OALC Newsletter

January 2021

# The headlines

**Latest Corona Advice READ THIS -** page 2- 4

**OALC -** subscriptions, Thank you, Exec Committee vacancies and helpful hint, pages 5-6

**LOCAL NEWS - pages 7-15**

* **OCC Census, help with repairs**
* **District Council’s**
* **CFO training, Healthwatch, Winter checklist, Ramblers, Oxford Carbon Summit etc.**
* **Oxfordshire Growth Board**

**NATIONAL NEWS - pages 15 -44**

* **Sec. 137**
* **East – west rail**
* **Open letter from NALC Chairman**
* **Code of Conduct, Village Hall Survey**
* **Climate emergency , Elections, Planning for the future**
* **And plenty more articles of interest**

**Consultations - 4 of them**

**Financial briefing –** risk management

**Employment briefing –** using up leave



**Training Programme 2021**

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

All training sessions are on line.

**See page 45 onwards for details of next year’s courses**

**VACANCIES**

* + **Salford PC – Clerk/RFO**
  + **Hornton PC - Clerk/RFO**
  + **Sandford on Thames PC – Clerk**
  + **Culham PC – 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) (updated 27th January) as it is constantly evolving. **The headings may look familiar but there are links to all the latest updates.**

1. **Oxfordshire is in lockdown like the rest of the country**

This link (below) updated on 28th January 2021 sets out what your council and community needs to know about what is or isn’t allowable under lockdown restrictions - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>



1. **Coronavirus - Oxfordshire Stakeholder Briefings**

 The position relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) is dynamic, in terms of national guidance for organisations and the general public. The Local Authorities and NHS organisations in Oxfordshire are all working together to ensure our response is effective and coordinated.

The briefings are provided to update you on how we are responding to the challenges and how this is changing the way we all work. Link to the briefings - <https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/your-health/coronavirus-stakeholder-briefing.htm> The latest one was issued on 22nd January

1. **Meetings**.

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 run until 7th May 2021.

There is much debate in central and local government circles about what the best way forward is and what legislation is necessary to enable virtual meetings to continue. Or whether there is any mileage in hybrid meetings. The LGA believe there is no option under current legislation to extend the current regulations under the Coronavirus Act 2020 as section 78 (3) contains the sunset date of 7 May 2021. The LGA has been speaking with colleagues in Government to make the case for extending and making permanent the provision for local authorities to meet remotely and or in hybrid form. To make this happen would require primary legislation, and LGA have been told that the Government is considering this issue carefully. LGA and NALC will continue to press this issue with Government.

From a parish council point of view we would not support hybrid or blended meetings. Allowing some councillors to be in the room and others virtual, would be a logistical, technical and legal nightmare for already overworked clerks. A continuation of virtual meetings is to be supported, this pandemic has gone on for much longer than many anticipated and may re-emerge again next winter so the ability to hold virtual meetings is vital. We await more news from MHCLG.

Unfortunately, the latest news from NALC is not helpful or optimistic for those councils that have found virtual meetings to be a good way forwards -

***NALC 27th January - Extending the remote meeting regulations*** *The government is not currently planning to extend the remote meeting regulations beyond 7 May 2021. Along with other local government bodies, NALC is continuing to press for this extension. We are also preparing guidance for local councils on preparing for and managing the return to physical meetings in May and beyond.*

This article from the Lawyers in Local Government website illustrates the problem -

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/314-governance-a-risk-articles/45802-remote-meetings-planning-for-permanence>

All I can say at the moment is watch this space. We will keep you informed as best we can when there is hard, factual news.

1. **Community Halls and sports**

**Updated advice from 5th January 2021** from the government 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/)

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 | Staff amenity |
| Safe distancing | Kitchen, café, bar |
| Entry and exit | Groups + Hiring |
| Entrances | Seating |
| Circulation | Indoor activities |
| Toilets | Outdoors |
| Office | 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)

1. Managing playgrounds and outside gyms updated **28th January 2021**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>

1. **Elections, referendums, by-elections and Casual Vacancies read the elections article on page 27**

Due to the coronavirus, the Government postponed all elections scheduled to take place on 7 May 2020 until Thursday 6th May 2021. At the moment we understand that the elections will be taking place. Returning officers and Democratic Services officers are working their socks off to ensure a covid safe election will take place.

Work on the basis that elections will be happening until you hear otherwise; 29th March is the date on which the Publication of the Notice of Election has to be published by the principal authority.

1. **Reopening your own offices** (if you have one!). Please follow the government guidance on safe working updated 6th January 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings>
2. **Charities,** as many councillors are charity trustees you may find this government advice for the charity sector helpful **updated 8th January 2021 -** <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>
3. Government advice on **accessing open spaces** **updated 13th January 2021** <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>

**COVID-19 VACCINATION - ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW**



Getting your COVID-19 vaccination can protect you and may help to protect your family and those you care for. The COVID-19 vaccine should help reduce the rates of serious illness and save lives, and reduce pressure on the NHS and social care services.

Patients are being prioritised for the vaccine according to the national criteria:

* Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
* All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
* All those 75 years of age and over
* All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
* All those 65 years of age and over
* All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
* All those 60 years of age and over
* All those 55 years of age and over
* All those 50 years of age and over

More information about the prioritisation criteria is available [here.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/)

When it is your turn to receive the vaccine you will be contacted by the NHS directly. You may receive a letter, phone call, text message or email, so keep an eye out. Please don't contact your GP to request a vaccination.

As with many vaccines, for the COVID-19 jab to be most effective people will need to have two doses. These can be up to 12 weeks apart and people will be called for their second dose at the right time. You should get vaccinated even if you have previously had COVID-19 as the protection the vaccine gives is likely to be greater and longer lasting than that created by the body's response to being infected.

Due to the urgency of the pandemic, the vaccine has been developed quickly. However it has passed all of the tests needed for any new drug or medicine to ensure it is safe. The vaccine developers followed well-established processes for clinical trials involving thousands of people who were closely monitored for side effects with no serious ill effects noted. The vaccine was then thoroughly assessed by the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHPRA) which is the UK medicines regulator.

The vaccine uses the virus’s genetic code to make your body's cells create a protein that looks like COVID-19. This then allows your body's immune system to develop the response cells ready to fight off the infection if you catch it at another time. The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain the live COVID-19 virus (so you cannot catch Coronavirus from the vaccine), and it does not contain any animal products or egg.

Having the vaccine is your choice. If you have any questions or concerns about the vaccine and your health, you should talk to your GP or another healthcare professional.

## OALC – subscription invoices for 2021-22 and thank you

Last year we managed to get our membership subscription invoices in the post to you before the world shut down in late March.

Since then we have invested in having our database rewritten so this year you will be getting the membership subscription invoice by email probably in late February early March.

There is a small increase from 13.165 pence per elector to 13.757 ppe this represents a 4% increase, most of which is attributable to NALC.

**THANK YOU** to all those of you that took the time to respond giving your views and experiences of working remotely. Interestingly there was wide disparity in the views, some councils had embraced virtual working because it allowed a wider spectrum of people to attend including councillors with caring responsibilities and saved on petrol, time, printing etc. Others hated it, missing the personal interaction and the informal but important conversations together with the techy problems of poor broadband and those without equipment or knowledge of how to join virtual meetings.

Also thank you for your views on whether elections should go ahead in May and the future of virtual/hybrid meetings.

All your responses will be summarized and forwarded to our MP’s so they have a better understanding of your views on virtual working, elections and loss of income due to covid.

## 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, one in South Oxfordshire 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, not just their own council. 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](mailto:info@oalc.org.uk) for a discussion and a nomination form to be completed by your council.

A Working Party of Executive Committee members is working on a review and update of our Strategic Plan.

## OALC helpful hint – don’t forget to publish required information on your website

The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities, 2014 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388541/Transparency_Code_for_Smaller_Authorities.pdf>

requires parish councils to publish certain information on their website:

1. all items of expenditure above £100
2. end of year accounts
3. annual governance statement
4. internal audit report
5. list of councillor or member responsibilities
6. the details of public land and building assets
7. Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings

Please consider a. – g. as a tick list. Can you tick that all this information is on your website? The more information on your website, in theory, the less questions (and FoI’s) you will get asked. Transparency should be the council default position, it is public money after all.

# Local News



**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.

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.**Thank you to all those who have already completed the short, [online survey](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKWolzuV90D3D3ThZ6WAEONkhujD4RBJI2XBh84xfvPHKmJg/viewform) .  If you haven’t had the chance yet, the Census team covering Oxfordshire would like to understand where your community may need or can offer support with the Census on the 21 March.

If you have town or parish newsletter deadlines due in the next two weeks, please feel free to use the following text to introduce the census:

‘*The Census is coming on 21 March. Information from the digital-first Census will help decide how services are planned and funded in our local area. Census outputs inform where millions of pounds of public funding is spent on services like transport, education and health, and on cycle routes, schools and dental surgeries. Everyone will receive a letter with a unique access code in the post, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. Paper questionnaires will be available on request. For more information visit* [*Census.gov.uk.*](https://census.gov.uk/)*’*

If you would like accompanying census graphics and social media content please contact [lisa.stead58@field.Census.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.stead58@field.Census.gov.uk) or on 07452 942723

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](mailto: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](mailto:sinead.leach49@field.census.gov.uk) or on 07452 948074 (South Oxfordshire and Oxford City).

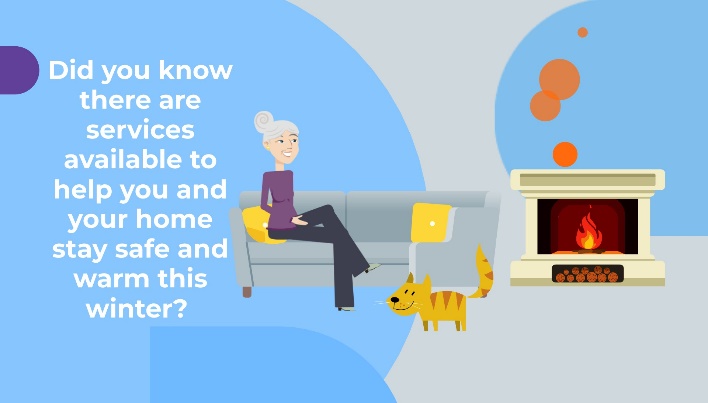
**Get help with home repairs**

The condition of your home affects your health.  When a cold home is also damp mould is likely to occur, all linked to impacts on health especially for older and vulnerable people.

There are services and funds available to help people (owners and private tenants) stay independent, safe, warm and well in their homes.

Oxfordshire County Council has developed a referral service to help residents (or carers) access the right organisations in their area, to get the help they need.

The type of help that can be provided are services such as new boilers, repairs to boilers, loft or cavity wall insulation, access to a local and trustworthy repairs service and general advice on how to stay safe, well and affordably warm in your home.

For more information or to make a referral visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs)  

* If you are a homeowner, you don’t have to put up with a cold, damp home.

There are services available to help you keep warm this winter.

Visit our referrals website: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs)  to find out what help is available to make your home comfortable and safe this winter

* Due to COVID-19 restrictions we will be spending more time at home, leading to higher energy use and costs of heating, there is help available.

Make yourself at home this winter. There are services out there to help your home stay safe and warm for you.

Housing affects health. There are services and funds out there that can help home owners stay independent, safe and well in their homes. For more information or to make a referral visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs)  

* Do you know someone who needs help with home repairs? There are organisations across Oxfordshire who can provide services to help keep them independent, safe and well in their homes. For more information or to make a referral visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs)
* Are you struggling with home repairs? Regardless of where you live in Oxfordshire as a home owner, you can report any housing condition problem and get help from organisations in your area. For more information or to make a referral visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs)



## Community First Oxfordshire free training

[News/Blog](https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/category/news-blog/), UncategorisedBringing Your Community Together 2021

**CFO** and **Oxfordshire Adult Learning** have come together to offer [FREE TRAINING](https://www.communityfirstoxon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Flyer-re-Bringing-your-Community-Together-Part-One-and-Part-Two-Day-and-Evening-courses.pdf)to inspire and help you strengthen neighbourliness, community action, and build a stronger community.

This training is a joint venture between CFO and Abingdon and Witney College, which builds on the successful pilot of the CFO online 'Listen In Listen Out, Active Listening and Reflective practice workshops for community leaders e.g parish and town councils and other voluntary run community groups, which they have run with different communities over the past six months.

This course will develop your skills in working with others in making a lasting difference in your community.

## Chilterns AONB

The AONB has published its latest newsletter covering

* A series on online webinars: The Chilterns are famous for their chalky soils, precious chalk streams, ancient woodland, rolling farmland and rich industrial heritage that has helped shape the landscape. Farming continues to play an active part in the landscape and the Chilterns Conservation Board is keen to help farmers understand changes that are being proposed in the new 25-year Environment Plan and the Agriculture Bill.
* A new Chalkscapes Project
* Concerns about HS2
* And much more, you too can sign up to receive their newsletter.

More information [here](https://www.chilternsaonb.org/) on their website

## Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to hear how it has been for residents and family members during COVID-19.

The county’s independent health and social care watchdog has launched a survey for people to share their experiences of keeping in touch while visits have been restricted.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would particularly like to know what contact you have been able to have with your relative, and what impact this has had on you and them. It would also like to hear any suggestions that would make it easier for people to keep in touch with their loved ones in care homes.

If you would like to have your say, please complete our anonymous survey [**www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/carehomefamilies**/](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001vayWRJF3k3YhXdVKHCSzXFRnFfMShKBrJViiMs_LxykCtbX5sHpo1piI0SMfTUrf1-DBDFRgIS13Tg-ejgBaieCvmo2nAhMzfhMi144iHkEzPV6arHtHsvWeXnrBM5N8VDNu0vZglktAJHGlRZ4o9xqdqkytMWksmWpSbMcbhT4L8p1NVOO14Q==&c=T216Q862eAIu6LYzS8JXkBeyg9kFIOiHSnD7Q8McueKhfSZCCsXbRA==&ch=S5LkLCefmXcCNWbQ0K6pDL-12CycLRm9VpI5v0ycQWokxGsZnvNn2A==) or get in touch with HWO on 01865 520520 or at [**hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk**](mailto:hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)

## Winter Checklist for councils from BHIB insurers

Winter weather can present a lot of challenges to town and parish councils from a risk management perspective. During the winter months your roads, car parks, walkways, stairs/steps, bus shelters, playground etc. can become hazardous as snow falls and ice forms.

To make sure your council is well prepared this winter, we have produced a [Winter Checklist](https://www.bhibcouncils.co.uk/news/winter-checklist-for-councils-top-tips-for-dealing-with-winter-weather/?utm_source=MEMBERS&utm_campaign=f86105a092-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_08_03_15_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_206970988f-f86105a092-323671257&mc_cid=f86105a092&mc_eid=2593660dc7) – that is free to download – as well as our top tips for dealing with winter weather.

## Oxford: Britain's first all electric bus town?

Oxford and Coventry have been chosen as finalists in the all electric bus town scheme run by the Department for Transport. On 6th January the Department put out a [news story](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coventry-and-oxford-set-to-be-uks-first-all-electric-bus-cities#:~:text=Coventry%20and%20Oxford%20are%20developing,bus%20fleet%20to%20electric%20vehicles.) that 19 bids had been received from principal authorities across England to change to a cleaner and greener bus fleet to help improve air quality and reduce emissions

Subject to successful business cases, each area could be awarded up to £50 million to not only replace its entire fleet of buses with all-electric versions, but to also install new infrastructure, such as charging stations, and pay for electric grid updates.

Oxfordshire County Council Leader, Cllr Ian Hudspeth, said: *Oxfordshire’s bid comes at a time when our council is determined to take concerted climate action to cut vehicle air pollution and expand the provision of bus services with our*[*Zero Emission Zone*](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20299/air_quality_projects/1305/oxford_zero_emission_zone_zez)*and*[*Connecting Oxford*](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/connecting_oxford_brochure.pdf)*plans. This council is committed to offering our residents a clean and environmentally sustainable future through a series of steps including through better public transport.*

The government will work with the 2 local authorities to finalise their business cases over the coming weeks.

## Zero Carbon Oxford summit

Oxford City Council announced on 10th December that the city had achieved its target of 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 on a 2005 baseline, and set the date for a Zero Carbon Oxford summit. The summit is to be held with key partners to set a vision for reaching Net Zero faster than the Government’s legal deadline of 2050.

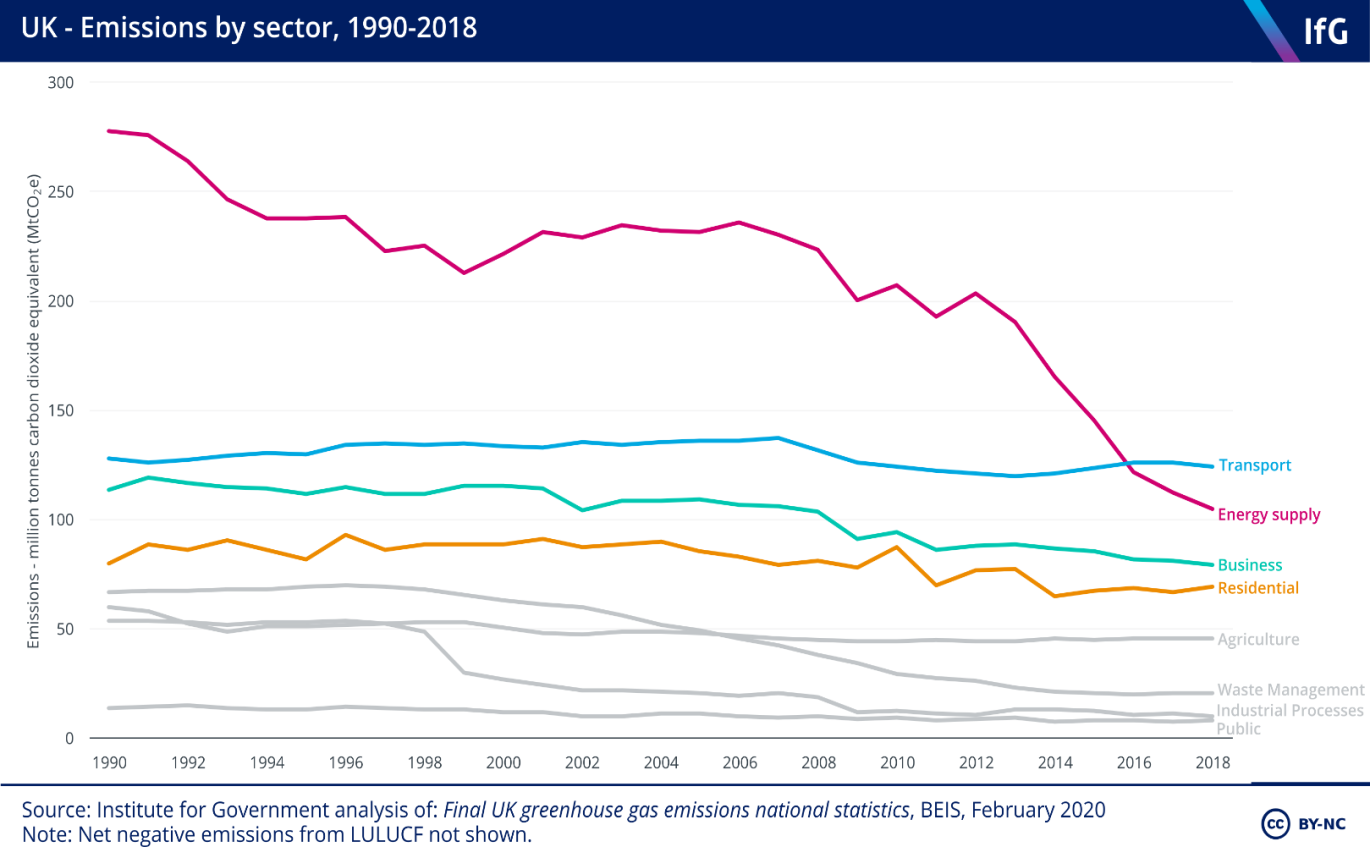
The announcement came as Oxford City Council joined other local authorities in welcoming [UK 100’s goal of reaching net zero area-wide emissions by 2045 at](file:///C:\Users\ext-pcowx\Downloads\UK%20emissions%20by%20sector) the latest.

The Zero Carbon Oxford summit to be held on 04 February 2021, will bring together leaders from the city’s universities, institutions and large businesses to consider the actions required to accelerate carbon reduction across the city and  how early it could be possible to achieve Net Zero.

[The Council’s newly appointed Scientific Adviser, Professor Nick Eyre of the University of Oxford’s Environmental Change Institute,](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1592/oxford_city_council_announces_appointment_of_scientific_advisor) will use his expertise to provide independent scientific advice to the Summit partners. They will discuss mapping five yearly carbon targets for the city that are both achievable and scientifically robust.

It is intended that the Summit will also lead to the creation of a new Zero Carbon Oxford partnership for the city, replacing the Low Carbon Oxford partnership established a decade ago. The new partnership will enable a wider range of stakeholders to play their part in cutting Oxford’s carbon footprint to zero.

The Council is hosting the summit in response to the declaration of a climate emergency in January 2019, the recommendations of last year’s Oxford Citizens’ Assembly on Climate Change, and calls for collective action by the Council’s [Youth Climate Summit](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1629/oxford_city_council_holds_youth_climate_summit_on_how_city_can_tackle_the_climate_emergency), which took place at the end of November 2020.



[UK emissions by sector (Updated: 20 Apr 2020)](https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/charts/uk-emissions-sector)

Although it is responsible for just 1% of Oxford’s emissions, the City Council has set out a vision to reach zero carbon across its own operations by 2030.

The Zero Carbon Summit will develop a roadmap to net zero emissions for Oxford as a whole and set an aspirational but scientifically robust date by when this can be achieved.

The Summit will be an opportunity for representatives to showcase their climate plans and action, facilitate conversation about a collective vision, and establish a formal partnership and collaborative approach to tackling the climate crisis.

## Ramblers Association – 696 miles of footpaths could be lost in Oxfordshire

**According to the Ramblers Association, with the help of thousands of volunteers, they have searched all of England and Wales and found over 49,000 miles of paths that could be lost forever, unless we come together to save them.**  
Footpaths are one of our most precious assets, hidden in plain sight, and often taken for granted, they allow everyone to enjoy the countryside, both on our doorstep and across Britain’s iconic landscapes.   
  
Time is running out, **with only five years** left to collect the evidence needed to build and submit applications to restore them for future generations. The map of Oxfordshire is here

<https://e-activist.com/page/70259/action/2> And more information, FAQ’s etc. are [here](https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026.aspx) on the Ramblers Association website

## Cherwell District Council

Grants are available for businesses that have had to close due to the tier and lockdown restrictions that have been in place since November 2020.  In this context a business is any property that has a business rates account, so most village and community halls are eligible to apply.  There have been several iterations of the scheme as restriction levels have changed.  A business only needs to fill in one application form and the council will work out which elements it qualifies for.

Further details and application form are at: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/258/coronavirus/675/coronavirus-guidance-for-businesses/2>

Stay at home – COVID kills, from the County Council

Cases are rising extremely quickly across Cherwell – we’re now one of the top 50 most affected areas in all of England. COVID loves a crowd and as people continue to mix, it’s spreading fast.

One in three people with COVID don’t know they have it, but increasing numbers are being affected – and are dying. So, in order to minimise the risk to you and your loved ones, act like you’ve got it.

The vaccine will not start to have an influence for some weeks – and so the only weapon we have is to stay at home and avoid mixing.

* Only go shopping when essential
* shop alone and locally
* keep two metres apart from others
* wear a face covering
* remember that outdoor exercise is only allowed once per day.

This is real, it’s affecting our economy, our children, our healthcare system and our own lives. We need to act now to stop the spread. For more information, visit <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19/stopping-spread-coronavirus-oxfordshire>

## Oxfordshire growth board



The agenda for Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting held on Tuesday 26th January 2021 is available on the Vale of White Horse DC website here -<http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=2782&x=1>

The secretariat for the Board circulates around each of the district/county councils for one year.

The Members of the Growth Board are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council | Councillor Sue Cooper |
| Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council (which holds the Chair) Leader of Cherwell District Council | Councillor Emily Smith |
| Leader of Cherwell District Council | Councillor Barry Wood |
| Leader of Oxford City Council | Councillor Susan Brown |
| Leader of Oxfordshire County Council | Councillor Ian Hudspeth |
| Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council  (which holds the Vice-Chair) | Councillor Michele Mead |
|  |  |
| Chairman of OxLEP | Jeremy Long |
| Vice-Chairman and Skills Board representative | Adrian Lockwood |
| Universities representative | Professor Alistair Fitt |
| OxLEP business representative - Bicester | Miranda Markham |
| OxLEP business representative – Oxford City | Peter Nolan |
| OxLEP business representative – Science Vale | Angus Horner |
| Homes England representative | Catherine Turner |
| Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group | Dr Kiren Collison |
| Environment Agency representative | Emma Hill |

The main items were:

|  |
| --- |
| **Growth Board Scrutiny Panel** update |
| **Update on Healthy Place Shaping**:  This report provides members of the Growth Board with an update on activities that have been undertaken to embed healthy place shaping into its workstreams and the strategies that underpin them. As part of this work a Health Impact Assessment Toolkit has been developed for use in Oxfordshire and the Growth Board is asked to endorse its use across the county. |
| **Economic Recovery Plan Update:**  To receive a further update on progress in developing an Economic Recovery Plan for Oxfordshire, which responds to the economic impacts caused by COVID-19. |
| **Community Led Housing** |
| **England's Economic Heartland Briefing**:  To receive a presentation/update from England’s Economic Heartland regarding the outcomes of their recent Transport Strategy consultation, and next steps for finalising the Strategy |
| **Housing and Growth Deal Reports**: Infrastructure and Oxfordshire Plan 2050 sub-group updates |
| **Growth Board Forward Plan** |
| **Oxford to Cambridge Arc Update:**  Councillor Smith and Councillor Wood summarised the key points of the Arc Leaders Group meeting held on 17 November 2020 and highlighted the holding of webinar on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc which had been attended by over 300 delegates. This was available to watch on the [OxLEP YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZeO-MKy0CA) . |

## South Oxfordshire DC

**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.  Minimum grant £250.

**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 19th February 2021.**

## Vale of White Horse DC

Check on the Vale of White Horse DC website for eligibility for funding, amounts, criteria and deadlines keep altering! <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/coronavirus-community-support/support-for-businesses/>

## Phil Hood internal auditor

A message from the daughter of Phil Hood, Arrow Accounting:

*“As some of you may or may not know, Philip Hood fell suddenly ill in January of 2020. (Unrelated to covid-19).*

*The last year has been a battle of survival and I am pleased to say he is now stable. However, as a result of his on-going illness, he has unfortunately lost his vision and is now registered blind.*

*It is with an extremely heavy heart that I have to advise, that Arrow Accounting can no longer stay in operation.*

*I have been trying my best to correspond with the councils individually. However I don’t have the function to send an email to “all”. Please accept my apologies, as I know that some of you have been holding out and have tried to contact him.*

*This is a decision I have been forced to make on his behalf. Thank you for all of the well wishes and support during the last year.*

*If you wish to contact me, please do so on 07784243981*

*Alexandra Hood”*

# National News

## SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE: LIMIT FOR 2021-2022

**Extract from letter to NALC:**

*This is to notify you that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for parish and town councils in England for 2021-22 is £8.41.*

*This is the amount as a result from increasing the amount of £8.32 for 2020-2021 by the percentage increase in the retail index between September 2019 and September 2020, in accordance with Schedule 12B to the 1072 Act.*

*I am coping this letter to Rob Smith, Chief Executive of the Society of Local Council Clerks, Tony Crawley, Chief Officer of Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited and Howard Midworth, General Manager at Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Limited.*

***Chris Widgery,*** *Deputy Director* ***,*** *Efficiency & Accountability, Local Government Policy Directorate, MHCLG*

## East west rail link receives government funding

The Department of Transport announced on 23rd January a £794 million investment package to reopen 2 rail routes closed more than 50 years ago

The new funding includes £760 million for the delivery of the next phase of East West Rail, which the government suggest will create 1,500 skilled jobs, and reinstate direct rail services between Bicester and Bletchley for the first time since 1968.

The Dept. of Transport press release is here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/transport-secretary-launches-794-million-investment-to-boost-rail-links-in-north-and-south>

## Drones (UAV) - Freedom of information request

Clerks may have received an email like this : “*Can you please advise if you have any byelaws relating to the use off UAVs from your land, and if so can you please elder provide a copy or the link to their location on a website.  
If you do not have any byelaws, do you have any other policies relating to the use of UAVs on your land?  
Can you finally advise if these have been reviewed in relation to CAP722C (*[*https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=11&mode=detail&id=9891*](https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=11&mode=detail&id=9891)*) published by the Civil Aviation Authority in December 2020.”*

We understand that this request has gone to some but not all clerks across the country

We are dubious whether many or any parish councils will have bye laws concerning drones. A few might have polices about the use of drones in their parish.

With a query like this if you do have a policy then you provide it or point the enquirer to your website where they can find it.

If you don’t have anything, a polite email to that effect is all that is required.

## Community Business Renewal fund

Power to Change has launched the Community Business Renewal Initiative, in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This £3million [Community Business Renewal Fund is](https://www.powertochange.org.uk/get-support/programmes/community-business-renewal-fund/) part of a support package for the community business sector.

**What is the Community Business Renewal Fund?**

The Community Business Renewal Fund provides grants to community businesses in England affected by the Covid-19 crisis to adapt, renew and rebuild their business so they can remain financially viable. The fund is aimed at organisations delivering services in their local community to support those who have been most affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

**What can you apply for?**

An unrestricted grant between £10,000 and £20,000 to support your organisation to adapt and evolve to the changing circumstances, by providing an unrestricted grant that could be used to cover core staffing costs, contribute to meeting capital costs of adapting your community business and ensuring that your community business can continue to provide the vital support to local people.

The Community Business Renewal Fund welcomes strong applications from organisations across the community business sector. However applications will be prioritised from organisations that are:

* Operating in a community that has been hardest hit by Covid-19
* Increasing diversity in the community business sector
* Supporting the growth and impact of the community business sector as a whole.

The Community Business Renewal Fund has one more round of grants -

**Round three:** **Opening 10am on Tuesday 2 March – closing at 4pm on Tuesday 9 March**

## Housing Delivery Test 2020

MHCLG has [published its Housing Delivery Test 2020 measurement.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2020-measurement?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=fd4d0227-82fc-4755-b900-a763e9cd7d6e&utm_content=immediately) This is the annual measurement of housing delivery in relevant plan-making authorities – the result of which can result in a number of consequences for councils, including the presumption in favour of development. The numbers of 'homes required' within the 2019/20 year has been reduced by a month, to reflect the disruption to local authority planning services and the construction sector, as a result of COVID-19.

The Local Government Association continues to make the case that the Housing Delivery Test fails to take into account the complexity and unique needs of local areas, as well as failing to recognise that councils have few powers to ensure build-out, once planning permission is granted. They continue to call for the presumption in favour sanctions to be scrapped, as they leave councils and their communities exposed to speculative planning applications for developments outside of the Local Plan. This results in homes that do not meet local needs, in places where they are not needed.

## Future Homes Standards

The Government has published its response to the submissions on the [Future Home Standard](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMzksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTAxMTkuMzM1NzI3NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3Byb3RlY3QtZXUubWltZWNhc3QuY29tL3MvWGl4ZUMyUkpERmtYTmxOSDN5RG01In0.z6kFbBPzZiQlL5V64T1d1UzFGU2O6XjL_QntChY8MMA/s/1098563174/br/93319305939-l) consultation carried out last year. The response acknowledges the need to clarify Local Planning Authorities' roles in setting energy efficiency requirements and confirms that in the immediate term, they will not amend the Planning and Energy Act 2008 and local authorities will retain powers to set local energy efficiency standards for new homes.

Meanwhile, the Government has begun Stage Two of its consultation on standards, which focuses on changes to Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations. It builds on the [Future Homes Standard consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings) by setting out energy and ventilation standards for non-domestic buildings, existing homes and includes proposals to mitigate against overheating in residential buildings. The deadline for submissions is 13 April.

## Open letter from NALC Chairman, Cllr Sue Baxter to all councillors

Looking back to my open letter just twelve months ago, no-one could have foreseen the coronavirus pandemic which has changed our lives and the country in so many ways since.

It was my contention then, that as the first tier of local government, England’s 10,000 local (parish and town) councils can be at the centre of a movement of community change. That never before has it been so important for local councils to play our full part in this, to realise our potential to help bring the country and our communities back together after recent challenging years. And that we have a key role to play in the new decade ahead, we must be up for this challenge, and be ambitious for our communities.

Which is why I am immensely proud of how local councils mobilised so quickly to be at the forefront of the initial response to the coronavirus, [stepping up to support our communities](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/news-stories/3221-coronavirus-case-studies/file) and play a vital role in the national effort to tackle the pandemic.

Co-ordinating emergency plans and volunteers to collect and deliver medicines and shopping. Acting as information hubs to provide guidance, advice and support from the government and other agencies. Helping businesses including publicising their online services. Establishing emergency grant funds such as supporting food banks. Continuing to maintain our never more important green spaces. Holding remote meetings to keep local democracy going which has seen an increase in people attending and watching.

All this cements the already crucial role local councils play as a unit of solidarity and natural focus of community effort in building strong and resilient communities.

My contention, therefore, remains – but is even firmer, and even more resolute.

Yet while 2020 was an undoubtedly the year of the response, recent events mean right now and over the coming weeks and months, our response role must continue or in some cases be stepped back up.

I know many councils are already doing just this and I want to again thank and pay tribute to all councillors, staff and volunteers, plus colleagues at NALC and in county associations, for your efforts. You are real unsung superheroes of local democracy and our communities.

We have reason to be optimistic, however, as the roll-out of the vaccines gives hope that many aspects of our national and community life will soon return. Back albeit different, with new ways of working, a greater appreciation of our immediate locality and the many things we previously took for granted, which I am sure will stick. Better in so many ways.

But our resolutions for 2021 must also look beyond the response, this must also be a year for a reset, a year to rethink the change needed to support the recovery and focus on the rebuilding of our communities. I want to set three rethinks for the year ahead which challenge all of us through a series of pledges to take action on, as we build back stronger, better communities.

Rethink relations

Where local councils work well, this is in no small part down to relationships and partnerships. Good, positive and effective relations, both within and outside the council, are the keys to delivering for our people and places.

Most local councils are well run, with clerks and council staff working as a team with councillors to deliver their ambitions for the community. But all too often we hear about the negative impact behaviour can have, by clerks, councillors and residents. NALC remains committed to promoting and supporting good governance and the highest standards of conduct and behaviour in councils.

I pledge to work with county associations and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) on a civility project aimed at improving conduct and behaviour, as well as with the Local Government Association (LGA) on support and guidance. I ask you to pledge to take part in training opportunities and the Local Council Award Scheme and consider the new national model code of conduct developed by the LGA which we have contributed to.

Councils across all tiers are increasingly recognising the added value that greater partnership working brings to services and local people. Strong, enduring partnerships – not just with principal authorities but other agencies such as health, police and voluntary sector – ensure local councils can play their part in tackling the challenges our communities face.

I pledge to work with the LGA to encourage good relations between the tiers, share good practice and develop appropriate guidance. I ask you to pledge to build positive links with your principal authority plus other partners and to ask yourself how you can help them.

This awful crisis has demonstrated how important our sector is to local areas, and we will continue to make the case to the government and others that we should be at the heart of building back communities, further devolution and community empowerment. I am particularly keen for us to maintain a focus on forging good relations with Members of Parliament (MPs) and indeed parliament in general.

I pledge that NALC and county associations will be strong voices for the sector, that we will continue to promote [A prospectus for ultra-localism,](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/prospectus?mc_cid=d68090a0ae&mc_eid=2593660dc7) speaking up for and championing local councils – your fantastic work as well as the issues you face – to government officials and ministers, political parties, the media and opinion formers. I ask you to pledge to engage positively and regularly with your MP, tell them what you are doing, invite them to events, but ensure they too know the issues you face and take them up on your behalf. Only by doing this together, nationally and locally, will we ensure our sector gets the recognition and support it deserves.

Rethink ambitions

Our relevance as the first tier of local government rests firmly on supporting and improving our communities and being at the heart of local place-shaping. We should rightly be ambitious for our people and places.

This will be increasingly important as the country rebuilds following the pandemic and in tackling the existential threat posed by the climate emergency. Many of the best councils, of all sizes, in both urban as well as rural areas, are already addressing these issues. Such as through neighbourhood plans, supporting the local economy and high streets and town centres, setting up community businesses, working with others to develop climate action plans, promoting health and wellbeing, addressing loneliness and building dementia-friendly communities.

I pledge that NALC and county associations will encourage and support your ambitions, providing the tools you need to make a difference, building on our work to date on our big themes of [health and wellbeing,](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/health-and-wellbeing?mc_cid=d68090a0ae&mc_eid=2593660dc7) [climate change](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/climate-change?mc_cid=d68090a0ae&mc_eid=2593660dc7), and our recent guide on [community business](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/1620-nalc-launches-a-new-guide-on-community-business%20?mc_cid=d68090a0ae&mc_eid=2593660dc7). Sharing good practice will remain at the heart of what we do through our case study collections such as POINTS OF LIGHT, [LCR magazine,](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/lcrmagazine?mc_cid=d68090a0ae&mc_eid=2593660dc7) and our programme of online events aimed to enthuse and inspire you. Young people – who have been particularly impacted by the pandemic – is our next big theme and we will raise awareness of the work of local councils with and for young people. I ask you to pledge to actively encourage your council to work with residents and your partners to ambitiously shape the future development of your place. Making full use of the resources and powers you have, including attaining the general power of competence – a power of confidence and innovation – to make it easier for you to make the vital difference your community and the country needs. And to place young people’s current and future needs firmly on your agenda.

Rethink engagement

Our 100,000 councillors are the closest democratic representatives to residents. They can play a key role in restoring faith in democracy and confidence in how our country is governed and decisions which affect our lives. But we cannot simply rely on the ballot box every four years to deliver this.

Communities thrive when people get involved, give up their time and come together to take action on the issues they care about. The pandemic has provided a real boost to this community spirit and my big aspiration for the year ahead is for all councils to build on this newfound civic pride, to find ways to keep new volunteers motivated and actively involved in the wider life of their community as the pandemic recedes.

It is by local councils being ambitious and realising your potential that I am sure more people will come forward as they recognise and appreciate the difference local councils really can make.

I pledge through NALC’s [Make a Change campaign](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-elections?mc_cid=d68090a0ae&mc_eid=2593660dc7) to work with county associations to promote local elections, encourage more people to stand, and provide resources and information to assist local councils. I ask you to pledge to actively seek out and encourage more people to come forward to be a councillor. If you know someone who cares about where they live, ask them to stand. Make sure your council’s activities and processes attract a wide and diverse mix of people of all backgrounds and ages. Provide time and resources to publicise, support and encourage elections and see them as the lifeblood of your democratic credibility.

The best councils continuously communicate with residents of all ages and from all backgrounds; online, in print and in person. They regularly engage with and consult people on key issues such as budget decisions, help residents to get involved through volunteering, provide opportunities to come together through events, and support community hubs and village halls for activities and people to meet when rules allow.

I pledge that NALC, as well as county associations, will communicate regularly with you, providing the information you need to do your job and on what we are doing on your behalf, [through our website,](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/?mc_cid=d68090a0ae&mc_eid=2593660dc7) social media channels, newsletters, bulletins, and opportunities to come together. I ask you to pledge to ensure you are engaging and communicating effectively with your residents and to use the flexibility to hold remote meetings to connect people with your important work.

I have never known a more challenging time for the first tier of local government. Yet it is a time so equally exciting and full of opportunity. A time where I know local councils will continue to be ambitious for our communities and make a change.

I pledge this to a year to help build back stronger, better communities, and I hope you will too.

Sue Baxter, Chairman, NALC

## **Councillor Code of Conduct**

The [LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct](https://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020-0) was approved by the recent LGA Executive Advisory Board. There were 1,600 individual [responses to the consultation](https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-model-member-code-conduct-consultation-response-analysis-november-2020#lga-model-member-code-of-conduct-consultation-analysis-) on the Code from councillors, officers and on behalf of whole councils from all parts of local government. The vast majority coming from town and parish councils.

**Table 2: Number of responses by respondent type**

|  | **Councillor** | **Officer** | **Whole council** | **Other** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Community/Neighbourhood/Parish/Town | 442 | 306 | 271 | 20 | 1,039 |
| District/Borough | 172 | 42 | 53 | 21 | 288 |
| County | 17 | 8 | 14 | 5 | 44 |
| Metropolitan/Unitary/London Borough | 90 | 20 | 32 | 22 | 164 |
| Other | 18 | 5 | 3 | 28 | 54 |
| Total | 739 | 381 | 373 | 96 | 1,589 |

The LGA has been working with partners including Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services Officers and the National Association of Local Councils. LGA will be developing further guidance and support on the Code.

The Oxfordshire Monitoring Officers met on 27th January to discuss the LGA Code of Conduct and a possible timetable for its adoption. At the moment the Monitoring Officers who are also usually the Returning Officers as well are extremely busy organizing the forthcoming elections, there isn’t the required time to adopt the new LGA Code before the May elections. It will probably be May 2022 when it is adopted. In Oxfordshire all three levels of local government – parish/town, district and county have adopted the same Code to ensure consistency and anticipate doing so again with this new Code.

## **Parliamentary Boundary Review**

The Boundary Commission for England has begun [a new review of Parliamentary constituencies](https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/home/2023-review/) in England.  The ‘2023 Review’ will make final recommendations by 1 July 2023. Initial proposals for new constituencies are expected to be ready for public consultation in the early summer. The review proposes an increase of three constituencies in the Eastern region; one in the East Midlands; two in London; seven in the South East; and, three in the South West.  There is no change in Yorkshire and the Humber.

## ACRE VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY HALL SURVEY

**The survey which is done every 10 years has been completed; the main highlights set out below:**

* 2,109 halls (21% of all known halls) responded to the survey
* 60% said that the hall is the only meeting place in their community.
* 70% had undertaken improvement works in the last 5 years.Estimated value: £50m.
* 7% are listed buildings. 35% are in conservation areas.
* 16% have no car park.
* 10,000 individuals are using halls to earn their living, which demonstrates their economic value to their communities.
* 91% are not registered for VAT.
* 60% are making progress in adopting energy saving measures.

The report is [here](https://acre.org.uk/cms/resources/comm-guides/village-hall-survey-report-2020-final-digital-edition.pdf)

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**Executive Summary – Additional Points**

* Since the last survey 10 years ago, there was evidence that a greater proportion of respondents serve larger populations.
* On buildings, one-third of respondents indicated that problems with roofs/guttering were significant. A total of planned major works showed over the next 5 years that this could amount to between £384m and £750m.
  + - 85% of respondents intended to use local builders and suppliers – value to local community.
* **Funding for building works showed that Parish Councils were the major supporters.**
* **Broadband/wi-fi provision**: 90% of respondents reported that this had been installed – a massive increase from 10 years ago.
* **Accessibility of premises:** The survey showed that 75% were fully compliant.
  + - Wheelchair access was 73%.
* **Environmental Impact:** Generally, there has been progress. 50% of halls have taken steps to minimise this impact, a big increase from 10 years ago when the figure was 15%.
  + - There was some reporting that heating systems might become a priority, with reviews of overhead systems and air source heat pumps.
    - 246 halls have installed photovoltaic panels.
* **Management and Administration:** 88% of halls are registered charities. Policies for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults need to be more widespread. Many halls feel that recruiting committee members and other volunteers is a continuing difficulty, and reliance on their willingness to serve is crucial to enabling the hall to function.
* **Finance Issues:** Three out of five have reported their running costs at less than £10,000 per annum. There has been a general improvement in financial health and financial planning. Three-quarters of hall committees believe that their hall will remain financially viable over the next 5 years.
* **Usage of Hall:** There has been the usual variety; perhaps an increase in fitness-related activity, and more use as emergency response centres, meeting the needs of their local community.
  + - 80% of respondents felt their hall is changing people’s lives for the better, notwithstanding the various issues outlined above.

## Alternative suggestions for the planning system

CPRE, the countryside charity, working with 17 other organisations including the Open Spaces Society, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, Friends of the Earth and RSPB, has launched a [Joint vision for planning](https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/joint-vision-for-planning-2021/). This is a new, solution-focused vision, laying out what a planning system fit for the 21st century might look like.

CPRE believe that the planning system is a toolbox for achieving better – for people, nature and the economy – while supporting the delivery of more badly-needed homes to end the housing crisis. This planning vision is a positive response to the widely criticized government proposals contained in the [Planning for the Future](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future), White Paper.

1. Be democratic and place local communities at the centre. This means communities having a legally guaranteed say on specific planning projects, as well as involving them in the wider planning of their areas.
2. Be plan-led and locally-led. This means central government supporting local authorities to ensure they have the resources and tools to keep an up-to-date local plan in place.
3. Have sustainable development at its heart. This means introducing legislation that ensures the planning system delivers equally on economic, social and environmental aims.
4. Deliver enough quality affordable and social homes for rent to meet local needs. This means improving Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy to ensure that all developments provide the right amount of affordable and social homes.
5. Tackle the biodiversity crisis. This means better protecting species and our most important habitats, with no reduction in the current level of protection, and positively supporting nature’s recovery from freefall decline by identifying new Highly Protected Areas and Nature Recovery Areas and strategically planning ‘nature recovery areas’.
6. Help tackle the climate emergency. This means ensuring all new homes are built to zero carbon standards as soon as possible, encouraging the use and repair of existing buildings; and by 2030 at the latest, embracing nature-based solutions to enhance climate resilience and developing similar standards for all building types.
7. Ensure beautiful, quality places that are in keeping with local character. This means appointing Design Ambassadors at local authority level to champion good, holistic, sustainable design and, revoking permitted development rights that have led to poor quality conversions to housing.
8. Both protect and enhance local green spaces and heritage for the benefit of people and nature. This means ensuring ring-fenced funding, which will secure good quality natural spaces close to people’s homes.
9. Make best use of previously built on land to maintain our green spaces and reduce dependency on cars. This means building on brownfield land where it is not important for biodiversity conservation, and without damaging heritage value.
10. Encourage green and sustainable forms of transport. This means amending planning guidance so that it adequately promotes a shift towards walking, cycling and green public transport as the main forms of transport.
11. Be evidence-based. This means using high quality and accurate data that is fit for purpose, including on meeting community needs and assessing environmental impact to underpin plans and decisions in line with agreed international commitments.

## Brexit - sector implications post 31 December

NALC writes: 31st December 2020 marks the end of the transition period for EU membership purposes. We have received some queries about the references to the EU Procurement thresholds in Model Standing Order 18 c:

1. *The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:*
2. *the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;*
3. *the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;*
4. *the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;*
5. *the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council’s accounts and/or orders of payments; and*
6. *whether contracts with an estimated value below* ***£25,000*** *due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.*
7. *Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.*
8. ***A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).***

and whether they are obsolete as of 1 January 2021. The answer is no. The figures in Model Standing Order 18 apply for the purposes of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.

On a further procurement point, the end of the transition period also brings new advertising requirements and the introduction of “find a tender”. Government guidance, which also includes procurement policy notes, FAQs and a flow chart sums up the main points <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-sector-procurement-from-1-january-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-sector-procurement?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=c8b1d0a0-964e-4428-ae16-94744a2d6ec2&utm_content=daily>

1. Find a Tender went live at the end of the transition period (23:00, 31st December 2020).
2. Procurements on OJEU/TED that were commenced prior to the end of the transition period must be concluded on OJEU/TED.
3. New procurements commenced after the end of the Transition Period must be advertised on Find a Tender.
4. Requirements to advertise on [ContractsFinder](https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder)  remain unchanged.

 Another issue is data protection. The EU GDPR will no longer apply directly in the UK at the end of the transition period. **However its requirements must still be complied after this point.** The new regime is known as “the UK GDPR” and incorporates the Data Protection Act 2018 and other Regulations. NALC Legal will give further guidance as appropriate.

The ICO website has some explanation about post Brexit GDPR here <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-at-the-end-of-the-transition-period/information-rights-at-the-end-of-the-transition-period-frequently-asked-questions/>

And the .gov.uk website here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-personal-data-in-your-business-or-other-organisation#now-that-the-uk-has-left-the-eu>

## The Good Councillors Guide to Community Business

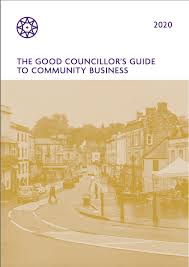
NALC and the Plunkett Foundation have launched *The Good Councillor's Guide to Community Business* to promote the opportunities that community businesses can create locally.

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.

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)

## Climate emergency - Tree Planting/reforestation

Boris Johnson has said he is aiming to plant 30,000 hectares (300 sq km) of new forest a year across the UK by the end of this parliament.

This BBC article <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55795816> quotes from a report in the journal [Global Change Biology](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gcb.15498#:~:text=These%20are%20as%20follows%3A%20(1,maximize%20biodiversity%3B%20(7)%20Use) which sets out 10 golden rules based on some of the most recent ecological research, to implement forest ecosystem restoration which maximizes rates of carbon sequestration and biodiversity recovery while improving livelihoods.



1. **Protect existing forests first**

Keeping forests in their original state is always preferable; undamaged old forests soak up carbon better and are more resilient to fire, storm and droughts.

1. **Put local people at the heart of tree-planting projects**

Studies show that getting local communities on board is key to the success of tree-planting projects. It is often local people who have most to gain from looking after the forest in the future.

1. **Maximise biodiversity recovery to meet multiple goals**

Reforestation should be about several goals, including guarding against climate change, improving conservation and providing economic and cultural benefits.

1. **Select the right area for reforestation**

Plant trees in areas that were historically forested but have become degraded, rather than using other natural habitats such as grasslands or wetlands.

1. **Use natural forest regrowth wherever possible**

Letting trees grow back naturally can be cheaper and more efficient than planting trees.

1. **Select the right tree species that can maximise biodiversity**

Where tree planting is needed, picking the right trees is crucial. Scientists advise a mixture of tree species naturally found in the local area, including some rare species and trees of economic importance, but avoiding trees that might become invasive.

1. **Make sure the trees are resilient to adapt to a changing climate**

Use tree seeds that are suitable for the local climate and how that might change in the future.

1. **Plan ahead**

Plan how to source seeds or trees, working with local people.

1. **Learn by doing**

Combine scientific knowledge with local knowledge. Ideally, small-scale trials should take place before planting large numbers of trees.

1. **Make it pay**

The sustainability of tree re-planting rests on a source of income for all stakeholders, including the poorest.

## Centre for Sustainable Energy

The Centre for Sustainable Energy put on a series of webinars last year under the auspices of the SLCC about climate change. The Bristol based charity is launching a pilot programme to support town and parish councils with monthly packages of content for communications campaigns about the climate emergency.

Climate change is an issue which challenges local authorities at every level and communicating information and ideas. Town and parish councils are ideally placed to introduce local solutions and influence behaviour change through their communities, this can stretch the already limited resources of local councils. The CSE pilot, which will run for four months from December to March 2021 will provide ready-to-go content which can be shared in order to engage and inform the local community.

The content will be shared on a monthly basis and the content will be tailorable to local needs, unbranded and targeted at different audiences. Those councils taking part will also receive an 18 month communications calendar, as well as further resources and tips.

To find out more about joining this pilot, click [here](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VVF8R6J) and complete a short survey.

You may also be interested in a series of [local council climate action days](https://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2516) CSE has recently started running online. CSE is currently in discussion with West Oxford DC around running an action day for some of their town/parish councillors.

## May 2021 elections

****Returning Officers are planning for the rescheduled elections to be held on 6th May but there is still some uncertainty about details concerning campaigning in a covid environment.

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 has resources on its 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)**…and we will update what we have on our website too.**

Lawyers in Local Government wrote on January 15, 2021:*The May 2021 elections look set to go ahead after the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution told MPs this week there should be “a high bar for any delay”.*

*Answering* [*an urgent question on the elections*](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-01-13/debates/aea39c74-11e2-4417-801a-c9c80e2b1a47/CommonsChamber)*, Chloe Smith said: “Safe and secure elections are the cornerstone of any democracy, and Parliament’s decision, as set out in primary legislation, is that these polls should go ahead in May.*

*“Due to the pandemic, many of these elections have already been delayed by a year, but voters have a right to be heard and to decide who governs them. During the pandemic, local authorities will have taken many serious decisions impacting directly on residents, on matters from council tax to road closures, and those are important issues on which elected representatives should be held to account.*

*“Given the situation, however, we are, as the Prime Minister set out last week, keeping this position under review. Any change would require very careful consideration, including by this House, and would need to be based on robust evidence. There should be a high bar for any delay.”*

Next month we will set out the timetable for elections. Look out for briefings from your district council too.

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, although 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 arms!

## Planning for the Future

The Chief Planner at MHCLG, Joanna Averley, sends out an update to Chief Planning Officers as and when there is something she wants to impart, the link to the latest edition dated 18th December 2020 is [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-guidance-letters-to-chief-planning-officers?utm_source=4c44afbd-aea6-4dc3-bba9-73d84f0cb3e7&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)

Message from Chief Planner: *“Firstly, can I thank everyone who participated in the consultation on the White Paper, Planning for the Future. We received over 40,000 responses and it is evident that people have engaged in the proposals and what it means for their work, interests and communities.*

*So, what next?*

*The government will publish a response in the Spring setting out its decisions on the proposed way forward including preparing for legislation, should the government so decide, in the Autumn. Initial work will focus on developing the next level of policy detail, having considered the inputs received.*

*It is evident that local planning authorities have moved mountains over the last months to continue to deliver services to our communities, through challenging and uncertain circumstances. As indicated above, the reform will take a few years to implement and I would therefore encourage local planning authorities to progress their local plan preparation and approval and development management decisions, including S106 agreements and the delivery of affordable housing through this means. Please do not use the reform as a reason to hold back on local plan preparation.”*

The other headings in her Update are:

* New prior approval in respect of permitted development rights to extend buildings upwards
* Changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need
* Improving planning performance – updated criteria for designation
* **Altered Regulations** **(PLEASE NOTE**) in response to COVID – space standards; extending temporary Permitted Development Rights; amendments to permanent Permitted Development Rights; publicity and physical inspection requirements for planning applications; plan making; planning appeals and enforcement

## New protection for statues, Plaques & historic monuments – government response to removal of Edward Colston statue

Government press release 17th January

New laws have been announced by Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick. The new legal protections mean that historic statues should be ‘retained and explained’ for future generations. Individuals who want to remove any historic statue, whether listed or not, will now require listed building consent or planning permission.

Under the new regulations, if the council intends to grant permission for removal of a particular statue and Historic England objects, the Communities Secretary will be notified so he can make the final decision about the application in question.

Historic England and the Secretary of State will apply the new policy of “retain and explain”, meaning historic statues will only be removed in the most exceptional circumstances.

Many unlisted heritage assets are of interest, significance and pride to the local communities in which they are erected and it is right that protections are put in place for them.

These new laws will protect 20,000 statues and monuments throughout England for future generations.

More details here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-protection-for-england-s-heritage?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=4fcdeeaa-8183-40b0-bd8e-fc30e3b72a65&utm_content=daily>

## Consultations

**1. Vale of White Horse DC invites your comments on two planning consultations:**

* **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule and**
* **Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

If you have an interest in how the Vale of White Horse District Council can secure funding towards the provision of local facilities and infrastructure needed to support growth in the district, these planning consultations might be of interest to you.  
  
Vale of White Horse District Council is conducting a review of its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. The Charging Schedule sets out rates that developers will be required to pay towards the delivery of infrastructure to support planned growth in the district. The money developers pay is used to fund a wide range of infrastructure such as transport schemes, schools, community facilities, health and social care facilities, parks, green spaces and leisure facilities.  
  
As part of the review process, the council has published a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) **Draft Charging Schedule** for public consultation. The review of the Charging Schedule is necessary as we have adopted Part 2 of the Vale Local Plan 2031. The Plan includes new site allocations and additional infrastructure requirements and there have also been changes to the CIL Regulations.  
  
Alongside this review, the council has reviewed and updated its **Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document** (SPD). This SPD is used to seek developer contributions through Section 106 Agreements from new development to fund infrastructure alongside CIL. We have published a revised draft of the SPD for public consultation.

Your comments are invited on both draft documents during the two four-week public consultations running simultaneously from **11 January until midnight on 8 February 2021.**  
  
You can also read and make comments on the following documents, which underpinned our CIL review and provided the evidence to support the proposed new CIL rates, as set out in the Draft Charging Schedule:

* CIL Viability Assessment, April 2019
* CIL Viability Assessment Addendum, August 2020
* CIL Viability Assessment Executive Summary, October 2020
* Infrastructure Funding Gap Statement, January 2021

All documents available for comment for both consultations can be viewed and accessed electronically via the respective consultation pages on our website:  
  
[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/cilchargingscheduleconsultation](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/cilchargingscheduleconsultation)  
[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/developercontributionsSPDconsultation](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/developercontributionsSPDconsultation)  
  
If you would like to view hard copies, please contact us on 01235 422600 or email [planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) so we can discuss options with you.  
  
**How to take part in the consultations**  
To give your views on the two planning consultations and any of the associated documents we encourage you to use the online comment forms, via these links (you will be able to save a copy of your response):  
  
**CIL Draft Charging Schedule** <https://survey.southandvale.gov.uk/s/CIL-ChargingSchedule-CommentForm/?m=50697160oacq0>  
The link above is uniquely tied to your email address.  
  
**Draft Developer Contributions SPD**  
<http://survey.southandvale.gov.uk/s/DeveloperContributionsSPD-CommentForm/>  
  
Responses can also be made:

* Via email, completing one or both comment forms (available on the respective consultation pages of our website – links above) and emailing to [planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) (with ‘Vale CIL Consultation’ or ‘Vale SPD Consultation’ in subject line);
* Or via post, by completing one or both paper comment forms (available from our website or by calling 01235 422600) and posting to: ‘Freepost SOUTH AND VALE CONSULTATIONS’ (no other address information or stamp is needed).

If you have any questions or would like further information on how to submit comments, or if you know anyone you think would be interested in the consultations who does not have access to the internet or is self-isolating, please contact us on 01235 422600 or email [planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

1. **Government proposes Right to Regenerate**  (used to be Right to Contest)

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched on 16th January a consultation seeking views on proposals to reform of Strand 2 (land owned by a local authority or certain other public bodies) of the Right to Contest under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 operated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.  The main consultation document can be downloaded [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/right-to-regenerate-reform-of-the-right-to-contest/right-to-regenerate-reform-of-the-right-to-contest) .

**Context**

Currently longstanding vacant, derelict or underutilised public sector land can have a significant impact on the attractiveness of a local area, sometimesacting as a focus for anti-social behaviour. Since 1980, the public has been able to request that the government considers whether certain publicly owned land is unused or underused, and if so, direct that it be sold (under strand 2 of the right to contest).  NALC has been liaising closely with MHCLG since last Autumn on this right; currently local councils have the power to invoke the right to challenge other defined public sector landowners under use of land, and refer such cases for consideration to MHCLG.

The government wants to empower people to challenge the inefficient use of public sector land in their communities, and to bring it into better economic use, including to provide new homes. The government is consulting on the effectiveness of these requests as it considers reforms to make the process more efficient and more transparent.

The government believes that reforming the Right to Contest and relaunching it as a new ‘Right to Regenerate’ could provide a quicker and easier route for individuals, businesses and organisations to identify, purchase and redevelop underused or empty land in their area. In turn, the government believes, a strengthened right would support greater regeneration of brownfield land, boost housing supply and empower people to turn blights and empty spaces in their areas into more beautiful developments.

Currently town and parish councils are not in the list of public landowning bodies which can be challenged under this right – but this consultation seeks views on whether town and parish councils who own underused or derelict land should be challengeable under this right in the future.

**NALC’s concern:**

NALC is concerned that developers will be tempted to approach local people and remunerate them for putting their names on the challenges being made.  Whether local councils are subsequently subjected to the 'Right to Contest' or the 'Right to Regenerate', there needs to be a requirement about how the land or buildings are subsequently dealt with after they are passed on to ensure that developers are not tempted to use a front to acquire land or buildings, perhaps at below market value.

In addition NALC has some other minor concerns regarding the new right to regenerate as below:

* + - That semi-natural wildlife areas become deemed to be ‘under-used’.
    - Given the government’s pro-developer stance, will any land that is transferred in this way be given some kind of ‘prior permission’ status, thereby by-passing the normal planning system?
    - What mechanism will be available to adjudicate between competing claims for the same piece of land?
    - What are the implications for council-owned land that is subject to certain statutes, such as allotments or village green?
    - Assuming local councils were to be added to the Schedule 16 list, would all of them have to produce regular reports, or just those where requests have been made under the ‘right’?

**Consultation Questions**

The main consultation questions NALC will be responding to in this consultation are below. NALC seeks the views of county associations and member councils in response to these questions to help inform its own submission to MHCLG:

**Increasing the usefulness and effectiveness of the right**

**Q1: Do you consider the Right to Contest useful?**

**Q2: Do you think there are any current barriers to using the right effectively, and if so, how would you suggest they be overcome?**

**Making it clearer when land is unused or underused**

**Q3: Would a definition of unused or underused land be useful, and, if so, what should such a definition include?**

**Extending the scope of the right**

**Q4: Should the right be extended to include unused and underused land owned by town and parish councils?**

**[NALC Supplemental Question:** Do you think that this proposal could lead to a back way in for developers to acquire redundant council-owned land and buildings?]

**Land where a public body has an intended use**

**Q5: Should the government incentivise temporary use of unused land which has plans for longer term future use?**

**A greater role for local authorities**

**Q6: Should the government introduce a requirement for local authorities to be contacted before a request is made?**

**Presumption in favour of disposal**

**Q7: Should the government introduce a presumption in favour of disposal of land or empty homes/garages where requests are made under the right?**

**Publicity and reporting**

**Q8: Do you agree that the government should require these publicity measures where requests are made under the right?**

**Right of first refusal**

**Q9: Should government offer a ‘right of first refusal’ to the applicant as a condition of disposal?**

**Conditions attached to disposals**

**Q10: Should the government impose conditions on the disposal of land? And if so, what conditions would be appropriate?**

**Q11: Do you have any additional suggestions regarding reforms that could improve the effectiveness of the Right to Contest process?**

Please email your responses to this consultation to [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) by 17.00 on Friday 26 February 2021. Alternatively you/your council can complete the consultation directly here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/right-to-regenerate-reform-of-the-right-to-contest/right-to-regenerate-reform-of-the-right-to-contest> The consultation closes on 13th March 2021

1. **HM Land Registry need your help**

 HM Land Registry provides clarity and security in land ownership and interests. It maintains a land register of more than 25 million titles in England and Wales, estimated to be worth more than £7 trillion. Once registered, these interests are protected under a state guarantee, giving the increased surety and confidence to owners that is not provided when the land is unregistered.

Currently 87% of the freehold interests in land are registered. HMLR is committed to achieving a comprehensive register by 2030, with a strategic milestone for ensuring all publicly held land is registered by 2025.

We are already working with a large number of Local Authorities and bodies within central government, removing their reliance on paper deeds, and giving clarity and confidence to title extents and transparency of ownership.

Organisations such as your parish council maintain essential interests in land and property, and we are keen to understand these better. The purpose of this survey is to help provide important insight for our strategies to delivering the benefits of registration to your organisations and the communities you serve.

I am grateful for your time in completing this short survey and look forward to working with you in the future. If you have any questions, or would like to speak with a member of the team here at HMLR we would love to hear from you at Email: <mailto:PublicSectorEngagementTeam@landregistry.gov.uk> or telephone 0300 006 7001

Your responses will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and all comments and feedback is very welcome.

Shane Bartlett, Head of Public Sector Strategy

The survey link is here ([**https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=160406652244**](https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=160406652244) **)** it closes **on 26 February 2021.**  This survey is specifically for parish and town councils.

1. **Bicester and Witney Active Travel Schemes**

**Both consultations are open from 21st January 2021 until 11th February**

* The **Bicester** consultation is about proposals to improve the walking and cycling infrastructure in Bicester to create a network of improvements from the south and west of Bicester into the town centre.
* The **Witney** consultation is about proposals to improve the walking and cycling infrastructure in Witney to create a cross-town active travel route between Tower Hill in the west and Madley Park in the east. This will encompass the Five Ways roundabout, Corn Street, Market Square / Butter Cross, Langdale Gate, Langel Common and Church Lane.  
    
  To participate in Oxfordshire CC consultations you need to register on the OCC Consultation Portal – here

# Financial Briefing

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

Local councils are required to have a system of internal control, which includes arrangements for the management of risk. This includes the risk of error, theft, fraud or loss, as well as the risk of death, injury or illness.

Regulation 3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 says:

A relevant authority must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which—

1. facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
2. ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and

(c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

Regulation 6 requires a council to annually:

1. conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control
2. consider the findings of the review by members of the authority meeting as a whole

This review is about the effectiveness of the internal control system, in other words, whether the controls actually work. The review could be done by individuals, a working group, a committee or sub-committee. The findings of this review (for example, a report from a committee) must be considered by the full council.

Assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement requires the council to confirm that it has reviewed the effectiveness of its system of internal control, so the review needs to be considered before the council can approve this statement.

Assertion 5 covers risk management and says:

“*We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.”*

Proper practices, set out in The Practitioners’ Guide, say:

*“In order to warrant a positive response to this assertion, the authority needs to have the following arrangements in place:*

*1.31 Identifying and assessing risks. The authority needs to identify, assess and record risks associated with actions and decisions it has taken or considered taking during the year that could have financial or reputational consequences.*

*1.32 Addressing risks. Having identified, assessed and recorded the risks, the authority needs to address them by ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate and manage risk. This might include the introduction of internal controls and/or appropriate use of insurance cover.”*

Councils should ensure that they review both risk management and internal control before they reach the point where the Annual Governance Statement needs approving.

# 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 to provide specialist employment advice free of charge to our member councils. OALC pay for this, because we believe it is an important and valuable service to our members. Each month he writes a briefing on relevant employment issues.

1. **Unused leave entitlement for 2020/21**

Due to the extraordinary circumstances that have affected the current holiday year, many Councils are now finding that staff have accrued a significant amount of unused leave, which needs to be used before the 31st March 2021.

The current legal position is that staff have a statutory entitlement to at least 5.6 weeks paid leave each year. If they have been unable to use all of it, they should be able to carry it over into the next holiday year. Most Council’s allow 5 days to be carried over, which is also reflected in the NALC template Employment Contract. However if the amount of unused leave is greater than that, the full amount should be carried over, and not restricted to just 5 days.

Clearly this could result in a very confusing holiday entitlement situation, and the law does allow Councils, along with other Employers, to enforce the ‘use it or lose it’ principle. However this only applies if adequate prior warning has been given to Employees by the Council throughout the year.

If the Council can demonstrate that it has given staff plenty of notice throughout the year that they must get their leave booked, and if they don’t they will lose it, it can prevent Employees from carrying leave over.

Alternatively a Council can force staff to take leave before the end of the current holiday year. There is two months left before the current holiday year ends, which may be plenty of time to take any unused entitlement. A Council does have to give an Employee twice as much notice of the requirement to take leave, as the amount of holiday they will take. This means that if a Council wants an Employee to take five days off, they must provide ten working days’ notice. The Council should also issue the Employee with written notice that they are being forced to take annual leave. We can provide a copy of the requisite letter free of charge; please see contact details below.

However, if staff have genuinely been unable to take leave, either as a result of the Pandemic, or long term sick leave due to a disability, or Maternity Leave, they are entitled to carry over the whole of their unused entitlement, regardless of what is written in their Employment Contracts.

**2 Key Legal Changes for 2021**

**IR35**

Changes to the IR35 self-employed Contractor’s Regulations, which were due to be implemented in April 2020, will now come into effect on the 6 April 2021. Self-employed consultants and contractors who work for Councils; such as Landscape Contractors, Health and Safety Consultants, Book Keepers; should use the government online tools to find out if the Council needs to deduct income tax and national insurance contributions at source when paying them. The Contractor should provide the Council with a print off of their online results which should be kept in the event of a PAYE audit.

**Proposed new legislation**

In December 2019 the Queen’s speech heralded a number of proposed pieces of legislation which will affect Town and Parish Councils. Some of these may have been overtaken by the events of the last nine months, but the key ones are:

* **Extension to redundancy protections to prevent pregnancy/maternity discrimination.**  
  Currently anyone who is on Maternity Leave can be put at risk of redundancy, and ultimately made redundant, should demand for their post end or diminish. This can be done on the understanding that the Council is treating all employees fairly and equally, which means including those on maternity leave in a pool with colleagues who are ‘at risk’. However, if they are selected for redundancy while on maternity leave then a woman has enhanced rights to be placed into a vacant role for which they have the skills without competitive interview.

The government intends to extend that protection for six months after the woman returns from maternity leave.

* **Introducing an entitlement to one week’s leave for Employees with caring responsibilities.**  
  In March 2020, the government issued a consultation paper and asked for responses by 3rd August 2020. In this paper they proposed allowing Employees who are also carers to have an additional one week unpaid leave a year. The response to this consultation has not yet been published.
* **Allowing parents to take extended leave for neonatal care**  
  Following consultation in 2019, the government published a response in March 2020 confirming that parents of babies that are admitted into hospital as a neonate (28 days old or fewer) will be eligible for neonatal leave and pay if the admission lasts for a continuous period of seven days or more.

They will be entitled to this from day one of their employment and up to a maximum of 12 weeks. There have been no further details published, including the level of the neonatal pay.

* **Making flexible working the default unless employers have a good reason not to**  
  The Queen’s speech announced that legislation would be implemented to force all employers, including Town and Parish Councils, to look at whether their employees can work from home, with some having to juggle childcare as well as do their jobs.
* **A new, single enforcement body for employment rights**  
  The intention is to have one body enforcing minimum wage, unpaid tribunal awards and the tribunal penalty scheme, regulating statutory sick pay and publicising employment rights.

**PROFILE**

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

[www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk](http://www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk)

## Training of all sorts



CiLCA Train the Trainer       Friday March 5th 9.00am - 1.00pm on Microsoft Teams

For potential trainers and mentors who have not attended before or who would like a refresher; the event introduces CiLCA, the assessment process and ideas for training specifically for CiLCA.

Trainers should also attend a separate generic train the trainer course organised by LRALC  before becoming a CiLCA Recognised Trainer.

The cost to attend our CiLCA Train the Trainer event is £30 + VAT per person. Please register using this link <https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/train-the-trainer-5th-march/> The password to enter is Train.  Bookings will close on Thursday 25th February.

Helen Quick​: Head of Conferences, Training and Education: Tel: 01823 253646   Direct:  07803 137993



[](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=ac6371c112&e=2593660dc7)Attend our Leaders talk: Why representation in local councils matters on 23 February 2021. The event will focus on the importance of representation and inclusion in the local (parish and town) council sector and how it leads to creating real change. You will hear from sector experts on how to encourage and reach people from all backgrounds and experiences in your community to stand for election.  
  
We're pleased to announce **Rachael Farrington, founder of Voting Counts** will be joining the panel. She will talk about how local councils can help young adults understand the links between the issues they care about and the positions of power that can make a difference, the importance of feedback and how to create feedback loops in your community and how local councils can build resilience.  
  
Prices for this event start from £30. The event is sponsored by BHIB Councils Insurance, Blachere Illumination and CCLA.

To book a place click [here](mailto:https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/leaders-talk-why-representation-in-local-councils-matters-tickets-133063944841?aff=MAILCHIMP&mc_cid=ff3a5103a4&mc_eid=2593660dc7) [**Register your place and find out more about this event**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=230aae7aa1&e=2593660dc7)

## OALC Training programme please read this and take note

All OALC training is delivered 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](mailto: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>

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| date | subject | Half/full day | trainer | description |
| Tuesday Feb. 9th 10.30am | GDPR and Data Protection  FULLY Booked | Half day AM | Elizabeth Howlett |  |
| Tuesday Feb. 23rd  10am | Preparing for Year End for Clerks/RFOs  12 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 Councillors  6 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 Planning  5 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 councillors  9 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 | Chairmanship  2 places available | 2 morning sessions | Kim Bedford | Managing and leading people is one of the most challenging situations we find ourselves in  This 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 Compliance  5 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 Greens  12 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. 14th  10 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  Overcoming Staff Worries  The Appraisal Form  Preparation for an Appraisal |
| 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 donations  By 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 monitoring  By 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)

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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* |

**Hornton Parish Council – clerk/RFO wanted**

An interesting and varied role in a village in the north of the County

**Location:**  Home based, but would need to attend seven PC meetings a year.

**Hours: per week or month**: 8 hours a week.

**£ salary (range)** £12.36 per hour. There is an additional monthly allowance for home working.

Duties include production of agendas and minutes for all meetings, carrying out the Council's decisions and advising on procedural matters (help and training is available from various sources).  There are seven meetings a year (February, two in April, AGM in May, July, September and November). They usually take place on Monday at 7.30pm and the clerk would be expected to attend. Most other duties can be performed from home.

The Responsible Financial Officer’s work includes

* dealing with the payment of bills (predominantly on-line)
* managing the computerised accounts and preparing updates for meetings
* producing an annual budget and preparing the annual accounts for internal and external audit
* preparing statutory and transparency documents for Parish Council approval
* dealing with VAT claims
* payment of the Clerk’s salary through the PAYE system with HM Revenue & Customs

Good systems are already in place for dealing with all this and a laptop is provided. 

The ideal candidate will have good organisational, interpersonal and computer skills, including knowledge of Excel spreadsheets.  Internet access is essential as most returns, banking and correspondence is done on-line or by email. Whilst living near Hornton is an advantage, the vast majority of work is done from home, so not essential.

Please contact Cllr. Steve Woodcock. Tel: (01295) 670795 or email: [cllr.woodcock@hornton.org.uk](mailto:cllr.woodcock@hornton.org.uk)

**We are looking for somebody to start in February.**

**Interview date** As soon as possible, remotely during current Covid restrictions

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| **Vacancy for Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**  **Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council** |
| To provide administrative support for the function of the Parish Council. We are a small friendly council of up to 7 Parish Councillors This post is available from 1st August 2021 or possibly sooner by negotiation. |
| Mostly home-based role. The monthly Parish Council meetings are held online at present. Otherwise held in the Village Hall. |
| **Hours:** 7.5 per week |
| **£ salary (range) & other key benefits**  £11.30 per hour (LC1, SCP 11), office expenses, laptop provided for duration of employment. |
| Duties include production of agendas and minutes for all meetings, carrying out the Council's decisions, advising on procedural matters (help and training is available from various sources) and maintaining the parish (village) website.  There are eleven meetings a year (every month except August). They usually take place on the first Monday each month at 6.30pm and the clerk would be expected to attend but currently these meetings are held online. Most other duties can be performed from home.  The Responsible Financial Officer’s work includes   * dealing with the payment of bills (predominantly on-line) * managing the computerised accounts and preparing updates for meetings * producing an annual budget and preparing the annual accounts for internal and external audit * preparing statutory and transparency documents for Parish Council approval * dealing with VAT claims * payment of the Clerk’s salary through the PAYE system   Good systems are already in place for dealing with all this and a laptop is provided. |
| The ideal candidate will have good organisational, interpersonal and computer skills with a good working knowledge of IT systems including Microsoft Office, email and online document management. Attention to detail is required especially for online banking and accounts management. |
| **How to apply:** In writing with a CV and covering letter/email to:  [**sandfordparish@gmail.com**](mailto:sandfordparish@gmail.com)  or email first for an informal discussion/expression of interest/job description  **Deadline: 1st April 2021**  **Interview date:** TBC |

**Vacancy for Culham Parish Council –**

**Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

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

**Hours**: 4 per week

**£ salary (range)**  
Commensurate with Experience (LC1, SCP 13-17) £11.76 - £12.73 per hour

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. A laptop and printer is provided.

**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.
* Advising councillors on their statutory duties and that of the Council.
* Supporting general village communications and website uploads.
* Maintain a document repository for access by Parish Councillors.
* Dealing with general correspondence and public notices.
* Administering the burial ground

Council meetings take place in the evening on a monthly basis, except in August where no meeting takes place.

**Person Specification**  
Candidates must possess good attention to detail, have good communication skills (written and verbal), be competent in Zoom, and have a good working knowledge of IT systems. Candidates should have a proven understanding, or a willingness to engage in training to gain an understanding, of local government processes and remits. On-going training will be expected as necessary.

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 team of energetic Parish Councillors, and enable them to deliver added value benefits for the village community.

How to apply: For further information, an informal chat or to receive an Application Form to apply for the position, please contact the current clerk Lucy Dalby by email [clerk@culham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@culham-pc.gov.uk) or the Chair Sam Casey-Rerhaye by email [s.caseyrerhaye@culham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:s.caseyrerhaye@culham-pc.gov.uk)

**Deadline 12th February 2021**  
Interview date: Week commencing 22nd February

Starting date 15th March for a handover with the current Clerk.