able to have physical meetings in the near future should be extinguished. It is virtual meetings for the foreseeable future.

Further guidance related to COVID-19 can be found on the NALC website -<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus> and SLCC website.

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 and were updated in August to cover Parish Meetings. 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.

**If your council has fears of uninvited people gatecrashing your meeting and your council is using Zoom take a look at this guidance to help you manage with the assistance of the Waiting Room.** [**https://blog.zoom.us/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/**](https://blog.zoom.us/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/)

1. **NHS Test and Trace.** On 18th September 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**

ACRE has produced a [very helpful visual guide](https://acre.org.uk/cms/resources/covid-19-safer-community-centres-aug-20.pdf) about adapting existing Village Halls and Community Centres to being more covid friendly. It covers:

* Arrival
* Safe distancing
* Entry and exit
* Entrances
* Circulation
* Toilets
* Office
* Staff amenity
* Kitchen, café, bar
* Groups + Hiring
* Seating
* Indoor activities
* Outdoors
* Case studies

From Thursday 24 September, it is **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 **14th December** 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)

On **30th November** the government issued updated guidance on the use of community facilities <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

Advice and support is available from [Community First Oxfordshire](https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/)

1. **Elections, referendums, by-elections and Casual Vacancies read the elections article on page 21**

Due to the coronavirus, the Government postponed all elections scheduled to take place on 7 May 2020. The Government 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.

If your council has a Casual Vacancy the process for filling it remains exactly the same **EXCEPT** if an election is called for by 10 electors, if that happens then the election will not be held until May 2021.

1. Check your district council website and the County Council’s too <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19>
2. **Reopening your own offices** (if you have one!). Please follow the government guidance on safe working updated **14th December**  - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres> and **latest advice updated on 30th November 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>
3. **Charities,** as many councillors are charity trustees you may find this government advice for the charity sector helpful **updated 14th December -** <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>
4. Government advice on **accessing open spaces** **updated 2nd December** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-on-accessing-green-spaces-safely?utm_source=7e48c2c5-d07b-4c05-944d-f042d073c1da&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily>

## OALC Office Christmas closure



We will be closing the OALC office at lunchtime on Friday 18th December 2020 and will reopen on Monday 4th January 2021.

We hope that you all have a calm and peaceful Christmas, respecting all the social distancing, bubble and other restrictions currently in place, and that 2021 will be a much, much better year.

## OALC - HELPFUL hint – email address for the clerk and councillors

This is a familiar subject which we return to time and time again. We will continue to do so until all Clerks in Oxfordshire have a generic email address for them and their council…which looks something like this:

 clerk@XXXXXparishcoucnil.gov.uk Parish councils can apply for a .gov.uk email address more information [here](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-and-manage-a-gov-uk-domain-name) or like this - clerkXXXXXpc@gmail.com

**BUT NOT LIKE THIS -**  joebloggs@hotmail.com this does not indicate you are the Clerk; this does not indicate you are the Proper Officer of a local authority; this means your private personal emails will get mixed up with parish council correspondence and if you have a Freedom of Information request you will have trouble complying; it does not look professional; if you as Clerk go under a bus how will the council get hold of all its correspondence?

And councillors should also have and **use** generic parish council addresses too – for example cllrjbloggs@XXXparishcouncil.org.uk for all the same reasons that the clerk should have one.

## OALC Executive Committee Vacancies

OALC has a number of vacancies on its Executive Committee and would like to hear from anyone interested in joining it. The term of office is four years, we are part way through the term which started in 2019-2023.

We have four vacancies in West Oxfordshire, two in Cherwell and two in Vale of White Horse District Council. Representatives are sought from town or parish councils or parish meetings capable of seeing the bigger picture and representing their district. The Executive Committee meets four times per year + AGM in July. The meetings are being held virtually at the moment, although they may return to physical, location tbc on Monday afternoons.

If you are interested please contact info@oalc.org.uk for a discussion and a nomination form to be completed by your council.

OALC is also working on reviewing its Strategic Plan.

## Christmas Risk Assessment



All employees planning to dash through the snow in a one horse open sleigh, going over the fields and laughing all the way are advised that a Risk Assessment will be required addressing the safety of an open sleigh for members of the public.

 This assessment must also consider whether it is appropriate to use only one horse for such a venture, particularly where there are multiple passengers. Please note that permission must also be obtained in writing from landowners before their fields may be entered. To avoid offending those not participating in celebrations, we would request that laughter is moderate only and not loud enough to be considered a noise nuisance.

 Benches, stools and orthopedic chairs are now available for collection by any shepherds planning or required to watch their flocks at night. While provision has also been made for remote monitoring of flocks by CCTV cameras from a centrally heated shepherd observation hut, all socially distanced users of this facility are reminded that an emergency response plan must be submitted to account for known risks to the flocks.

 The angel of the Lord is additionally reminded that, prior to shining his/her glory all around, s/he must confirm that all shepherds are wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment to account for the harmful effects of UVA, UVB and the overwhelming effects of Glory.

 Following last year's well-publicised case, everyone is advised that Equal Opportunities legislation prohibits any comment with regard to the redness of any part of Mr R Reindeer. Further to this, exclusion of Mr. R Reindeer from reindeer games will be considered discriminatory and disciplinary action will be taken against those found guilty of this offence.

 While it is acknowledged that gift bearing is a common practice in various parts of the world, particularly the Orient, everyone is reminded that the bearing of gifts is subject to Hospitality Guidelines and all gifts must be registered. This applies regardless of the individual, even royal personages. It is particularly noted that direct gifts of currency or gold are specifically precluded, while caution is advised regarding other common gifts such as aromatic resins that may evoke allergic reactions.

 Finally, in the recent instance of the infant found tucked up in a manger without any crib for a bed, Social Services have been advised and will be arriving shortly.

Merry Christmas all

 *Thanks to Anna Field, RFO at Benson Parish Council for bringing this to our attention. We don’t know who the original author is but the copyright is theirs and thanks go to them, we all desperately need a smile at the moment.*

# Local News



* **County Councillors Priority Fund**

The County Council set aside £945,000 in 2020/21 for a Councillor Priority Fund. The fund will be at the discretion of individual county councillors to award. They each have £15,000 for 2020/21. Funding is awarded on a rolling basis. The deadline for applications to your local county councillor is **31 January 2021**.

All the information is here [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/thriving-communities/councillor-priority-fund?utm\_term=90432&utm\_content=](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/thriving-communities/councillor-priority-fund?utm_term=90432&utm_content=%20)

* **Households across Oxfordshire will be asked to take part in Census 2021 this spring.**

The Census, run by the Office for National Statistics, is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every ten years since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

This year, for the first time, the Census will be digital first. All households will receive a letter in early March with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on 21 March on their computers, phones or tablets. For some of our residents, this will make things easier, but we understand that for others it could be challenging.

The Census team covering Oxfordshire would like to understand as soon as possible your communities and key groups that may need support, local community groups who already provide help, local resources that could be used to support Census promotion/ engagement, and where there could be risks, so it can meet the needs of your communities with alternative or adjusted arrangements.

**Earlier this week, surveys were sent by district and city councils to town and parish clerks to help gather this information - with a deadline of 4 January for completion.**

If you have any questions, or if you haven’t received a survey by email please contact Lisa Stead lisa.stead58@field.census.gov.uk or on 07452 942723 (Cherwell, West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse) and Sinead Leach sinead.leach49@field.census.gov.uk or on 07452 948074 (South Oxfordshire and Oxford City).

## Cherwell District Council

Earlier in the year, many village halls, pavilions and scout huts benefited from Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant scheme.  A successor scheme, **Local Restrictions Support Grant** is now available to help businesses that have had to close during the November lockdown.  Community Halls are one of the classes of business identified in the government guidance [Closing certain businesses and venues in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/closing-certain-businesses-and-venues-in-england)

The grant application form is available on the [Coronavirus: Guidance for Businesses](https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/258/coronavirus/675/coronavirus-guidance-for-businesses/2) page of the CDC website.  We want all eligible businesses to benefit from this financial support. Please help by raising awareness of this important grant scheme among relevant organisations in the parish.

Grants are still available from the **Cherwell Covid-19 Councillor Priority Fund**.  Grants are awarded at the discretion of District Councillors.  Any community project broadly or specifically in response to the Covid-19 situation can be considered.  Grants awarded already have included befriending and support schemes; local ‘meals on wheels’; making community halls ‘covid-safe’; PPE for ‘Good neighbour’ volunteers.  Details are on the CDC website at <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/Coronavirus-grant>

**Community Hub Emergency Relief Grants** are aimed at programmes of work that will relieve hardship and reduce food poverty for residents who are struggling to afford food or essentials.  Grants awarded already have gone to local larder, foodbank, baby bank and benefits advice schemes.  Details are on the CDC website at https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/290/community-grants/3

## Oxfordshire growth board – have your say on the new strategic vision

A strategic vision for Oxfordshire is being prepared with the aim of improving the lives of all in the county and the Growth Board want your views to make sure it delivers what is most important to you.

The Vision sets out the Board’s ambition for the county.

It will be used to help create an agreed set of long-term, strategic economic, infrastructure and environmental priorities designed to deliver the outcomes that local people want.

You're invited to give your thoughts on whether the outcomes proposed – and the definition of good growth and the set of guiding principles that underpin them – are the right ones for Oxfordshire.

The Board also want to know how it can measure the Vision’s progress, how far it should aim and how fast it should try to reach its targets. You can give your thoughts via the Oxfordshire Open Thought website - <https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/strategic-vision>

**The engagement period ends on January 3rd 2021.**



You can now read a summary report of the responses to the Open Thought engagement.

Oxfordshire 2050 launched [Open Thought](https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/) in June 2020, as part of the [Oxfordshire Plan 2050](https://oxfordshireplan.org/), and asked for your thoughts on some of the challenges facing Oxfordshire and its communities in the future around living and working, climate change and connectivity.

The approach was a new way of engaging with stakeholders that could supplement the more formal statutory stages of consultation.

This engagement was vital given the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is a new concept, looking far more long term than other planning documents such as Local Plans, with bigger opportunities to affect change.

Open Thought allowed Oxfordshire 2050 to tap into the wealth of knowledge and experience Oxfordshire is lucky to contain, including that of two top universities, which could massively benefit the Plan and explore the ideas it covers.

It also offered the opportunity to gather a range of voices willing to contribute to the conversation.

You can read the full summary report [here](https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Oxfordshire-Open-Thought-Phase-I-Summary-Report.pdf).

## South Oxfordshire DC

* 1. **Councillor Community Grant Scheme**

On Friday 20 November South Oxfordshire District Council launched their usual councillor grant scheme, where every councillor has £5,000 to help fund projects in their ward.

**PLEASE NOTE CLARIFICATION - THIS ONLY APPLIES TO SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DC NOT VALE OF WHITE HORSE DC**

**We’ve recently changed this to allow all town and parish councils to apply.**

The other change we’ve made is to encourage funding applications for projects that will contribute to our new corporate plan priorities, in particular to protect and restore our natural world; action on the climate emergency and improved economic and community well-being.  This scheme is ideal for projects which are relatively low in costs and can complete within 12 months.

If your council has a project in mind then please get in touch with your district councillor to discuss your plans before submitting an application via our [website](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/councillor-community-grants/). **The scheme will close at midday on Friday 5 February 2021.**

* 1. **South Oxfordshire Local Plan**

South Oxfordshire District Council adopted the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 on 10 December 2020.

In March 2019 South Oxfordshire District Council submitted the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Secretary of State appointed the Planning Inspectorate to review and examine South Oxfordshire’s Local Plan. The Planning Inspectorate assigned Jonathan Bore, MRTPI to carry out a review and examination of the Local Plan. Examination hearings into the Local Plan were held in July and August 2020. Following this, the main modifications consultation was carried out for a six-week period between 21 September and 2 November 2020. The Inspector’s report was issued on 27 November 2020 and the Plan was found to be sound with the recommended main modifications.

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 now forms part of the statutory development plan.

The Adoption Statement can also be viewed on [our website](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/forthcoming-planning-policies/our-forthcoming-local-plan/), alongside the adopted Local Plan 2035 and the Inspector’s Report.

## Vale of White Horse DC

May I take this opportunity to remind all of you that we do have £2000 each to spend on covid related emergency expenses so if anyone knows of a reason this may be spent locally, please let me know - though it is an emergency fund so we will have to consider every application carefully to meet eligibility criteria.

Cllr Bethia Thomas Bethia.Thomas@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

## 20’s Plenty for Oxfordshire

It appears that the 20’s Plenty campaign to limit traffic speeds in built up areas has been swift and successful.

Oxfordshire County Council at their meeting on 8th December unanimously supported a motion submitted by Cllr Pete Sudbury supporting the premise that 20mph is the optimum speed limit in built up areas; decision here <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/g5919/Decisions%20Tuesday%2008-Dec-2020%2010.00%20County%20Council.pdf?T=2>

The second part of the decision is set out here:

*2. Parish, Town, City Councils will by default be supported in reducing speed limits in existing streets or areas on the basis of their local knowledge and the wishes of their residents, whilst taking note of national guidance. Where funding from any source is available, they will subsequently be supported to put in place necessary speed-calming measures to bring maximum and average speeds down to acceptable levels.*

County Councillor Jeanette Matelot at the OALC Executive Committee meeting on Monday 14th December, where this campaign was discussed and supported, suggested that if parish councils are interested in moving this forward and implementing it in their community they inform the County Council and they speak to their County Councillor to tap into their Priority Councillor Grant.

## Wild Oxfordshire



**Wild Oxfordshire Annual Lecture, 20th January 2021** will be delivered by Dr Richard Benwell, Chief Executive of [Wildlife and Countryside Link](https://www.wcl.org.uk/)  He will be talking about the Politics of Nature at Westminster, prior to joining WCL Richard held a series of influential positions in the civil service, House of Commons Commission and the environmental movement. Most recently as a policy adviser to the Secretary of State at Defra, he contributed to development of the Department’s three flagship Bills – the Environment Bill, the Agriculture Bill and the Fisheries Bill.

Tickets available here <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/annual-lecture-tickets-132239278241?aff=erelexpmlt>

# National News

## Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

The Greater South East Energy Hub would like to draw your attention to the Government’s recently launched **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.** This is afunding schemethat provides grants for the capital cost of energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects for **public sector buildings (non-domestic only).**  Public-sector bodies such as local authorities and schools can apply for a grant to finance up to 100% of the capital costs of projects that meet the scheme criteria.

**The Rural Community Energy Fund is a £10 million programme that supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects with community benefit. It is being delivered by the five Energy Hubs across England on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.**

The aims of the Fund are to:

* Support rural communities by helping them to maximise the income-generating potential of renewable energy and put this income to work in their local area
* Increase the uptake of community and locally-owned renewable energy to support the Government’s targets for renewable energy and carbon reduction
* Enable communities to access the economic and social benefits associated with renewable energy schemes through the promotion of rural growth, job creation and volunteering opportunities.

The Fund offers support to eligible organisations in two stages:

**Feasibility Grant** - Intended for projects that are at an early phase of exploring the possibility of a renewable energy project, and which meet the Fund’s eligibility criteria. This stage offers grants for any amount up to a maximum of **£40,000** to cover the professional costs of developing a feasibility report in a standard format.

**Development Grant** - Intended for projects that demonstrate a good chance of securing planning permission and being implemented. The Energy Hub will consider further development funding for any amount up to **£100,000** to cover more detailed investigation into the key areas of technology selection. This includes the cost of securing a site (such as legal fees), environmental impact assessments, submitting planning and permitting applications and developing a business plan.

The scheme is being administered by [Salix Finance](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/).  Click the links for further details of the [grant scheme](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/PSDS), [eligibility](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/PSDS_eligibility), [eligible technologies](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/PSDS_eligible_technologies) and [full guidance notes](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/sites/default/files/Public%20Sector%20Decarbonisation%20Scheme%20Guidance%20Note%20-%20September%202020%20V1.0_8.pdf).  Projects should aim to be completed by 31 March 2021 if possible, or by 30 September 2021 latest if not.  Salix Finance will prioritise assessment and approval of funding for projects that have an early completion date.  There are four forthcoming application deadlines, **26th October, 9th November, 23rd November, and 11th January**.

For further information, support or guidance relating to the Grant Scheme, **please contact the dedicated Salix team at****grants@salixfinance.co.uk**.  Please see also the attached presentation which has further details about the Scheme.

[www.energyhub.org.uk](http://www.energyhub.org.uk/)

## New evidence of Post Office role as local community “lifeline”

A [major study](https://postofficeimpact.co.uk/?mc_cid=015d7b60d5&mc_eid=49ca3a26cd) for Post Office Ltd (POL) sets out new evidence of the vital part post offices play in providing essential services and support to people and local economies.

More than 8 in 10 (82%) people see their post office as an essential service, with young people valuing it almost as much as older people. Small businesses also rely on their local post office – 43% say they would not survive without it. Proximity is vital for both consumers and businesses, and 67% have a branch within a 10 minute journey, and 38% within a 10 minute walk.

Of the network’s wide range of services, mail services are most commonly used – 83% of respondents using it for letters and stamps and 80% for parcels. Post Offices are also frequently used for returning online orders (54%), exchanging foreign currency (54%) and picking up official forms (44%). Just over 1 in 3 (35%) have used branches to withdraw or deposit cash.

Highlighting the importance of post offices as a physical presence, 87% of respondents agreed that the Post Office is an essential service for vulnerable or lonely people. And only 47% of people aged 65+ said they would be able to find an alternative place to access pensions and benefits. POL also says post offices deliver a lifeline to struggling high streets. Visits to post offices help drive 400 million extra visitors and £1.1 bn additional revenue to other local businesses.

POL’s report follows [Citizens Advice’s recent call](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/policy/policy-research-topics/post-policy-research-and-consultation-responses/post-policy-research/the-post-office-network-is-at-crunch-point-investment-is-needed-now-to-ensure-survival/?mc_cid=015d7b60d5&mc_eid=49ca3a26cd) for increased government investment in post offices to fix the cracks in the network and allow post offices to deliver even greater social value.

## Natural England – people and nature survey

The National [People and Nature Survey](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-monthly-interim-indicators-for-october-2020-experimental-statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-monthly-interim-indicators-for-october-2020-experimental-statistics) for England led by Natural England published their latest statistics on 9th December. They illustrate unsurprisingly in a time of covid the importance of green and natural space.

The main findings are:

* In October, almost two thirds of the adult population (62%) had visited a green and natural space in the last 14 days. **Forty two per cent of adults said visiting green and natural spaces has been even more important to their wellbeing since coronavirus.**
* A quarter (25%) of adults had not spent any time in green and natural spaces in the previous 14 days. Thirteen per cent of adults in England had not visited any green and natural space in the previous month.
* In October, bad / poor weather was the top reason reported for not spending time in nature, (reported by 41% of those not visiting). Twenty nine per cent reported that staying at home to stop coronavirus spreading / Government restrictions was the main reason for not visiting (consistent with August and September)

## SLCC survey about bullying

In Oxfordshire OALC encourages clerks to join SLCC. While the SLCC exists primarily for Clerks and OALC exists to help the council as a corporate body there is a lot of overlap. Subjects close to Clerks hearts are highly likely to be on our radar too. SLCC is carrying out a survey on bullying, a topic that does come up and is not adequately addressed by existing structures such as the Code of Conduct. Although it isn’t only bullying of the clerk by councillors, there is bullying by the public and councillors bullying each other!

We bring to your attention a survey the SLCC is currently running -

*Workplace Bullying remains high on the list when it comes to members seeking advice from SLCC and our sector partners. The bottom line is that it can cause ill-health, it affects morale and is the cause of untold misery to people in this sector. Your concerns and representations at the Virtual National Conference, National Forum meeting and at Board level are at the forefront of the work we are doing on your behalf to bring about the changes which you have so rightly demanded to improve standards and professionalism across the local council sector.*

*In 2017, the SLCC commissioned Hoey Ainscough Associates, an organisation setup to support local government members and officers in ensuring effective local governance, to conduct the first piece of evidence-based research into professional standards. The high response rate to this survey delivered meaningful results that have been used to strengthen our compelling argument for change. We have now commissioned a further survey from Hoey Ainscough Associates which will provide comparative data and give an accurate snapshot of whether things have improved during that time or become worse.*

*The survey, which will take around 15 minutes to complete, can be accessed by clicking the button below and, as a thank you, we are offering respondents the chance to win one of 20 SLCC training vouchers worth £20 each. If you would like to be entered into the draw please ensure you enter your contact details on question 62.*

*The closing date for this survey will be* ***Friday 15th January 2021***

*Take the survey <*[*http://mstat300.co.uk/service.php?s=click&mm=2CHO01400031001948360018790047360000326500003382c25&lid=10759*](http://mstat300.co.uk/service.php?s=click&mm=2CHO01400031001948360018790047360000326500003382c25&lid=10759)*>*

*Clerks who work for more than one council are invited to complete multiple survey entries and, please be assured that the data collected is for statistical purposes and all entries remain strictly confidential, your personal details will not be shared with any other parties other than Hoey Ainscough Associates.*

## Reversing the decline of rural buses

The County Councils’ Network (CCN) this week published their report [**Reversing the decline of county buses**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=0aa4044d01&e=2593660dc7)<https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/County-APPG-Reversing-the-decline-of-county-buses.pdf> from their inquiry into rural bus decline, referencing written evidence from NALC and picking up a number of points they raised.

The report includes new analysis estimating the decline in financial resources for local buses and usage since 2009/10. It argues for the forthcoming National Bus Strategy to provide significant resources, new powers and responsibilities for county areas to help reverse the decline of local bus routes, which NALC argued for in their response. Examples from Bishops Stortford Town Council and Hartley Wintney Parish Council were included in the section on innovation in local provision, just two of the examples which illustrate the crucial difference rural local councils can make to the local transport agenda in their areas.

The report had 10 recommendations:

1. Provide adequate long-term funding for county bus services to transport authorities that recognises the challenges of running these services. This should include clarification over the future of the Bus Service Operators Grant to provide confidence and long-term reassurance to operators.
2. Review the concessionary travel bus pass scheme in consultation with operators and local authorities.
3. Give consideration to the provision of the range of passenger transport services across the country, and the positive benefits that they can bring to residents, particularly in more deprived and rural parts of the country. Consideration should also be given to the extent to which an improved public transport offer could assist in levelling-up the country.
4. Encourage a partnership approach between local authorities, bus operators and community groups developing bus services and routes and other passenger transport. As part of future devolution deals, allow local transport authorities to take on bus franchising powers, where there is a desire. This would match powers already offered to Mayoral Combined Authority areas and would allow a partnership approach to developing services between the local authority and operators.
5. Amend regulations in the 2017 Bus Services Act to allow local authorities, where better value could be achieved, to run their own bus companies to implement new routes where demand is not being met by the private sector.
6. Devolve Bus Service Operators Grant to local authorities, allowing them to work in partnership with operators to ensure that it is spent where it is needed most.
7. Recognise the value that community and voluntary services play, and make provisions to ensure their financial sustainability to allow them to keep running, and to introduce new schemes and routes where needed.
8. Make bus operators statutory consultees during the local plan process to ensure that bus provision to and from new development is considered as early as possible. This will assist local authorities in any negotiations for legal agreements and contributions when sites come forward. This will also provide opportunities for building active travel into masterplans that integrate with public transport for longer journeys.
9. Encourage bus operators to work with local authorities to optimise routes and timetables allowing for services that integrate with other bus routes and rail services, making public transport a more attractive option.
10. Include a strategy and investment plan for the role out of low-emission vehicles and/or for the electrification of bus fleets, alongside associated infrastructure.

## Parish precepts

The average Band D precept charged by a parish or charter trustee in 2020-21 was £69.89, an increase of £2.71 or 4% on the previous year

Statistics from MHCLG *Council tax levels set by local authorities 2020-21*, revised July 2020 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905425/Council_tax_levels_set_by_local_authorities_in_England_2020-21.pdf>

|  |
| --- |
| Average Band D parish precept for England 2016/17 – 2020/21 |
|  | 2016-17  | 2017-18  | 2018-19  | 2019-20  | 2020-21  |
| Total number  | 8,818  | 8,840  | 8,839  | 8,859  | 8,886  |
| Tax base (thousands)  | 7,754.3  | 7,954.4  | 8,083.0  | 8,253.8  | 8,532.7  |
| Aggregate of local precepts (£000)  | 445,073  | 485,474  | 517,629  | 554,492  | 596,362  |
| Average parish precept per Band D (£)  | 57.4  | 61.03  | 64.04  | 67.18  | 69.89  |
| Change (£)  | 3.28  | 3.63  | 3.01  | 3.14  | 2.71  |
| Percentage change  | 6.1%  | 6.3%  | 4.9%  | 4.9%  | 4.0%  |

Individual parish data for 2020-21 is published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-datasets/live-tables-on-council-tax#council-tax-statistics-for-town-and-parish-councils-in-england>

## EU end of transition phase 31st December 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/transition>

The EU transition period is coming to an end and the United Kingdom leaves the EU on 31st December. The latest advice is here on the [main official government guidance for citizens](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDEyMDguMzE3NTM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvdHJhbnNpdGlvbiJ9.Splc5OkhMfut0B81DWfvATfPmqce18SaqwCQ7MgjjCI/s/1098563174/br/91311304447-l), and [advice for businesses](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDEyMDguMzE3NTM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ3VpZGFuY2UvaGVscC1hbmQtc3VwcG9ydC1pZi15b3VyLWJ1c2luZXNzLXRyYWRlcy13aXRoLXRoZS1ldSJ9.2SUsZ5vnlbBG-H27CMnLj-n6gazdBNwRL_FFDQSu8Uo/s/1098563174/br/91311304447-l). Separately, [advice for local authorities](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDEyMDguMzE3NTM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ3VpZGFuY2UvcHJlcGFyaW5nLWxvY2FsLWdvdmVybm1lbnQtZm9yLTEtamFudWFyeS0yMDIxIn0.wEzLWXwWJdtxdFuAhSLhV18hKPP8qKlJpx50eFIeVz8/s/1098563174/br/91311304447-l) on preparing for 1 January 2021 has also been published.

The next phase of the Government’s EU Settlement Scheme is now live. The scheme plans to communicate with European Economic Area citizens across the UK to address the barriers to application.

## Some Guidance on Data sharing in local councils

Six steps to take:

 1. Be clear about your purpose for sharing the information, and record this in your council’s privacy information.

2. Check the sharing is necessary for the specific purpose (required for most lawful bases). If you can reasonably achieve the same purpose another way, then the sharing won’t be necessary and your lawful basis won’t be valid.

3. Determine and document your council’s lawful basis for sharing the information. There are six lawful bases, and the most appropriate one for your council will depend on your purpose.

4. Share the minimum amount of personal data that is needed to help your council achieve its purpose. For example, you might need to share somebody’s current name and address, but not other information you hold about them.

 5. Provide information to individuals about why your council is collecting and using their personal data. Privacy information is a key transparency requirement under the GDPR and individuals have a right to know your purposes for processing their personal data, how long you will hold their data for, and who you’ll share it with.

6. Demonstrate your accountability as part of GDPR compliance. Your council has to take responsibility for what it does with people’s personal data and you need to put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to meet the requirements of accountability.

Visit: [www.ico.org.uk/CouncilResources](http://www.ico.org.uk/CouncilResources) for more guidance, advice and interactive tools to help your council get data protection right.

OALC training ***A refresh on GDPR and Data Protection*,** 3rd February 2021 details and booking here -<https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000108>

## Pay freeze?

NALC were asked to clarify the question as to whether the widely discussed pay freeze for public sector workers was valid and applies to our sector. NALC contacted the Local Government Association which represents the employers in national pay negotiations they advised: -

 *As set out in the LGA’s*[*Spending Review On-the-Day Briefing*](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxNTEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDEyMDQuMzE1OTY2NzEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3Byb3RlY3QtZXUubWltZWNhc3QuY29tL3MvZG9BMENEUkVXRkJHbk5RdVdsdXZlIn0.xoaApMuV5cplJamap7tDC1pyhnz9WTIh2C-rKJoFNWU/s/604660930/br/91114832914-l)*, national government cannot impose a pay freeze nor mandate a pay increase for just lower-paid workers in local government, as pay is determined between the employers and unions (either nationally or locally). The National Joint Council (‘NJC Green Book’) unions for local Government have informed us that their pay claim will not be lodged until late January. Councils will be consulted on it in order to inform the National Employers’ position for when they reach the stage of formally responding.*

*A continuing challenge for the NJC National Employers arises from the OBR’s forecast for the National Living Wage to reach £10.46 in 2025. The bottom hourly rate for ‘Green Book’ employees is currently £9.25 (outside London) so, if the forecast remains unchanged, there are only five pay rounds remaining in order to increase just the bottom pay point by a potential further 13.1 per cent.*

## Planning for the future White Paper

On 8th December the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee heard evidence from the Minister for Housing, Christopher Pincher MP, as part of the [Committee's inquiry into the future of the planning system](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/634/the-future-of-the-planning-system-in-england/) in England.

The Minister said there had been 44,000 responses to [the Government’s Planning for the Future White Paper consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future), which he emphasised would guide the Government’s response. He said that the consultation was the beginning, not the end of the process and that there would be further engagement with stakeholders to refine the process. OALC submitted a response and wrote to Oxfordshire MP’s detailing its concerns.

## Planning regulations

The Government has laid a new Statutory Instrument (SI) for planning. The [Local Planning, Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings etc. (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMzQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDEyMDguMzE3NTM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5sZWdpc2xhdGlvbi5nb3YudWsvdWtzaS8yMDIwLzEzOTgvY29udGVudHMvbWFkZT92aWV3PXBsYWluIn0.OHza_hQn0fEy8hdERRO67qIMWKCHwwRS9Cu6Fnh8aDI/s/1098563174/br/91311304447-l) amends a number of regulations which were made in response to the pandemic, extending the current temporary measures to 31 December 2021. This includes local planning and spatial development strategies, and temporary development management measures due to expire in December this year. The new SI allows councils to continue to make relevant planning documents available online rather than being required to provide hard copies. The new regulations come into force on 24 December 2020.

## armed forces Covenant annual report 2020

The Government has published its [Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMzcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDEyMDguMzE3NTM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2Fzc2V0cy5wdWJsaXNoaW5nLnNlcnZpY2UuZ292LnVrL2dvdmVybm1lbnQvdXBsb2Fkcy9zeXN0ZW0vdXBsb2Fkcy9hdHRhY2htZW50X2RhdGEvZmlsZS85NDE2MzYvNi42ODU2X01PRF9Db3ZlbmFudC1Bbm51YWwtUmVwb3J0LTIwMjBfRnVsbC1QYWdlc19BNF92MTVfd2ViLnBkZiJ9.FEB-a8JEWAmBa9yZnKmaOkfMgDrXAFZvSOTrgDx5utI/s/1098563174/br/91311304447-l), setting out the achievements of the Armed Forces Covenant. Oxfordshire County Council was one of the first to pledge support to the Covenant. The LGA is working with the Ministry of Defence to help shape the new statutory duty to have ‘due regard’ to the Covenant, which the LGA expect to be introduced next year. Next year will be the tenth anniversary of the Covenant.

More information on the County Council website here - <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/armed-forces-oxfordshire/armed-forces-covenant>

## NEW - The Good Councillors Guide to Community Business

NALC and the Plunkett Foundation have launched *The Good Councillor's Guide to Community Business* to promote the opportunities that community businesses can create locally.

You can find a copy to download in the member’s area of the OALC website <https://www.oalc.org.uk/members-area> under NALC briefings

[The Plunkett Foundation](https://plunkett.co.uk/local-councils-encouraged-to-harness-the-benefits-of-community-business/) (based in Woodstock) wrote the guide in partnership with [Power to Change](https://www.powertochange.org.uk/) (the independent trust that supports community businesses in England).

The guide is a comprehensive resource that will enable local councils to understand better how a community business could enhance their parish or town in a post-Covid society.

Community businesses are enterprises that are owned and run democratically by members of the community and others, on behalf of the community. They come in many forms, including shops, pubs, woodlands and anything which lends itself to community ownership.

In addition to developing and safeguarding valuable assets and services, community businesses address a range of issues including isolation, loneliness, wellbeing, work and training. As well as bringing people together and attracting people to a local area, for every £1 spent in a business, a further 56 pence is spent locally as the money dissipates.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the importance of local services has never been more apparent. However, the reality is that an increasing number of services are at risk of closure due to market forces, lack of funding, or due to the effects of the pandemic. This means that many residents, many of whom are dependent or vulnerable, are losing access to essential amenities. In these areas where there is a concern of services being lost, the community business approach is often a viable and sustainable solution.

This guide intends to provide the practical "how-to" knowledge behind a community business and inspire a new generation of businesses to open. Also, there is support available from Plunkett Foundation, Power to Change and the National Association of Local Councils to ensure that councillors can access further expertise and resource to realise the ambition of setting up a community business in their area.

Chris Cowcher, Head of Community Business at Plunkett, said: "*We are delighted to be supporting this project because local councils have the power to encourage, facilitate and support more community businesses to open. The guide launched in a year when community businesses have stepped up more than ever to serve their residents across the UK in the most challenging of times. These enterprising businesses, time and again show themselves to be inspirational and inclusive operations, and it is exciting to think that this guide will lead to even more setting up.It is often vital that local councils are engaged, contribute to and collaborate with community business projects and through working with NALC and Power to Change we hope that we can create an environment where these businesses can flourish."*

NALC Chairman, Cllr Sue Baxter, said: *"I'm delighted for the launch of The Good Councillor's guide to community business. Local councils play a significant role as service deliverers for their communities, through supporting local economy and business. It is encouraging that the sector already engages with community businesses and hope this latest publication will empower councillors with information to support community businesses and extend their take-up across the country*".

Ailbhe McNabola, at Power to Change said:” *In 2020, community businesses have really come into their own. They have demonstrated just how agile and adaptable they can be, stepping up during the pandemic to provide vital support and services for the most vulnerable in their communities. Every town or village should have at least one community business. Run by local people for the benefit of local people, they have resilience hardwired into their business model; and with 56p of every pound spent by a community business staying in the local economy, it makes financial sense too.”*

For more information on the guide and the support available through Plunkett to help local councils support the opening of more community businesses visit: [www.plunkett.co.uk](http://www.plunkett.co.uk)

## Planning Aid - jargon buster glossary of planning terms

The Planning Aid website has lots of useful information for those not familiar with the planning system. It also has an extensive glossary explaining everything from Affordable Housing through Backland Development and Change of Use to Written Representations (there are no Z’s). Their website is here <https://planningaid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us> and the glossary is here

<https://planningaid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/203221371-Jargon-Buster-Glossary-of-Planning-Terms>

## Climate emergency – survey 147 responses so far, more needed!

* 1. NALC has launched its own climate change survey to find out how many councils have declared a climate emergency and if they have, what measures they are taking to support that declaration.

 This survey is a product of the NALC climate change Task and Finish Group and will be running to 29 January 2021.

**There have been 147 responses so far, more needed!**

The 21 question survey is here - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HVNZMR6>

* 1. **Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency**

The Centre for Sustainable Energy produce a number of [useful guides](https://www.cse.org.uk/resources). One of which, dated February 2020 may assist those who are currently writing a Neighbourhood Plan -

[*A guide to policy writing and community engagement for low-carbon neighbourhood plans*](https://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/reports-and-publications/policy/planning/renewables/neighbourhood-planning-in-a-climate-emergency-feb-2020.pdf)

## Oxfordshire County Council launches its Climate Action Framework

In October 2020 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) approved its [**Climate Action Framework**](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/OCC_Climate_Action_Framework2020.pdf) setting out how they’re going to tackle the Climate Emergency through:

* becoming a carbon-neutral council by 2030
* working in partnership to achieve a carbon-neutral Oxfordshire by 2050

OCC seek to transform their organisation, support schools, and work with suppliers and partners – building climate action into every decision.

Find out more about how they’re working to reduce carbon emissions in their own organisation and across the county at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/what-we-are-doing](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/what-we-are-doing)

Their vision is to shape a thriving Oxfordshire - achieving livable, healthy places. It is a vision for prosperity in an enhanced natural environment and within global carbon limits. Together with the leaders and chief executives of all local authorities across Oxfordshire, they have committed to tackling the Climate Emergency. With wider Oxfordshire partners they are signatories to Oxfordshire’s Energy Strategy, setting out a pathway to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, as an ambitious step on the road to net zero by 2050.

Find out more about how OCC are working in partnership to reduce emissions across the county at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/climate-action-oxfordshire](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/climate-action-oxfordshire)

**OCC wish to further develop partnerships with Parish Councils** in building capacity of local communities to take climate action by:

* Supporting Community Action Groups to expand, diversify and collaborate with civil society organisations
* Pursuing localised zero-carbon investment options
* Delivering digital connectivity, low-carbon transport and active travel schemes that support a zero-carbon ambition

Additionally, the following schemes are currently available to local communities through OCC partnerships:

* [Oxfutures](http://oxfutures.org/projects/register-for-energy-audit/) offers free energy audits for businesses to identify energy-saving opportunities, to reduce energy bills and cut carbon emissions
* [Rural communities energy fund](https://www.energyhub.org.uk/rural-community-energy-fund/introduction/) supports rural communities wanting to set up renewable energy projects in their area
* The UK government’s [Green Homes Grant](https://cosyhomesoxfordshire.org/green-homes-grant/) offers homeowners and landlords vouchers which cover two-thirds of the cost of undertaking certain energy efficiency retrofit improvements, up to £5,000.

To discuss opportunities to work with OCC in delivering their climate agenda, email climate.action@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## May 2021 elections

**Budgeting**

For those who are expecting elections (scheduled and postponed) next year (6th May 2021) it may be worthwhile when reviewing your budget to increase any figure you have in for elections. We (OALC), nor the Returning Officers, know at this point, what the costs might be because May 2021 is a long way off. Additional Covid safety measures may increase the costs passed on to town and parish councils that have contested elections.

Next year there will be combined elections for the delayed Police and Crime Commissioner; County, District, any by-elections and any Neighbourhood Plan Referendums as well, so it will be a complicated undertaking.

**NALC are gearing up and have resources on their website which you may want to use or adapt to encourage new people to come forward for election. Have a look on their** [website](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/elections)**…**

**HOW TO BECOME A COUNCILLOR?**

Local councils can only be as useful, connected and energetic as the people elected to run it, so we need councillors who are capable, enthusiastic and engaged to reflect their communities. You can find out more about becoming a councillor on [**The Electoral Commission**](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-community-council-elections-england) and [**Government**](https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/become-a-councillor)website.

There are a number of steps to becoming a councillor:

1. [Check for elections in your area](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information) **or on your district council website**
2. **Ensure you meet the** [eligibility criteria](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/Part%201%20Can%20you%20stand%20for%20election%20P%20and%20C.pdf) **to be a councillor**
3. Submit your nomination to the returning officer in your district — find out more about the [process](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/Part%202a%20Standing%20as%20an%20independent%20candidate%20P%20and%20C_0.pdf) and the [criteria](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/Part%201%20Can%20you%20stand%20for%20election%20P%20and%20C.pdf)
4. Wait for your nomination to be accepted
5. Your nomination is made public by the principal authority
6. Start your election campaign if you want to, many parish councils are apolitical

**On 23rd March 2021 OALC is running a training session on how to attract new councillors**

 Details here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000112>

It isn’t rocket science, it’s a combination of psychology, persuasion, commitment and the ability to twist

## Charles Arnold-Baker *Local Council Administration* – new 12th edition

The 12th edition of the Charles Arnold-Baker publication is now available to order from the publishers.

What’s different about this edition?

According to the publishers LexisNexis, the comprehensive and authoritative guide to local government law has been extensively revised for its 12th edition, providing the definitive guide for everyone working in this specialist area.

The new edition has been updated to include:

* Disqualification criteria for councillors and mayors
* Further amendments to the Local Elections Rules
* New ICO guidance on GDPR for local councils

It also has a new author, Roger Taylor, who is a leading authority in this complex area.

**The book is offered at the reduced price of £119.99,** a 20% reduction from £149.99; if ordered before 4th December, Lexis Nexis will include free postage. Please order by contacting: connor.holgate@lexisnexis.co.uk.

We do understand this is an eye watering amount of money to pay for a reference book considering the last edition is only two years old.

## Local Government finance settlement

On 17th December the [provisional local government finance settlement](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945484/Provisional_Settlement_2021-22_Consultation_Document.pdf) confirmed that the Government will continue with no referendum principles for local councils in 2021-22. In ordinary language this means that town and parish councils won’t be capped for the coming year only. But the Government will continue to expect restraint.

The relevant section is on page 12 of the consultation document:

 *3.5 Council tax referendum principles for town and parish councils*

*3.5.1 In 2018-19, the Government announced that it did not intend to set referendum principles for town and parish councils for three years. This was contingent on the sector taking all available steps to mitigate the need for council tax increases and the Government seeing clear evidence of restraint in the increases set by the sector.*

*3.5.2 In 2020-21, the average Band D parish precept increased by 4.0%. This was the lowest percentage point increase in parish precept since 2012-13 but remains in excess of the rate of inflation.*

*3.5.3 In expectation that parish and town councils continue to show restraint when setting council tax precept levels, the Government proposes to continue with no referendum principles for town and parish councils in 2021-22. The Government will take careful account of the increases set by parishes in 2021-22 when reviewing the matter ahead of next year’s settlement.*

Other headlines include:

* a uniform percentage increase in 2020-21 Revenue Support Grant (RSG) allocations, based on the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
* a core council tax referendum principle of up to 2% for shire counties, unitary authorities, London boroughs, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and fire authorities
* a bespoke council tax referendum principle of up to 2% or £5, whichever is higher, for shire district councils
* an Adult Social Care (ASC) precept of 3% for authorities responsible for ASC, with the option to defer some or all of its use into 2022-23
* a referendum principle of £15 for police and crime commissioners
* a new round of New Homes Bonus payments in 2021-22, which will not attract new legacy payments
* a new Lower Tier Services Grant of £111 million to local authorities with responsibility for lower tier services (for example, homelessness, planning, recycling and refuse collection, and leisure services).
* increase Rural Service Delivery Grant by £4 million, taking the total to £85 million

 NALC will be responding to the consultation to welcome this proposal, also taking the opportunity to highlight the continued financial pressures placed on our councils from Covid funding to local government not being passed on and not being eligible for the Income Compensation Scheme.

 The final settlement is expected to be published in late January/early February and debated and agreed by the House of Commons.

## Consultation – extended date for responses

The Committee on Standards in Public Life has recently launched a consultation as part of its review into the institutions, processes and structures in place to support high standards of conduct. The terms of reference of the review are to:

* review the evidence as to how well ethical standards are upheld in public life in the UK
* review the evidence on the strength of the UK’s arrangements for regulating and promoting ethical standards
* review the adequacy and continuing relevance of the Seven Principles of Public Life,
* identify examples of best practice in the regulation of ethical standards
* identify examples of best practice in the promotion of cultures that celebrate and encourage high ethical standards.

The main consultation document is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-matter-2-public-consultation-and-public-sector-survey). Please email your responses to this consultation to policycomms@nalc.gov.uk by 17.00 by 29th January 2021. (extended from 4th December)

# 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**) 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. This month’s is about the council tax base

**Council tax base**

When a local council sets its precept, the money is raised by adding an amount to the council tax bill for each residential property within the parish that pays council tax.

Each year, the billing authority (your district council) works out the number of properties that will pay council tax. Properties are divided into 8 bands (A to H) and pay different levels of council tax. The figures are converted into “Band D equivalents”, to allows us to use a single figure (called the council tax base) to understand how changes will affect the taxpayer.

In 2013, there was a change in the way the council tax base is calculated. Homes that receive council tax support had previously been included within the council tax base, but they are now removed from the figure. One consequence of this is that the tax base is more variable, it can increase or decrease depending on the number of people receiving financial support.

To work out the impact on the council tax payer, we divide a council’s precept by the council tax base for the year. This tells us how much a band D property will pay (all other bands pay a sum based on the band D figure, from 6/9ths to 18/9ths). We can use that figure to make comparisons between councils and between different financial years.

The council tax base is set based on the 1 December figures each year, so the figure for 2021/22 has just been set. In some areas we are seeing a reduction in council tax base of up to 4%, due to increasing levels of council tax support.

Even if a council sets the same precept as last year, this might result in a council tax rise, because fewer people are paying so they have to pay more.

To take a simple example: For 2020/21, a council set a precept of £100,000 with a tax base of 2,000 band D equivalents, which results in a council tax of £50 (£100,000/2,000). If the council tax base drops 2% to 1,960, the calculation for 2021/22 would be £100,000/1,960, giving a council tax of £51.02. Taxpayers would see a 2.04% increase, even though the local council doesn’t receive anything extra.

Please be aware of this effect and don’t ignore your tax base figure.

# 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.

**This Year’s Key Tribunal Rulings**

1. **Dismissal should not automatically follow a criminal conviction *(Benyatov v Credit Suisse)***

High profile Employees such as Clerks or RFOs who have been subject to criminal convictions should not automatically be dismissed. We occasionally receive enquiries from Councils concerning such incidents involving the Clerk, and asking whether or not the Employee should be sacked. The Council’s concern is that the criminal conviction, and attendant bad publicity, could bring the Council into disrepute, however quite often the conviction has no bearing on the Employee’s ability to do their job.

In the above case, Benyatov was convicted for a number of crimes which led to his dismissal by Credit Sunrise. However, the Employer agreed that the convictions had no direct impact on the Employees ability to do his job or brought the Company into disrepute. As a consequence the Employer found themselves on the receiving end of very expensive legal action.

1. **Don’t accept heat of the moment resignations *(Rae v Wellhead Electrical Supplies Ltd)***

A Director who was involved in a dispute with fellow Directors announced “I won’t be back” and walked out of work. The following day the Director attempted to retract his resignation but this was not accepted.

We do encounter similar situations in Town and Parish Councils where tempers can become frayed, and an Employee will do a ‘*grande departe’* and march out. The above case concluded that Employees need to be given the opportunity to confirm their resignation in writing. This would normally involve giving them a cooling off period, to ensure that the decision has been given proper consideration.

Failure to do so could result in claims for Unfair/Constructive Dismissal based on the conduct of the Employer which led to the outburst and verbal resignation.

1. **Employees cannot boost their terms and condition prior to a TUPE transfer *(Ferguson & Others v Astrea Asset Management Ltd)***

Since 2006 in a Council decides to cancel the contract of a Contractor and give that contract to another contractor, the Service Provision clauses of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment Regulations) 2006 have entitled people who are employed by the first contractor to move to the new one.

In *Ferguson & Others v Astrea Asset Management Ltd* the first contractor was aware that they were going to lose their contract, and re-wrote their contracts to boost pay and other terms with the intention that the new contractor would have to honour the new terms and conditions. However, this was challenged in both the Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal who confirmed that the new Contractor’s decision to dismiss the new contracts was legal as they were void and invalid.

## OALC Training programme please read this and take note

OALC has moved all its training online via Zoom

Our training courses are limited to 14- 20 participants, depending on the trainer. We do training **not** webinars and our trainers are always experienced and knowledgeable practitioners, they know their subject and they know this level of local government. Our courses fill up quickly and as a consequence we often have waiting lists.

 Please note our revised cancellation and late payment policy:

**Cancellation Policy**

We require a minimum of 7 days' **written notice** for cancellations. Where the required notice is given no charge will be incurred by the council. However, where notice is less than 7 days the full cost of the course booking will be incurred. Additionally, non-attendance without cancellation notice will incur the full cost of the course booking.

If necessary, other delegates may attend in the place of the original attendee should they be unable to attend.

As we provide more online courses, we recognise technical difficulties may occur. It is therefore vital that you make contact with us immediately at info@oalc.org.uk or by phone on 0751 9367709 or 0774 6943076. Failure to make contact at the time of the course will be treated as non-attendance without notice and your council will be charged the full cost of the course.

**Late payment**

OALC invoices should be paid within 28 days of the invoice date. We do understand that councils usually meet monthly so authorisation for payment may take longer than 28 days. However, if payment isn’t made within 3 months from the date of invoice a late payment fee of £20 (+VAT) will be additionally invoiced to the council.

**We urge all clerks to bring this information to the attention of their councillors and staff.**

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

Here is next year’s programme January – November 2021 (other events may be added depending on demand, legislation and events.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| date | subject | Half/full day | trainer | description |
| Mon January 11th10.30 am | Using Facebook and social media to enhance your council's communications  | Half dayAM | Breakthrough Communications | FULLY BOOKED |
| Wed January 27th 3.30pm | Councillor Fundamentals | Half dayPM | Kim Bedford | FULLY BOOKED |
| Tuesday Feb. 9th 10.30am | GDPR and Data Protection10 places available | Half day AM | Elizabeth Howlett | A 2 hour training session to provide a refresh on data protection and how the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 are working. In particular, the course will cover what to consider when collecting contact details and the ICO guidance on storage and disposal of such details. In brief the course will cover:**Session One*** A  quick reminder of what the GDPR is
* The Data Protection Act 2018
* Mailing lists and ‘consent’
* Privacy Notices
* Collecting contact details in the time of Covid

**Session Two*** Subject Access Requests
* Consultations and who is the data controller?
* Data security and reporting breaches within 72 hours
* Role of the ICO and what the ICO can do to help
 |
| Tuesday Feb. 23rd10am | Preparing for Year End for Clerks/RFOs17 places available | Half day morning | Steve Parkinson | This session introduces the Annual Return and the stages of the audit process, enabling you to complete all the relevant steps correctly.  Topics include:* Closing the accounts
* Debtors and creditors
* Assets and borrowing
* Internal audit
* Reviewing internal control
* The Annual Return
* Electors rights
* Publication requirements
 |
| Tuesday Feb 23rd 1.30pm | Finance for Councillors13 places available | Half day afternoon | Steve Parkinson | This session gives councillors a greater understanding of their duties regarding the council’s finances. Topics include:* Roles and responsibilities
* setting a budget and precept
* Financial control
* Year end and accounts
* • Internal and external audit
 |
| Tuesday March 9th 10 am | Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning7 places available | Half day morning | Neil Homer | With the popularity of neighbourhood planning increasing, we will be looking at the opportunities and challenges of preparing successful plans. This will include how to approach them from new, how to complete them if already started, and the options for reviewing a 'made' plan.Neil will draw from a range of case studies to illustrate effective policy writing and implementation, successful community engagement, compliance with the statutory processes and where the banana skins lie for the unwary! It will therefore appeal to the novice and experienced neighbourhood planner.We’ll also look at how the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the Planning for the future, White Paper and other legislative changes might influence neighbourhood plan making in the county over the next few years. |
| Tuesday March 23rd 1pm | Finding new town and parish councillors11 places available | Half day afternoon | Breakthrough | How can you effectively find and encourage people to stand or be co-opted as town or parish Councillors? In many areas it is increasingly hard to find people who are willing to put their names forward either at election time or to be co-opted. We show you effective ways Councils and Councillors can encourage more people to come forward and this interactive session explores practical ways to do just that. |
| Wed. March 31st & Wed. April 14th 9.30 am | Chairmanship6 places available | 2 morning sessions | Kim Bedford | Managing and leading people is one of the most challenging situations we find ourselves inThis two-part workshop explores the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective community leader |
| Tues. April 27th & Wed. April 28th 9.15 am | Cemetery Management and Legal Compliance5 places | 2 morning sessions | ICCM | This course deals with common problems, issues and mistakes and the costs that can be incurred by burial authorities. The course will tell you how to avoid these costs and create potential new income streams. The following subjects are not exhaustive therefore any problems and issues raised by delegates will be explored.During the online training, attendees can submit questions and comments using the Chat function.  - Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO)- Admin Processes, Grave digging, Memorials, Exhumation overview - Granting and Exercising the EROB- Transferring the EROB |
| Tuesday May 25th 10am | Village Greens13 places available | Half day morning | Wellers Hedleys | This online session will cover the following:* Definition of Village Greens
* Registration of Village Greens
* Evidence required for registration
* Preventing establishment of a Village Green
* Effect of Village Green status
* Ownership of Village Greens
 |
| Thurs. June 3rd &Thurs. June 10th 9.30am | Clerks, the Knowledge | 2 morning sessions | Kim Bedford | This two part online workshop, explores the knowledge needed to be an effective Clerk to a Town or Parish Council. It is ideal for new practitioners and those wishing to prepare for ILCA and CiLCA. |
| Thurs. June 24th 10.30am | Employing Staff with Confidence | Half day morning | Chris Moses | The training is aimed at Councillors and Clerks who want to avoid the numerous legal and practical pitfalls associated with being an Employer.  It will provide an overview of the essentials of getting it right when employing a Clerk or other members of staff.The course starts with recruitment and interviews, moves to induction and the legal requirements of taking on new staff, issuing contracts, and then managing sickness and disciplinary issues.It will also ensure that attendees are brought fully up to date with the latest legal changes. |
| Tuesday July 13th 10am | The Experienced Councillor | Half day morning | Wellers Hedleys | This is designed as a refresher course for councillors who have attended a core Councillor training session and spent some time gaining hands-on experience as a local councillor.Councillors, as elected representatives, are often thrown in at the deep end with very little training and support.  Whilst core councillor training sessions provide a much-needed introduction to local councils, there is little opportunity for more experienced councillors to pause and reflect on what is still to be achieved in terms of professional development and learning.  The session is focussed around a series of case studies, providing an important opportunity for councillors to explore and discuss commonly arising issues and typical scenarios in greater depth.  The purpose of the session is to refresh knowledge of procedure and practice and to further empower councillors to handle council business effectively and confidently.  A range of topics will be covered including local council spending powers, councillor conduct and planning ahead for the medium term.  Councillors will receive key sector updates. |
| Tuesday August 24th 6.30pm | Councillor Fundamentals | Evening session | Kim Bedford | In this session we will set the scene of local government -* Roles and responsibilities concerning the five main components of the council - Council, Councillor, Chairman, Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)
* The importance of the law in meetings with an effective agenda and accurate minutes
* Council delegation through committees; ways of managing your responsibilities; the place of Annual Meetings
* Making a council plan for delivery of services to and for your community
* Not forgetting - compliance through governance arrangements with full transparency
 |
| Tues. Sept. 7th & Tues. Sept. 21st 9.30am | Clerks, the Knowledge | Two morning sessions | Kim Bedford | This two part online workshop, run by Kim Bedford, explores the knowledge needed to be an effective Clerk to a Town or Parish Council. It is ideal for new practitioners and those wishing to prepare for ILCA and CiLCA. |
| Tuesday Sept. 14th10 am | Roles and Responsibilities | Full day over two sessions | Liz Howlett | This course, aimed at newly elected councillors, will be in two online sessions on the same day 10 - 12 and then 1 - 2.30pm.**Session One*** Terminology
* Collective responsibility
* Chairing a meeting
* Relationships
* The Agenda

**Session Two*** Code of Conduct
* Disorderly conduct
* Managing difficult situations
* Practical tips
 |
| Wed. Sept. 29th 6.30pm | Councillor Fundamentals | Evening Session | Kim Bedford | In this session we will set the scene of local government;-* Roles and responsibilities concerning the five main components of the council - Council, Councillor, Chairman, Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)
* The importance of the law in meetings with an effective agenda and accurate minutes
* Council delegation through committees; ways of managing your responsibilities; the place of Annual Meetings
* Making a council plan for delivery of services to and for your community
* Not forgetting - compliance through governance arrangements with full transparency
 |
| Tuesday October 12th 10.30am | Appraisals for Parish Council Staff | Half day morning | Chris Moses | The Purpose of Appraisals* Individual development
* Two way communication
* The benefits
* The potential pitfalls

Overcoming Staff Worries* Potential worries and objections and how to overcome them

The Appraisal Form* Its contents and their relevance
* When to supply it to Appraisees
* How to brief Appraisees on using the form

Preparation for an Appraisal* Job Descriptions – does everyone have a copy?
* Location and Environment – what are the required criteria?
* Questions – what are you going to ask?
 |
| Tuesday October 26th 10am | Introduction to VAT | Half day morning | Steve Parkinson | Essential for any council contemplating major building projects.Topics include:• how VAT law applies to local councils• where to find the law and guidance• business and non-business activities• understanding whether sales are taxable or exempt from VAT• when a council must register for VAT• when VAT can be reclaimed• Partial exemption• Reclaiming VAT when using grants and donationsBy the end of this session you will:• Know where to find the relevant legislation and guidance• Understand the key concepts of VAT• Know when a council can or can’t reclaim VAT• Recognise when a council must register for VAT• Be aware of activities that require special attention |
| Tuesday October 26th 1.30pm | Budgeting | Half day PM | Steve Parkinson | This session is aimed at officers and councillors of parish & town councils, who are involved in preparing, approving and monitoring budgets. Topics include:• setting a budget and precept• Contingencies and reserves• how the council tax base affects the budget• Inflation• budget monitoringBy the end of this session you will:• Understand how and when to prepare a budget• Know how to approve and issue a precept• Be aware of the factors that affect a budget• Understand how to manage a budget |
| Thurs. November 25th 10am | Roles and Responsibilities | Full day over two sessions | Liz Howlett | This course, aimed at newly elected councillors, will be in two online (Zoom) sessions on the same day 10 - 12 and then 1 - 2.30pm.***Session One**** Terminology
* Collective responsibility
* Chairing a meeting
* Relationships
* The Agenda

**Session Two*** Code of Conduct
* Disorderly conduct
* Managing difficult situations
* Practical tips
 |

# vacancies

If your council has a vacancy or anticipates having a vacancy OALC has a number of resources which can assist your council:

* A template for the advert to ensure your council provides all the necessary information and has thought about a job and person specification
* Information on salary scales
* A step by step guide to recruitment
* Copies of draft NALC/SLCC Model Contract
* NALC publication *Being a Good Employer* (in members area of the website)
* Access to OALC HR/Employment consultant for advice or an independent job evaluation (chargeable service)
* Library of employment briefings (in members area of the website)

**APPLEFORD-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL**

**VACANCY FOR PARISH CLERK**

**Location:                   Home** (required to attend Parish Council meetings)

**Hours:                        22 hours pcm** (5 hours pw)

**£ salary                      Commensurate with Experience** (LC1, SCP 10-12)

**Detail**
The Clerk will support the Parish Councillors, provide guidance on compliance and legal matters, and manage the administrative and clerical functions of the Council.  As the Responsible Financial Officer, he / she will manage the Parish Council’s finances.

Duties include:

* Supporting the chair by preparing agendas, taking minutes, noting decisions, follow ups and actions forward.
* Tabling planning notices for discussion and dealing with the District Council.
* Managing the finances of the Parish Council including preparing accounts, financial reports, controlling the Bank account, paying invoices, dealing with HMRC (VAT & PAYE), arranging insurance and audits, and overseeing the annual budget review and precept submissions.
* Supporting general village communications and website uploads.
* Maintain a document repository for access by Parish Councillors.
* Dealing with general correspondence and public notices.

**Qualities**

Candidates must possess good attention to detail, have good communication skills (written and verbal), be competent in Microsoft Office and Teams (or Zoom), and have a good working knowledge of IT systems including file sharing in the Cloud.

 This is a varied and interesting position. Working part-time and largely on your own initiative, you will have the necessary flexibility to deliver high-quality responsive support to a new team of energetic Parish Councillors, and enable them to deliver added value benefits for the village community.

**How to apply:** For further information, or to receive an Application Form to apply for the position, please contact the Council Chair, Mr Greg O’Broin by email at [applefordpcworkinggroup@gmail.com](https://d.docs.live.net/faaa57edaab7f639/ARG/APC%20%28Parish%20Council%29/Parish%20Clerk%20%28%5E0%20Vacancy%29/Job%20Advs/applefordpcworkinggroup%40gmail.com) or text or call 07768 490277.

**Deadline:  7th January 2021**

**Interview date:**  early January 2021

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| --- |
| **Salford**\* **Parish Council****Vacancy for Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer****This is a part-time, home-working, flexible role serving the village community. Starting date: 1 April 2021.****Hours** Part-time, 5 hours per week. **Location** Working from home and (in Covid-free circumstances) attending the monthly evening meetings in the Village Hall on the second Tuesday of each month. **Salary** The salary is £13.78 per hour (LC2 SCP 21), reviewable annually, depending on the candidate’s experience and skills. There is also an optional pension scheme. Annual leave entitlement is equivalent to 31 hours.**Responsibilities** The Clerk provides administrative and clerical support to the Council, and is also responsible for managing its financial affairs and budget. A detailed job description is available on request. A laptop and printer are provided, as well as some office materials.For an informal chat and further information, call the Clerk, Carol Ross, on 01608 641414. To apply, please send your CV with a covering letter to clerk@salfordvillage.org.uk **Closing date for applications: 31 January 2021.**\**Salford is a small village just outside Chipping Norton*  |
| **Chipping Norton Town Council****Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer****Location:** Office (with temporary flexibility for home working due to Covid-19)**Full Time** (37 hours a week) to include regular evening and occasional weekend working**£ salary (range) & other key benefits** SCP 33 – 36 £36,922 - £39,880 plus LGPSAre you committed to serving the community? Are you a careful administrator, a good communicator and an enthusiastic manager? Would you consider joining Chipping Norton Town Council as its new Town Clerk?We’re looking for a dynamic and innovative individual to lead the Council into the future. The successful candidate will need to build a wide range of positive relationships with Councillors, staff, residents, businesses and other organisations. You will also manage our small staff team and take overall responsibility for all the Town Council’s administrative functions. The Council provides a wide range of quality services including recreation grounds, open spaces, sports fields, allotments, burial land and the Town Hall. Town Clerks come from a range of backgrounds but they share an enthusiasm for serving the community. If you come from outside the sector then full support, training and mentoring will be given.The ideal candidate will have (or be):* A working knowledge and understanding of local government structure and practices.
* Experience of Committee administration and ability to take clear and accurate minutes of meetings
* Experience of financial management including budget setting and budget monitoring
* Experience of managing and developing a small staff team
* Ability to analyse and communicate complex data, write clear and accurate reports and correspondence
* Ability to manage land, buildings and other resources
* Ability to manage projects; delivering results to an agreed timescale and within budget
* Proficient user of Microsoft Word and Excel
* Comfortable using Zoom software or similar
* Proactive and confident in the use of other IT solutions (e.g. file sharing), website management and a range of social media
* Ability to research and identify relevant information and act on it in a timely way.
* Ability to build effective working relationships with Council members, staff and a range of stakeholders
* Ability to work effectively alone with minimal supervision

For full details of the post and to download an application form go to the Town Council’s website <https://www.chippingnortontowncouncil.co.uk/vacancy-for-town-clerk/> or contact Louise Steele at LGRC Associates louise.steele@lgrc.uk If you would like an informal chat about this vacancy then either Janet Eustace or Louise Steele (Locum Clerks) would be happy to talk to you and answer any queries you may have. Janet or Louise may be contacted using the details given below. Janet Eustace E: janet.eustace@yahoo.co.uk T: 01451 830594 orLouise Steele E: louise.steele@lgrc.uk T: 07808649597**Deadline 6pm on 8 January 2021 Interview date 15 January 2021**  |