

# OALC NEWSLETTER

## JULY 2022



NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT  
STRATEGY FOR PARISH  
& TOWN COUNCILS

### Training Programme 2022

#### THE HEADLINES

**Corona Advice** - page 2

**OALC** – Hon.Treasurer, Chair's sessions, 4 useful tips

#### LOCAL NEWS – pages 9-13

- **OCC** - travel research, Gypsy & Traveller Service, Priority CC Fund
- **SODC** - Design Guide
- **ToE funding**
- **Code of Conduct** – adopt, training

#### NATIONAL NEWS - pages 13-26

- **Church of England** – rural churches
- **RTPI Rural Planning report**
- **NALC Dementia Friendly communities**
- **Law Commission** – wedding locations
- **Star Council Awards** – Oxfordshire Cllr finalist
- **ACRE village halls** energy survey
- **Salary negotiations**
- **Civility & Respect – this is important**

#### CLIMATE ACTION page 27

**Consultation**- short term holiday lets

**Employment briefing** – conduct issues training

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

See page 40 onwards for details  
of our courses and which have  
places still available

#### VACANCIES – page 41

- **Claydon w Clattercote PC** – Clerk/RFO
- **Abingdon Town Council** – Town Clerk/Chief Executive
- **Woodstock Town Council** – Clerk
- **Ardington & Lockinge PC**- Clerk/RFO
- **Chipping Norton TC**- Facilities & Events Manager

## CORONA VIRUS

### 1. All over 50's will be offered a covid 19 booster and flu jab this autumn

Following on from the autumn COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination programme announcement by the UK Health Security Agency on 15<sup>th</sup> July, please find below a link to the announcement which you may like to include in your newsletters or Facebook posts -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-50s-to-be-offered-covid-19-booster-and-flu-jab-this-autumn>

## OALC



### 1. OALC still need an Hon. Treasurer !

We find ourselves without an Hon. Treasurer again. We would really welcome anyone with financial expertise to act as a critical friend to OALC. We do all the heavy lifting in the office but need another pair of eyes and ears (and a financial brain too!) to act as a sounding board.

Please contact us at [info@oalc.org.uk](mailto:info@oalc.org.uk) to find out more about the role or give us a call on 0774 6943076

### 2. Don't forget the regular Chair's session



All Chairs, new and experienced, are very welcome to join the zoom session

This dedicated on-line one hour session for Council Chairs is an opportunity for you to raise issues, discuss, share or even just listen. The sessions are intended to improve communication and help resolve any issues you may be experiencing in your council. There is no fixed agenda but OALC will highlight current important matters,

both national and local, which we think you should know about. You are encouraged to have your say, ask questions and share good practice. We will hold them alternatively during the day and in the evening so those who are working can join too.

### OALC virtual monthly Chairs Q&A session – fifth session was on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022 2.30pm

8 Chairs joined and topics which arose were –

- **Need for someone at OCC Cabinet level that has knowledge of and responsibility for town and parish councils**, should be a portfolio responsibility for one of the County Councillors
- **Transport issues** particularly including that arising from new development e.g. in the Chipping Norton area with a number of large applications with lots of car movements expected. Also return of lorries through Burford after pilot restricting HGV movements.

- **Planning** – the short response times allowed by local planning authorities, the attitude from LPA's is that parish councils are just a bunch of amateurs that don't understand the planning system.

Current topics outlined by the County Officer were

- The need for all councils to have a good knowledge of internal financial controls following the conviction for fraud of the clerk at Towersey.
- The £1m+ allocation for each district council from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, encouraging all councils to interact with their district council and see if they can get some of that funding. WODC already doing webinars.
- Adoption of the new Code of Conduct.

### **OALC Chair's Q & A sessions 2022**

**One hour** Zoom Meeting

We will ask you to observe good Zoom meeting etiquette – keep your camera on, be on mute except when speaking and display your name and council. Please do not pass this link on. Only Chairs of member councils will be allowed to join the session. Any problems which concern personal details will be taken offline.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2483078242?pwd=ZU9Fb2l2ZzdlampQN3BRT3ZMZnl2UT09>

Meeting ID: 248 307 8242      Passcode: oalclic

<b>August</b>	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> 6.30pm	
<b>September</b>	Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> 2.30pm	
<b>October</b>	Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> 6.30pm	
<b>November</b>	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> 2.30pm	
<b>December</b>	Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> 6.30pm	

### **OALC USEFUL TIPS**

#### **1. Cost of Living - How does the current sharp rise in everyday commodities affect parish councils?**

As we are only part way into the financial year with budgets set before the invasion of Ukraine, current energy prices rises and inflation, there may need to be some careful thinking, particularly if you are one of those councils with very small reserves (see last month's tips).

- Any large projects particularly if they are new build will likely increase by a factor of 8-10%.
- Utility prices have increased – affecting running costs of offices and village halls
- Petrol increases affecting landscape contractor's costs etc.
- What might the pay award be – who knows?

Separately there might be an increase in applications for sec. 137 monies from local charities, foodbanks and organisations helping those struggling with rising prices. Be clear about what powers your council can use in these situations.

2. **Councillors who work full time are legally allowed to have time off for their duties** – i.e. training. Hint see our training schedule here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

See para 7.14 Local Council Administration, Charles Arnold-Baker:

*“7.14 A councillor's employer must give their employee reasonable time off to attend to council affairs and perform approved duties, having regard to the employee's absence on the business and the amount of time required or already taken by the employee on trade union activities. The councillor may complain to an employment tribunal if the employer fails to do so.”*

Employment Rights Act 1996 sec 50

3. **As a parish councillor, should I be concerned about fraud?**

You should be aware of the possibility but hopefully there should not be concern. However, in light of the recent conviction of an Oxfordshire Clerk <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/20246696.jail-towersey-chinnor-parish-council-officer-stole-161-000/> we need to raise this difficult question. Council staff are usually completely trustworthy but things can go wrong which can have dire consequences for a parish council.

The types of risks particular to parish councils can include:

- wages and overtime claimed fraudulently;
- fraudulently contracted work or pay for contractors; and
- a lack of regular scrutiny by councillors and the council's appointed internal auditor.

In some circumstances friendships with council staff may become too close. Some parish councillors can leave too much unquestioned, unchallenged, or insufficiently scrutinised. Councillors are legally responsible for protecting taxpayers' money and proper control of your council's finances. Councillors should be interested in all areas of council work, knowledgeable about what is required of the council around finance and audit and mindful of their duty to protect public money.

Council finances are regulated by the Audit and Accounts Regulations

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/234/pdfs/ukxi\\_20150234\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/234/pdfs/ukxi_20150234_en.pdf) and the proper financial practices are set out in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities* which is updated each year <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/jpag/3698-practitioners-guide-2022/file>

Each council has its own Financial Regulations which councillors should be familiar with too, hopefully based on NALC Model Financial Regulations (last updated 2019)

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/1262-nalc-publishes-updated-model-financial-regulations> All councillors ought to know what software accounting system is used by their council, if there is one.

All councillors should read the NALC publication *The Good Councillors Guide to Finance and Transparency*, available to download free from OALC website Member's Area.



**We have councillor training on internal financial controls on 20<sup>th</sup> October.** In view of the Towersey fraud case it is important that councillors should attend training to learn more about their responsibilities. OALC training schedule here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

Here are two cases where things went wrong.

- A parish council clerk altered cheques to the council's insurance broker and paid them into her own account. The council's insurance subsequently lapsed. The value of the fraud was over £4,000. As the council had no insurance cover, the council was also exposed to unlimited uninsured financial risk. Furthermore, the council was then perceived to be a 'bad payer'.
- A parish council clerk set up an internet banking account for the council without its knowledge. He used this account to pay himself. The clerk told councillors the council did not require an audit. Councillors believed him and failed to ensure their responsibilities for protecting public money were undertaken properly.

Your first duty is to the taxpayer and your community. If you think something is not right, say so.

**Do:**

- act quickly;
- record your concerns - the more detail the better; and
- tell someone; for example, call the internal auditor (do you know who the council's Internal Auditor is?) or external auditor (Moore [oxon.sa@mooreuk.global](mailto:oxon.sa@mooreuk.global) [How To Contact The Smaller Authorities Team | Moore - MOORE](#)) or the police or your Chair depending on the situation.

**Don't:**

- accuse anyone you suspect directly;
- investigate the matter yourself;
- do nothing; or
- be afraid to report it.

Indicators of fraud can be behavioural, financial or organisational -

**Behavioural indicators**

- Increased stress for no obvious reason.
- Personal problems, including financial problems, alluded to but not shared.
- Reluctance to take holiday entitlement.
- Poor work practices, including bending rules, or using 'short cuts'.
- Constant complaints about the person.

- Person works late for no obvious reason.
- Secretive or economical with the truth.
- Income not equal to lifestyle.

### **Financial and organisational indicators**

- Late or poorly presented accounts.
- Accounts and documents that are not circulated in advance.
- Standing orders and direct debits not recorded.
- Auditors' reports not circulated and/or published.
- Accounts that do not balance.
- Hesitancy, avoidance or confrontation when asked direct questions.
- Inaccuracies that cannot be explained clearly.
- Poor records and minutes.
- Lack of openness and transparency, key decisions taken outside meetings.
- Poor forward planning.
- Final demands and 'red letters' received by the council.

But be aware your clerk might be under pressure because they have too much work to do in the hours they are contracted to do. Have they the skills – do they need help? Do they need training? Support?

#### **4. Governance and Accountability requires that a parish council must have a website and should provide official email accounts too...**

##### **"The importance of secure email systems and GOV.UK**

*5.204. All authorities except Parish meetings must now have an official website. To comply with GDPR, councils should provide official email accounts for their councillors as well as for their Clerk and other officers.*

*5.205. When choosing a domain name for the council's website and emails, many local council websites are appropriately making use of the official GOV.UK domain (for example, ourparishcouncil.gov.uk), with email addresses being linked to that domain.*

*5.206. Using a GOV.UK domain for your council website and email accounts demonstrates the council's official local government status. Members of the public are increasingly cyber security aware, so a GOV.UK domain can also help to build trust, credibility*

*and visibly demonstrates authenticity. Many people will now reasonably expect a local council to have a GOV.UK domain name.*

*5.207. For the purposes of user management, councils should ensure that the Proper Officer can add and remove member and staff email accounts. Commercial 'dashboard' email and web systems offer centralised searching of all data contained within the system for effective compliance with GDPR Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests.*

A group of students currently doing their Community Governance degree are organizing a training event in Henley next month.

The event is titled Conflict Management and relates very closely to the joint NALC & SLCC Civility and Respect Project currently running.



The poster below sets out all the details:

Cost: £90

Location: Henley Town Hall

Book: via SLCC

IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

website : <https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/managing-conflict-and-difficult-conversations-14-9/>

Two more students are doing their dissertations and are seeking your input on their research. I hope you can help them. We are willing to support Clerks that are studying and seeking to improve their skills

### **1. Research Project – The Effectiveness and Value of Internal Audit to Smaller Authorities**

My name is Elaine Anstee, and I am currently undertaking a study into Internal Audit as part of my final year studying Community Governance. This is a BA degree through the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and De Montfort University.

I am a parish council Clerk in Oxfordshire and also support some small parish councils with their internal audits. The idea for this research study came from carrying out those Internal Audits and the passion I have for this function to be supportive to smaller authorities and Clerks.

What is the research about?

The research is entitled 'The Effectiveness and Value of Internal Audit to Smaller Authorities'. The smaller authorities are specifically parish councils in England. The research will aim to answer the following questions:

- a. To define the terms 'effectiveness' and 'value'
- b. To establish the parameters and conduct an illustrative piece of research based on the hypotheses
- c. To establish the perceived 'effectiveness' and 'value' of Internal Audit to smaller authorities
- d. To display the finding of the research in an accessible way for future reference.

The link to the questionnaire is at SORRY THE LINK HAS BEEN REMOVED IT WAS BEEN DETECTED AS CAUSING THE UPDATE TO BE REJECTED

If you have a question or would like a copy of the questionnaire to complete instead of using the online link please contact me at [cq.foxwood@gmx.com](mailto:cq.foxwood@gmx.com)

ELAINE ANSTEE IS CLERK TO ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PC [clerk@astonoxon-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@astonoxon-pc.gov.uk)





# Conflict Management

## MANAGING CONFLICT AND DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

**The aim of the training is to identify what conflict is, why it happens and what to do if you need to have a difficult conversation.**

*Of particular interest to Clerks, providing knowledge and competencies to manage conflict in the workplace*

### Course Objectives

- What is meant by destructive and constructive conflict
- Why conflict happens
- Difficult conversations – perceptions and pre-suppositions
- Emotional intelligence and conflict
- Components of conflict
- Strategies to manage difficult conversations using a coaching approach

### Training Details

**Wednesday 14th September 2022**

10am to 3pm

Henley Town Hall, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire,  
RG9 2AQ **£90 per person (lunch included)**

**Booking, agenda and information:**



Online at: <https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/managing-conflict-and-difficult-conversations-14-9/>

### Networking & Wine Tasting

Join us after the event for an opportunity to share experiences with colleagues and hear about further training opportunities whilst sampling delicious wines from Oaken Grove (no extra charge)





## 2. RESEARCH PROJECT - DO YOU NEED BALLS TO BE A TOWN CLERK?

My name is Claire Commons, I am Town Clerk, Shepton Mallett Town Council and am also completing my degree in community governance. I am writing a research dissertation on the gender profile of clerks in different size councils.

68% of clerks are female, my working hypothesis is that despite this, the proportion of female clerks in larger councils is significantly less.

I would love to share my research findings with you on how the sector might respond. I would be very grateful if you could ask your clerks to complete this very brief survey. As a thank-you, once my dissertation is published, I would be happy to present my findings as a webinar or online seminar if that would be of interest to you.

Here's the link to the survey "Does it take balls to be a (town) clerk?" -

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=48B4T1DS3027HBXTFFaXzliUXgcOEjdNsOpYgab4xTxUNDFGTfPJVFVRDM1MVg4VIJLNzA1OEJFSS4u>

## CLEAR UTILITIES SOLUTIONS

Due to the much reported increases in the wholesale cost of gas and electricity and in line with OFGEMs TCR review which affects standing charges, Eon / Npower have raised their out of contract tariffs threefold and this means some Clerks are seeing rates rise from 18 pence per kWh to 56.32 pence per kWh and to compound this increase, Eon have declined to offer a discount on the night charge element where most of the electricity consumption naturally sits. In addition, where some supplies were not being charged a daily standing charge, Eon have now included a daily charge of £1.02 for all UMS supplies, this change will particularly affect Parishes with lower consumptions.



Clear Utility  
Solutions

Thankfully the best fixed tariffs on the market right now are far below this level and every Clerk on a variable or out of contract tariff will be able to save money by reviewing their tariffs immediately. Unfortunately this increase is not just for UMS supplies and we advise all users to review any energy contract they have for variable tariffs. As is often

the case with energy, we expect to see other suppliers making similar increases where they haven't already and we would urge Clerks to check their bills and get in touch if they have any concerns. As ever we are on hand to offer free advice and welcome any and all Clerks to get in touch should they wish.

Clear Utility Solutions council energy saving scheme highlights:

- Over £100,000 of public money saved since September 2020.
- 488,000kg of CO2 emissions prevented by recommending 100% green suppliers
- Partnership with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)
- Free post contract support

Please see the OALC online portal - <https://www.clearutilitiesolutions.com/OALC-partnership>

## LOCAL NEWS

If your council wants to keep informed about what the County Council is up to, register on their website here - <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

## **1. Travel research volunteers wanted and earn a £50 voucher**

Please could you publicize this on your noticeboards, Facebook pages & in newsletters too.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/travel-research-volunteers>

We are looking for volunteers living in the Oxford, Bicester and Didcot areas to collect travel data and help share the future of transport in the community.



You will be rewarded for your time and efforts with a £50 voucher – read on for details

### **Why the research is taking place**

We want to understand the ways people currently and could use transport. One of the most effective is to ask those already using the network to fill in travel diaries. It gives a realistic snapshot not only of the journey but also the experience of travel. We are working with a partner, Tracsis, who supports the collection and analysis of the information you give. This insight is invaluable in developing new services and planning long term for communities. This initiative is part of an externally funded project called [Harmony](#).

### **How to get involved**

Sign up as soon as possible because places are limited.

Using your mobile phone, you will receive intermittent notifications/reminders to let you know there are outstanding tasks and eligibility before you can claim the reward.

For up to seven trips, you'll need to record how and when you travel and your experiences of doing so. Download and register the app from [Google Play](#) or Apple Store - search for 'moby x'. After registering, you'll receive messages to help you complete the travel diaries.

1. Complete the introductory questionnaire
2. Complete a travel diary of between four and seven trips on agreed days
3. Answer another questionnaire based on your results

The reward will be emailed within 28 days of the conclusion of your tasks in the form of a voucher from 150+ retailers including but limited to Amazon, Argos M&S and more!

### **The small print**

You will need to actively input information for roughly 30 minutes and consent to being monitored on your travel patterns through the app on your phone. Detailed terms and conditions are listed here: [www.tracsissurveys.co.uk/occtscs](http://www.tracsissurveys.co.uk/occtscs)

Tracsis will not use your personal information for any purpose other than that of managing the survey and reward voucher.

All other information collected during the survey will be kept by Moby X Software Ltd / Oxfordshire County Council for the purposes laid out in the [Harmony app privacy notice](#).

## OXFORDSHIRE GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS SERVICE

Peter Gammond, Service Manager, Oxfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Services is retiring in September but the team continues. They are a fantastic resource that all town and parish councils should be aware of. They send out a weekly email to all those who sign up <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/contactus/contact-oxfordshire-gypsy-and-traveller-service> detailing what is happening in the county. And they can be consulted or contacted at [Travellers@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Travellers@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Peter writes -

*There are new powers in relation to unauthorised encampments, following the introduction of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 that came into force on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The new powers will work with the existing powers that the team use under Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.*

[Unauthorised encampments: guidance for police - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

*But please remember many groups of Travellers have little or no impact on the settled community, these new powers are not intended to move incursions just because they are there. If you read the document, there is a certain criteria before the Police can intervene.*

## OCC COUNCILLORS PRIORITY FUND

Each Oxfordshire County Councillor was allocated £15,000 to be spent in the two financial years ending in March 2023. **Last applications will be accepted by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.**

There is money still left in this fund. Your council needs to be talking to your own County Councillor. Has your councillor spent their allocation? If not, there is scope for a serious discussion to be had with them! More information here -

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/thriving-communities/councillor-priority-fund#:~:text=The%20fund%20supports%20councillor%20priorities,%C2%A315%2C000%20for%202021%2D2023.>

## SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DC

SODC has adopted a new DESIGN GUIDE, that will help ensure high-quality and sustainable development in their district.

The guide is an innovative and interactive tool for anyone undertaking a development to ensure it fits

with the character of the local area.

Following a public consultation earlier this year that received more than 180 responses, the [Joint Design Guide website](#) is now easier to navigate, broken down into more digestible sections and has more relevant pictures, additional annotations and explanations to diagrams and drawings.

## FUNDING AVAILABLE FROM THE TRUST FOR OXFORDSHIRE'S ENVIRONMENT



If you don't already know us, TOE is Oxfordshire's independent funder. For over ten years, TOE has successfully attracted funds to enable us to distribute over £2.4 million to some 400 projects. These projects have made a real difference enhancing biodiversity and improving people's access to nature.

Typically, TOE's Local Environment Fund awards grants for the cost of practical work. This year, we are asking our stakeholders to help us improve our work by answering some questions. Your answers will help us improve our grant-making and ensure that more community groups know about our funding and that we are here to work with them. We would be grateful if you could respond to our 5-minute survey by following this link <https://tinyurl.com/y93kpxtf> and many thanks if you have already shared your thoughts with us.

And, if your Council, or a community group in your parish, is planning a project, email [admin@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:admin@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk) to arrange a chat about the grants available for not-for-profit organisations (including parish and town councils), and check that your idea meets our funding criteria. **Grants are awarded quarterly and the next deadline is 12 October.**

Detailed guidance and the application form can be downloaded from [www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/main-fund](http://www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/main-fund)

## CODE OF CONDUCT

All councils will have been contacted by their Monitoring Officers, all councils by now should have adopted the Code, it is the same one across all tiers of local government within Oxfordshire.

The new Oxfordshire code is based on the [LGA model](#) and has been adapted by the local Monitoring Officers jointly to reflect local circumstances.

The Monitoring Officers are all offering training to town and parish councils. Most have offered a date or dates in September – **PLEASE ENCOURAGE ALL YOUR COUNCILLORS TO ATTEND THE TRAINING IN YOUR DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA.**

The Code does actually state that

### *6.8 Compliance with the Code of Conduct*

#### *A Councillor:*

6.8.1	<i>Shall undertake Code of Conduct training as required by the local authority.</i>
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Patrick Arran, MO in South and Vale has offered an extra training session for Clerks in those districts on 18<sup>th</sup> August 7pm, please attend.

The new Code does not allow suspension of councillors for poor behaviour. We know this is a significant weakness and all groups in local government recognise this; unfortunately the current government line is that sanctions such as suspension require legislation and this is not a priority for them.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### NALC BLOG ON LEVELLING UP

Professor Colin Copus, Emeritus Professor of Local Politics, De Montfort University has a blog on the NALC website - [Localising levelling up: Getting the parish voice heard - News \(nalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/localising-levelling-up-getting-the-parish-voice-heard)

He writes about the importance of the local voice being heard as the Levelling Up Bill progresses through parliament -

*“So as levelling up is the only game in town – what should local councils be doing:*

- *Don't be shut out*
- *Create a strategic alliance with the district council*
- *Work with districts (and county) to get the right deal for the parish or town*
- *Be crystal clear about how the big grandstanding schemes can be tailored to suit real places*
- *Using local councils and districts' local knowledge and networks, set out how a deal should integrate a range of public services – such as police and health or those provided by quangos and government departments – into a cohesive set of interactions aimed at improving the economic and social well-being of very local areas*
- *The highlight throughout the process is how it is a parish and town level where local networks, community groups and social interaction are at their strongest and are where and how the big stuff of the deals must make sense and be relevant*

*There is much at stake in levelling up and county deals that will mean a hard fight to keep local government local, and it is only local councils in alliance with districts that will achieve that badly needed goal. We need blood, sweat and tears to make deals work.”*

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND UNVEILS STRATEGY TO HELP ITS RURAL CHURCHES SURVIVE

The Church of England has launched a 10-point strategy to help its thousands of rural churches survive.

The C of E published at the end of June a book entitled '[How Village Churches Thrive](#),' a practical guide to help the churches – many of them historic listed buildings with very small congregations – have a sustainable future.

The strategy sets out 10 key areas *"where applying relatively small changes can make a big difference to the revitalisation, recovery and renewal of our village churches, amplifying the efforts that may well be happening already."*

The publication comes as many rural churches are facing increasing pressures – financial, demographic and with the upkeep of buildings. In many places, one priest will serve several congregations, going from church to church each Sunday, or across a month.

The book identifies ten key areas with practical case studies that could enable village churches to flourish:

- Extending a warm welcome to strangers as well as locals and friends
- Making the most of life events such as weddings, funerals and baptisms
- Using buildings creatively perhaps more as a community centre
- Caring for God's acre – churchyards as wildlife havens
- Being the heartbeat of the community
- Celebrating our heritage
- Cultivating fruitful festivals in partnership with the community
- Welcoming more children
- Reaching the isolated and lonely
- Communicating effectively

## FLY THE RED ENSIGN FOR MERCHANT NAVY DAY



We received this in the OALC in box –

“We're inviting you to join our ‘Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day’ campaign on 3 September in aid of the Merchant Navy Fund, which this year celebrates its ten-year anniversary. Fly the Red Ensign is an annual campaign, run by The Seafarers’ Charity, to honour the brave men and women who kept the UK afloat during both World Wars and celebrate our dependence on modern-day merchant seafarers who are responsible for more than 90% of the UK’s imports.

The past several years have been incredibly hard for most of us and especially challenging for those working at sea. Away from their family and loved ones for many months at a time, they are now facing the pressures of the rising costs of living, with their families dealing with the crisis at home.

### **Will you Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day Campaign on Saturday, 3 September?**

This Merchant Navy Day, 3 September, please Fly the Red Ensign to honour and remember the sacrifices of the, often forgotten and invisible, but very hard-working, Merchant Navy seafarers, and help us raise vital funds to help those in need and their families.

Everyone is welcome to get involved by flying a Red Ensign on Merchant Navy Day.

If you're organising a flag-hoisting ceremony, you could consider involving local dignitaries, Merchant Navy veterans, Sea Cadets, etc. This does not have to be on Merchant Navy Day - you may prefer to



schedule your event during the week or the weekend of 3-4 September. The Red Ensign may be freely flown ashore anywhere in the UK at any time of the year.

If you are organising an event the charity would like to hear about it! Please let us know about your activities by emailing [mnfund@theseafarerscharity.org](mailto:mnfund@theseafarerscharity.org) and our team will be happy to share any images that you send on our social media channels.

## PLANNING APPEALS: HOW LONG THEY TAKE

If these things interest you, the latest average timescales for planning, enforcement and householder appeals have been issued by the Planning Inspectorate and can be found at this link - [Appeals: how long they take - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-appeals-timescales)

## RTPI REPORT ON RURAL PLANNING



The Royal Town Planning Institute commissioned a report into *Rural Planning in the 2020's*; it details the changing face of rural areas across the UK and Ireland. It identifies key challenges rural communities are facing in the 2020s, from COVID-19, to Brexit, to climate change. It also identifies the potential for the countryside to be a site for adaptation.

This wide ranging study explores significant challenges facing rural communities, including the rural housing market and agricultural sector, and assesses how land use planning can effectively support the delivery of sustainable development in rural areas in the 2020s.

The key points that it covers are:

- Brexit
- Covid 19
- Climate change

The full report is here [RTPI | Rural Planning in the 2020s](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/publications/rural-planning-in-the-2020s)

## RURAL SERVICES NETWORK – SUMMARY FROM MARCH ONLINE SEMINAR ON RURAL PLANNING

[30/03/22 - RSN Seminar: Rural Planning - Rural Services Network \(rsnonline.org.uk\)](https://rsnonline.org.uk/30/03/22-RSN-Seminar-Rural-Planning-Rural-Services-Network)

### Key learning points

#### Neighbourhood Planning, leading the revival of rural planning

- Over 10 years, supported 180 Neighbourhood Plan projects in 51 LPA areas.
- Projects range from market towns to parishes with a number of distinct villages, 3-5 villages in the same parish, to smaller parishes based on a single village etc.
- Local communities managing the “trade-offs” whilst dealing with the breadth of common issues rather than the planning authority or developer.
- Neighbourhood planning has enabled a level of community engagement in the planning system which has been a real “game-changer” and led to a much greater understanding for rural communities of planning and how difficult it is to do.
- Bolsters community identity; levels of engagement in referendums exceeds local and general elections.

- Tangible outcomes include: a confident parish council that wanted to protect the village school, enhance footfall to local shop and increase numbers at village school whilst protecting the village from speculative bigger developments on outskirts – majority of residents agreed.
- A village actively setting design and development principles onto degraded land rather than wait for planning proposals etc. to come in first.
- A small village being positive in its neighbourhood plan but by only allowing a very small development area which enables it to control the type of development and ensure it's in the right place for the village.
- Protecting local heritage assets (may not warrant listing) helps to bolster identity.
- Promote active travel networks between cycling, walking and bus routes and reducing use of private cars in centre of village.
- Protect open spaces "local green spaces".
- Improve local infrastructure and resolve it – large village identified land for development of 400-500 new homes to have a relief road - "bottom-up" development.
- Neighbourhood Plan (NP) reviews are not mandatory but as the policy context changes so they should be updated, particularly if the Local Plan has been reviewed. The community will then need to do a proper and full review of their plan and come up with new development proposals. If there are "minor" amendments to the NP then no need to hold a referendum.

### **Planning for Digital Connectivity: How Planning Impacts the Rollout of Mobile Infrastructure?**

- Mobile UK is the trade body for the four main mobile operators: Three, EE, Vodafone and O2.
- Importance and benefits of rural connectivity particularly since the pandemic as more people worked from home, remote access to GP appointments, online education – school and university level, applying for jobs and job interviews.
- A mobile phone is no longer seen as a luxury but part of critical national infrastructure.
- Drone technology - potential to order prescriptions on mobile phones and delivery by drones, use of drones in farming to analyze soil for more specific crop growing/reduce use of fertilizer etc.
- Move towards Manufacturing 2.0 – not just mobile phones connected to a mobile network but to machines connected to a mobile network.
- Opportunities for fixed wireless access – essentially is broadband through your mobile. With the move into better 4G, and even 5G, potentially get near gigabit capability through a SIM card accessible router – no need for cables.
- Rural connectivity is critically important for the next phase of sensor technology which will help with climate change mitigation, and also to make places viable, investable and attractive for work and homes.
- 4G coverage to 95% of homes by at least one operator, through the [Shared Rural Network, which](#) will be completed by 2024.
- Generally, higher the mast equals less infrastructure, planning barriers in AONBs and National Parks mean lower masts and more infrastructure. In rural areas, it can be economically more expensive to put in masts where demand is low, there are topography issues, and difficulty accessing sites, maintenance issues etc. as compared to urban areas.
- Working with local authorities to put infrastructure on their public assets to support mobile connectivity. In Scotland this is the [Infralink](#) with critical data on it. Government looking to replicate this in England: [Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator Programme](#).
- Problem in planning but also in policy is the lack of priority for mobile in development plans. If it is mentioned focus is on fixed only.
- [Encouraging Digital champions](#) to be financed by Central Government to support local authorities. Where an authority has a Digital champion, they are more likely to promote/improve connectivity as a priority. Ideally need both political and officer level but a stand-alone role and at a senior level.

- Misinformation regarding [5G and health](#) and conspiracy theories - cannot distribute mobile, biological matter through mobile signals, and radiation levels for 5G are lower than that of wi-fi which most people have in their homes.
- [Cluttons](#) partnered with YouGov to survey MPs and councillors about the Government's gigabit rollout plans and the challenges involved in meeting the national targets. In addition, they surveyed businesses and consumers to gain insight into the level of understanding around gigabit capable technology and awareness of the benefits that gigabit connections can bring.
- Government's [Wireless Infrastructure Strategy](#) review is still under way.
- Expecting Permitted Development Right reforms to allow multiple users onto one mast.

## PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

30<sup>th</sup> June [Transforming Public Procurement - our transparency ambition - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

In the [Transforming Public Procurement](#) green paper, [consultation response](#) and [Procurement Bill](#), Government has proposed to embed transparency throughout UK public procurement.

While there is already a high level of transparency of UK public procurement, existing rules and systems have room for improvement.

The foundation of the transparency reforms is a new procurement 'noticing' regime, covering the full lifecycle of public procurement, from planning through to contract expiry. The new notices are outlined in the Procurement Bill (2022) and further detail on their content will be set out in the secondary legislation to follow. The Government has already begun building these new notices into the [Find a Tender service](#) (FTS), its central public procurement platform.

While the new notices are the Government's highest priority, it also wants to improve the tools that contracting authorities, suppliers and the public have access to, in order to better share information and understand activity across the entire sector.

This [Policy Paper](#) outlines Government proposals to improve transparency of UK public contracts and spending in greater detail, covering:

- The Government vision for procurement transparency in the UK
- Why this is needed
- What it is are proposing to do
- The benefits this will bring
- Where the Government are going to go from here

## UPDATED GUIDANCE ON PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERING OBJECTIONS TO DEFINITIVE MAP AND PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

[Guidance on Procedures for Considering Objections to Definitive Map and Public Path Orders html - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Updated on 22<sup>nd</sup> June - Guidance on procedures for considering objections to definitive map and public path orders.

## DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES



The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), together with the University of Plymouth, Faculty of Health and Dementia-Friendly Parishes believe that parish and town councils are ideally placed to improve the quality of life of their community.

There is a mounting body of research that outlines the prevalence of dementia in our society and the effects that this can have on any individual; such as isolation and loneliness. This, in addition to the reduction of health services in rural communities, will be the largest health problem that our country faces. Dementia-Friendly Communities, as set up by local councils, can ensure that people living with dementia can live well in their community. And guarantee that people living with dementia have access to an active lifestyle in their community.

In 2020, NALC launched a survey to identify the work that local councils are already doing to assist those most vulnerable in their communities and gain insight into potential barriers to this progress. Following this, NALC published the [‘Dementia-Friendly Communities’](#) guide which demonstrates the positive impact of building Dementia-Friendly Communities and provides local councils with the tools to help you build your own.

NALC has had a follow up [survey](#) which was in last month’s Update with the closing date of 22<sup>nd</sup> July. NALC is hoping to produce a short briefing report in conjunction with Prof. Ian Sheriff of the University of Plymouth in the second half of this calendar year – based on the results of the survey.

The survey asked questions such as:

**Is your council dementia friendly?** – The Alzheimer’s Society definition is “A city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported, and confident they can contribute to community life. In a dementia friendly community people will be aware of and understand dementia, and people with dementia will feel included and involved, and have choice and control over their day to day lives.”

**Did your council formally adopt a proposal and plan to work towards becoming a dementia-friendly council?**

**If yes, did your council identify a councillor responsible for the promotion of the dementia friendly approach?**

**For local councils to promote inclusive Dementia-Friendly Communities the following actions should be considered:**

- At a council meeting formally adopt a proposal and plan to work towards becoming a Dementia-Friendly Council.
- Identify a councillor responsible for the promotion of the DementiaFriendly Community approach.

- Identify and put in place technology and training to increase the flexibility and connectivity to your community.
- Have the development of a Dementia-Friendly Community as a regular item on the council agenda.
- Ensure all public buildings are Dementia-Friendly — see Alzheimer's Society website or email [communities@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:communities@alzheimers.org.uk)
- Ensure that responses to planning applications demonstrate an awareness of dementia where appropriate.
- Engage with local organisations, businesses and schools to promote an inclusive Dementia-Friendly Community.
- As part of the council's work plan, an audit of current Dementia-Friendly activities in the area would identify gaps to promote awareness. This should be reviewed annually.
- Working groups, which include people living with dementia and their families, can be set up by the local councils to establish networks with all stakeholders to develop a Dementia-Friendly Communities and work with existing community alliances, and other councils. This can include the use of virtual technology.
- Promoting the Alzheimer's Dementia Friends programme — find out more at [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk).
- Ensure sustainability by considering all aspects of funding and support (in-kind) — for example, the use of council-owned buildings free of charge.
- Dementia-Friendly Community groups may vary and change over time responding to the needs and capacity of people with dementia and their families.
- It is important to consider succession planning; including where appropriate, how to build a pipeline of future volunteers.
- COVID-19 provides the opportunity for local councils to think differently in how they develop their Dementia-Friendly Communities in future by being innovative to respond to the needs of people living with dementia and their families in their community

## LAW COMMISSION PROPOSES CHANGES TO WHERE WEDDINGS COULD BE HELD

### [Outdated weddings laws to be overhauled under new reforms | Law Commission](#)

On 19<sup>th</sup> July the Law Commission outlined proposals to reform the law around weddings.

The Law Commission was asked by the Government to review the law on weddings, following concerns that it is not working for many couples.

Under current law, the rules and regulations governing weddings are confusing, out-of-date and restrictive. Needless regulation prevents many couples from marrying in a place that is meaningful to them, or having a ceremony reflecting their own wishes and beliefs.

The Law Commission has recommended a new system that would focus regulation on the marriage officiant responsible for the ceremony, rather than on the building where the wedding can take place.

This reform could open up a wide range of locations for couples to get married. Permitted venues would include gardens, beaches, forests, parks, **village halls** and cruise ships.

## NALC STAR COUNCIL AWARDS 2022

### A STAR OXFORDSHIRE COUNCILLOR IS A FINALIST!



# Star Council Awards 2022

The Star Council Awards are back this year to recognise the achievements of the local (parish and town) council sector. A great opportunity for councillors, clerks, councils and county associations to showcase how they are making a change in their communities.

Submit your nominations:  
[www.nalc.gov.uk/starcouncilawards](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/starcouncilawards)

**|nalc**



NALC revealed the [Star Council Awards 2022 finalists](#) on Wednesday 20th July, and once again, you can decide who the winners of the Council of the Year will be.

The prestigious awards are the only awards in England that recognise the local (parish and town) council sector. They celebrate the positive impact local councils, councillors, young councillors, clerks and county associations make on their communities.

There are five categories

- Council of the Year – you can read about the five councils and vote here [STAR COUNCIL AWARDS 2022 \(nalc.gov.uk\)](#)
- \*Councillor of the Year\* - voted for by a judging panel
- Young Councillor of the Year - voted for by a judging panel
- County Association Project of the Year - voted for by other County Associations
- Clerk of the Year - voted for by a judging panel

We are delighted and proud that an Oxfordshire Councillor is a finalist in the Councillor of the Year category. Katharine is a member of Wallingford Town Council and OALC Executive Committee as well as all her other achievements.

**Cllr Katherine Keats-Rohan** has been a councillor at Wallingford Town Council since 2019, during which time she has demonstrated a high level of commitment and dedication to Wallingford and its residents.

One of her key strengths is her position as a well-renowned historian with a wealth of knowledge of Wallingford's rich history. This expertise has enabled her successful oversight of the Wallingford Castle Ruins Conservation Project, with the council successfully receiving grants from Historic England of £286,000 and a further £50,000 awarded by the Wolfson Foundation.

Cllr Keats-Rohan also uses her knowledge as a historian to spend time on the town's ongoing projects, such as assessing what is needed to restore Wallingford's nationally significant heritage,



including town hall conservation, castle ruins conservation and the restoration of Saxon defences. Showing such determination and passion for historical projects is of significant help to the council.

Cllr Keats-Rohan is the chairperson of many working parties in the council, including the neighbourhood planning steering group, the historic assets working group, and the climate change working group. She is particularly passionate about the latter and runs a series of events throughout the year to raise awareness of climate change issues. These events also aim to equip residents, as both individuals and a community, to make positive changes. She has also led the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, collaborating with other parishes in the OX10 district to come together for a significant tree planting and hedge laying boost in the local area to mark the platinum jubilee.

Finally, Cllr Keats-Rohan has been instrumentally involved with the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan, coordinating updates and working with the necessary councils and planning authorities about the local development plan, mainly focusing on the new significant sites that are planned in Wallingford. She has also been involved with delivering a new play area and pavilion and its ongoing progress.

The winners will be announced at an online awards ceremony in October — further details will be available in due course.

## WAR MEMORIALS ONLINE

I expect if you have a war memorial in your village you will have heard of the War Memorials Trust. The Trust is a charity which works to protect and conserve war memorials in the UK. The charity provides free advice as well as running grant schemes to support repair and conservation projects. Membership costs £20 pa.



War Memorials Online is an opportunity for the public to upload images of war memorials and log concerns for the conservation of these important community and historical sources for future generations.

To date, contributors have added **over 60,000** war memorials to War Memorials Online and **over 55,000** condition reports. There are estimated to be 100,000 war memorials across the UK so there may be a war memorial in your village which needs recording.

Have a look at the entry for Culham - [Culham Parishioners WW1 Roll of Service \(warmemorials.org.uk\)](https://www.warmemorials.org.uk/entry/culham-parishioners-ww1-roll-of-service)

or Bodicote which has several entries - [Cpl William Henry Catch \(warmemorials.org.uk\)](https://www.warmemorials.org.uk/entry/cpl-william-henry-catch)

Anyone and everyone can help protect war memorials for future generations. Your content is vital. Register to contribute information or explore the site to find out more about war memorials.

<https://www.warmemorials.org.uk/>

## ACRE VILLAGE HALL ENERGY USE SURVEY

The national charity, ACRE is working with Utility Aid to better understand the energy needs of village halls. In the context of rapidly increasing energy prices, ACRE want to know what can be done to help halls reduce their energy usage and save money.

ACRE would like to see as many halls as possible to complete this survey. It will provide valuable information that they can use to better tailor their services for community buildings and make the case to funders to sponsor improvements.

Your answers will be anonymised in any reports that they produced, and you do not need to provide any personal data unless you are happy for ACRE to get in touch.

The survey can be completed here - [Village Halls Energy Survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](https://surveymonkey.co.uk) until midnight Friday 19 August.

If you would like more information about the survey, please email [contact@acre.org.uk](mailto:contact@acre.org.uk)

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY NEGOTIATIONS

The National Employers for local government services have made final, one-year pay offers to the unions representing NJC 'Green Book' employees [Emp circular 25 July – local government pay 2022 | Local Government Association](#)

The National Employers on 15<sup>th</sup> July agreed unanimously to make the following one-year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), final offer to the unions representing the main local government NJC workforce:

- **with effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above**
- **with effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances** (*as listed in the 2021 NJC pay agreement circular dated 28 February 2022*)
- **with effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement**
- **with effect from 1 April 2023, the deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine.**

This offer would achieve a bottom rate of pay of £10.50 with effect from 1 April 2022 (which equates to a pay increase of 10.50 per cent for employees on pay point 1); everyone on the NJC pay spine would receive a minimum 4.04 per cent pay increase.

## COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND

The government is providing £150 million over four years to support community groups to take ownership of assets and amenities at risk of being lost. Voluntary and community groups can bid for match funding to acquire important assets and run them for the benefit of the local community.

This will be of particular interest to parishes which have Assets of Community Value either in the moratorium period, or likely to be on the market in the near future.

Detailed guidance and eligibility can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus>

## CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

**Definition of Civility and Respect** Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word

Throughout the sector, there have been growing concerns about the impact bullying, harassment, and intimidation are having on parish and town councils, councillors, clerks and council staff and the resulting effectiveness of local councils.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations have responded by setting up a joint Civility and Respect Working Group to oversee the Civility and Respect Project.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Civility and respect should be at the heart of public life, and good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels.

**The intimidation, abuse, bullying and harassment of councillors, clerks and council staff, in person or online, is unacceptable**, whether by councillors, clerks, council staff, or members of the public.

This can prevent councils from functioning effectively, councillors from representing local people, discourage people from getting involved, including standing for election, and undermine public confidence and trust in local democracy.

NALC and, county associations as the membership organisations representing the first tier of local government in England and the SLCC, as the professional body for clerks, are committed to working together to promote civility and respect in public life, good governance, positive debate and supporting the well-being of councillors, professional officers and staff.

To that end, the Civility and Respect Working Group is working to deliver tangible resources, actions and interventions in four main areas:

- providing councils with the tools to support good governance;
- lobbying to strengthen the standards regime and encouraging more people to get involved;
- training; and
- processes to intervene to provide support to struggling councils.

**CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE**

The Civility and Respect Pledge is being introduced because **there is no place for bullying, harassment and intimidation within our sector**. The pledge is easy for councils to sign up to; it will enable councils to demonstrate that they are committed to standing up to poor behaviour across the sector and to driving through positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct.

**We invite all councils to put the Civility and Respect Pledge as an agenda item on the next council agenda –**

*‘To pass a resolution to sign up to the civility and respect pledge’*

By signing the Pledge, your council is agreeing that the council will treat councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.

In addition to the Pledge councils are encouraged to go further and ensure they have in place policies and processes which embed good professional behaviour into council life and activity. The table below is a tick box for all councils to follow...

Statement	Tick to agree and action
Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.	
Our council has committed to training councillors and staff.	
Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.	
Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.	
Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when if and when it happens.	
Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme.	
Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.	

Sign here on the NALC website - [Civility and Respect Project \(nalc.gov.uk\)](http://nalc.gov.uk)

**Civility and Respect Project Training Courses**

A raft of training packages to support councillors, clerks, and other employees experiencing difficulties with bullying and harassment is planned and available, see below.

They are all virtual webinars. Please click on the links for more details:

**OALC IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING ANY OF THESE WEBINARS  
WE ARE SIGNPOSTING YOU TO THEM BUT WE ARE NOT TAKING BOOKINGS OR  
PAYMENT**

Course	Booking for Clerks & Staff	Booking for Councillors
Resilience and emotional intelligence; what it means in practice for clerks and council officers	<a href="https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/">https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/</a> <i>multiple dates available</i>	<a href="https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/">https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/</a> <i>multiple dates available</i>
Leadership in challenging situations dealing with challenging situations and working with others effectively	<a href="https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/">https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/</a> <i>multiple dates available</i>	<a href="https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/">https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/</a> <i>multiple dates available</i>
Respectful social media; how to deal with attacks and negative engagement	<a href="https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/">https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/</a> <i>multiple dates available</i>	<a href="https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/">https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/civility-respect/</a> <i>multiple dates available</i>
Uncovering the issues for public sector	8 <sup>th</sup> September 11am -12 midday <a href="https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-08-09/">https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-08-09/</a>	12 <sup>th</sup> September 1.30 - 2.30 Clerks to email <a href="mailto:sue@haptc.org.uk">sue@haptc.org.uk</a> copying-in your delegates  This contact email address is Hertfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils
Managing conflict and difficult conversations for Clerks	14 <sup>th</sup> September 10am-3pm <a href="https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/managing-conflict-and-difficult-conversations-14-9/">https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/managing-conflict-and-difficult-conversations-14-9/</a>	Not applicable
	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 11am -12 midday	26 <sup>th</sup> September 1.30 - 2.30

What makes people become challenging?	<a href="https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-22-09/">https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-22-09/</a>	Clerks to email <a href="mailto:sue@haptc.org.uk">sue@haptc.org.uk</a> copying-in your delegates
Personal resilience and self-protection	6 <sup>th</sup> October 11am - 12 midday <a href="https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-06-10/">https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-06-10/</a>	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 1.30 - 2.30 Clerks to email <a href="mailto:sue@haptc.org.uk">sue@haptc.org.uk</a> copying-in your delegates
Understanding psychopathic and narcissistic behaviour	20 <sup>th</sup> October 11am – 12 midday <a href="https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-20-10/">https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-and-respect-20-10/</a>	17 <sup>th</sup> October 1.30 - 2.30 Clerks to email <a href="mailto:sue@haptc.org.uk">sue@haptc.org.uk</a> copying-in your delegates
Code-of-conduct	28 <sup>th</sup> September 10am – 12midday <a href="https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-respect-the-new-code-of-conduct-28-09/">https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/civility-respect-the-new-code-of-conduct-28-09/</a>	19 <sup>th</sup> October 7.00 - 9.00pm Clerks to email <a href="mailto:sue@haptc.org.uk">sue@haptc.org.uk</a> copying-in your delegates

## PLAY

On June 17<sup>th</sup> we had a training day on Play. The day was facilitated and organised by Streetscape <https://www.streetscape-products.co.uk> and was at the lovely new Bourtons Community Hall <https://bourtons-cherwell-pc.gov.uk/the-bourtons-community-hall/> at the far north of the county. The location allowed everyone to go outside and have a really close look at the playground right beside the hall. We were talked through the practical details which arise from trip hazards, timber products which rot, wear on the swings, types of safety surface, gates which don't trap fingers and so on.

Doug Belfield shared years of practical knowledge covering inspection and maintenance of play areas. He covered:

- routine inspections by a 'competent' person;
- operational quarterly inspections and
- the annual inspection.

But what is a competent person? Most people have heard of RoSPA training but have you heard of the [Register of Play Inspectors International \(RPII\)?](#) RoSPA do provide training and inspection services but RPII is the overall body for all the organisations which offer Inspection.





The Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII) is the official UK body for examining, accrediting and certificating inflatable, indoor and outdoor play inspectors. The RPII also accredits courses for the training of inspectors to ensure that playground safety standards are met and adhered to for your complete peace of mind.

Ensuring play safety is essential – both for the protection of the children using the equipment and to mitigate risk for the council in charge of the play areas. By using accredited playground inspectors, providers can be sure that they meet the strict criteria set by the RPII and that they've been fully trained to conduct inspections to the required levels of competence.

**We are investigating running some training on becoming routine playground inspectors.**

Doug also talked about design of play areas, consultation and best practice.

The other speakers were Angela Lewis from Fields in Trust <https://www.fieldsintrust.org/> who explained how a green space could be protected in perpetuity by a FiT Deed of Dedication.

And Kevin Millard from the insurers Gallaghers (used to be Came & Co) <https://www.ajg.com/uk/public-sector-insurance/> outlining the absolute necessity of having the correct insurances in place to protect the council should there be any accidents.

We are looking into commissioning a training session on play inspection with the blessing of OPFA. We have a full training schedule for the rest of the year so it will probably not be until next year

## PAVEMENT LICENCES: GUIDANCE UPDATED

The Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities updated on 26th July guidance on pavement licences to reflect the change to the Business and Planning Act Regulations 2022.

The temporary pavement licences process introduces a streamlined consent route to allow businesses to obtain a licence to place removable furniture, such as tables and chairs outside of cafes, bars and restaurants. The fee for applying for the licence is capped at £100.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pavement-licences-draft-guidance>

## CLIMATE ACTION

### WORKPLACE CHARGING SCHEME: GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) is a voucher-based scheme that provides eligible applicants with support towards the upfront costs of the purchase and installation of electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints.

The scheme is run by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and administered by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). This guidance is aimed at applicants. [Guidance for installers and manufacturers](#) is also available.

## How the scheme works

The WCS is open to businesses, charities and public sector organisations that meet the [applicant](#) and [site eligibility](#) criteria. The grant covers up to 75% of the total costs of the purchase and installation of EV chargepoints (inclusive of VAT), capped at a maximum of:

- £350 per socket
- 40 sockets across all sites per applicant – for instance, if you would like to install them in 40 sites, you will have 1 socket available per site

After applying using the [online application form](#), successful applicants are issued with a unique identification voucher code by email, which can then be given to any [OZEV-authorised commercial chargepoint installer](#).

Once the chargepoint(s) have been installed, the authorised installer can claim the grant from OZEV on the applicant's behalf. The chargepoint installation must be completed and the voucher claimed within 6 months of the voucher's issue date. Claims against expired vouchers will not be paid.

Installers must not charge applicants for the grant in advance of payment being made by OZEV. After OZEV reimburses your installer for the value of your voucher, this cost will be discounted from your final invoice.

More information here [Workplace Charging Scheme: guidance for applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

GREEN WEEK 2022 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPT – 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER



Green Week 2022 is in the planning stage, and will run from 24 Sept. - 1st Oct. One of the key themes for this year will be energy.

<https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>

## EUROPE'S MOST POWERFUL EV CHARGING HUB OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED AS PART OF ENERGY SUPERHUB OXFORD

Europe's most powerful EV charging hub officially launched this week as part of Energy Superhub Oxford, driving us closer to net-zero

The hub was opened by Transport Minister, Trudy Harrison, accompanied by Oxford City Council Leader, Susan Brown, and representatives from the main partners.

It offers fast to ultra-rapid charging for 42 cars, but with 10MW of installed capacity, this transmission-connected site can grow to charge 400 vehicles at once.



Working with our Energy Superhub Oxford partner Pivot Power, the hub has been designed to cater for all needs. Thanks to charge point operators Fastned, Tesla and Wenea, drivers can charge and be on their way in minutes, or while they visit the city centre and go about their day.

As if that's not enough, our cutting-edge hybrid battery – incorporating a 50MW/50MWh lithium-ion battery with a 2MW/5MWh vanadium flow battery from Invinity Energy Systems is also live, marking the completion of Energy Superhub Oxford!

We'd like to give a huge shout out to everyone who has joined us on this incredible journey. Together, we are accelerating a net zero future. And this is just the beginning...

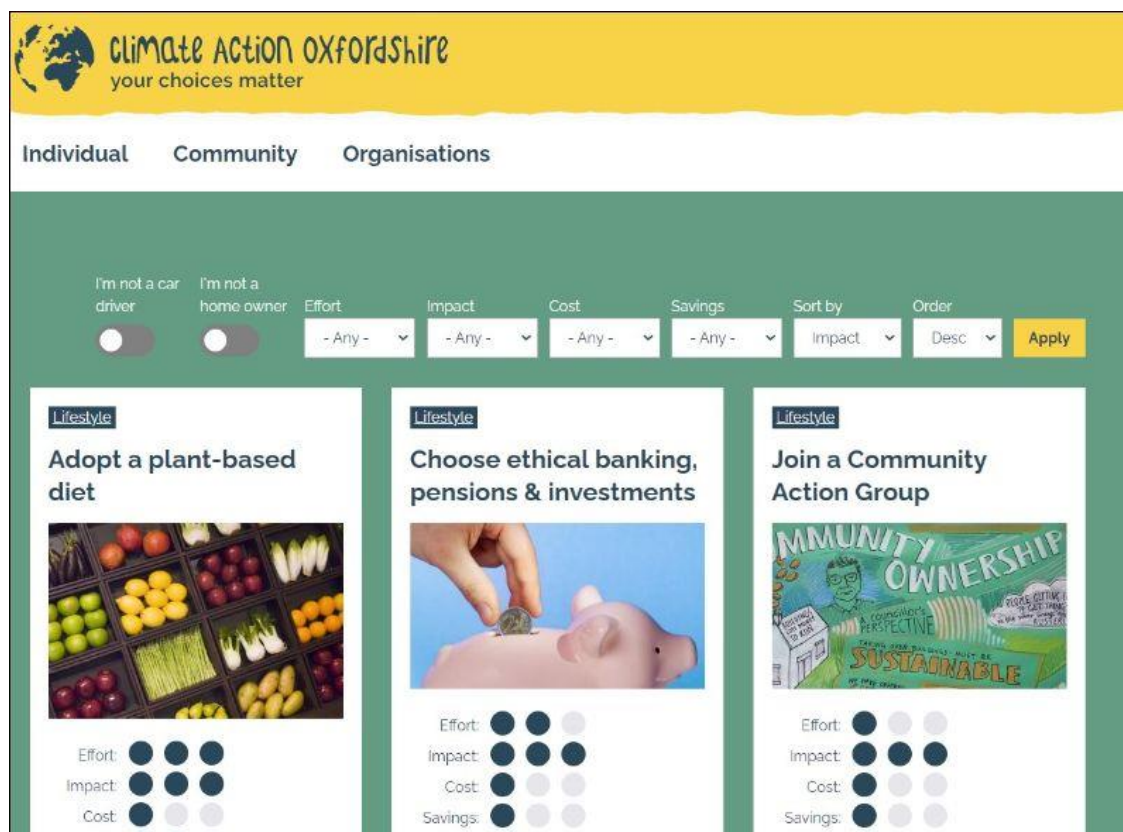
More information here on Oxford City website [Europe's most powerful EV charging hub officially launched as part of Energy Superhub Oxford | Oxford City Council](#)

## CLIMATE ACTION OXFORDSHIRE – NEW WEBSITE

A new website offering practical advice for Oxfordshire people wanting to reduce their carbon footprint and save energy has gone live.

Climate Action Oxfordshire – [www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk) – lists measures people can take and rates them according to effort, impact, and cost. It also gives people an idea of what financial savings they can make and includes tips and links on how to get started.

From small changes such as washing your clothes on a cold cycle, creating a wildflower area or using rechargeable batteries, to recycling more, eating less meat, and – for those with a bigger budget – getting solar panels or an electric vehicle, the website is full of practical things you can do with the time and money you have to spare.



It is a joint venture set up by Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, and the Vale of White Horse district councils, and OxLEP – the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The one stop shop has sections aimed at individuals, communities, and organisations, including businesses, and advice on transport, lifestyle, shopping, home and biodiversity matters.

**Councillor Andrew Prosser, Cabinet Member for Climate Change at West Oxfordshire District Council, said:** “There are so many opportunities for residents to reduce their energy use, particularly around the home which is a major contributor to climate change emissions. Simple steps really can add up, whether that’s draft proofing windows and doors, changing lightbulbs to LEDs and being more diligent about turning off lights, or replacing old appliances to those with a better energy rating when it’s time to renew.

“The new Climate Action Oxfordshire website brings together a whole range of positive actions residents can tap into to make their homes more sustainable, from quick wins that can be easily achieved to those actions which require a bit more input, for those who are able to go that bit further. We would urge everyone to take a look.”

**Councillor Pete Sudbury, Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, said:** “One of the many great things about this new website is that it puts people in touch with our community action groups. We recently welcomed our 100th group into the fold and it is inspiring to see them tackle climate change on a local level.



The Climate Action Oxfordshire website contains filters so that users can tailor it to their own circumstances. It will be regularly updated with new information and advice to help the county's residents do what they can to reduce their carbon footprint.

## OXFORDSHIRE PENSION FUND BEGINS FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

A year after Oxford University decided to divest from fossil fuels, the Oxfordshire local government pension fund has begun excluding fossil fuel investments from their own fund.

In September 2021, the administering committee for the scheme, worth approximately £3 billion and with around 65,000 members, voted to move the full value of the Fund's passive equity investment, worth £530Mn, into a newly launched 'Paris Aligned Benchmark' fund. The move will effectively exclude all investments in coal, oil and gas companies.

Over the previous year, the Fund as a whole achieved a 17.7% reduction in emissions across its measurable investments, and also decreased its exposure to fossil fuel reserves by over 30%.

<https://www.divest.org.uk/oxfordshire-pension-fund-begins-fossil-fuel-divestment/>

## OXFORD PARK & RIDE TO BECOME EVEN EASIER

Park & Ride services around Oxford will trial a new combined parking and bus ticket.

Working with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach to make it happen, the new combined ticket aims to make services more attractive and encourage a switch from car travel, helping reduce congestion in the city.

The trial means that you will be able to purchase a combined ticket which covers both parking and return bus travel for only £4.00 for a car with only one driver, and £5.00 for a car with two or more people.

Currently, other than a combined £6.80 family ticket, drivers pay separately for both parking and bus travel. The new combined ticket provides a lower cost option to the £6.80 family ticket.

We expect that the trial will take place from 30 September 2022 to 31 March 2023.

[City and County Cabinets to discuss combined parking and bus ticket offer at Park & Ride sites | Oxford City Council](#)

## THIS COMES FROM THE WEST OXFORDSHIRE DC CLIMATE TEAM NEWSLETTER

### Spotlight On...

## Spotlight On... Charlbury Green Hub

"Originating in 1997 as Charlbury Area Waste Action Group in response to local concerns about recycling, we became one of the first Community Action Groups. In 2013, we transformed to [Charlbury Green Hub](#) in line with wider issues about climate change and wildlife.



BRING OR TAKE EVENT

Over 25 years we've run activities helping local people make beneficial lifestyle changes for the environment. The Bring OR Take is a regular much-loved event and is now back in the hall after two covid years outside people's houses. We've invited traders here to sharpen tools, mend bikes, securely shred paper, and, since the start of covid, supply fresh food. People order from [Styan](#) and we organise the collection outside the community centre every Saturday morning, helping to reduce travel miles and packaging and encouraging people to eat healthy, fresh, seasonal produce. Styan always come to Charlbury's quarterly Farmers Market but now people can easily buy their produce every week. This also gives us a convenient weekly drop-off and collection point for our [SESI detergent refill service](#).

Our experience over the years helps us advise and work with other local organisations. In 2020 the [Cornerstone at the Corner House](#) was set up as a community larder that also provides food to many local families in need. During Covid, we couldn't run our fortnightly [Big Apple Take-Aways](#) - far too crowded - so we took all the picked fruit to the Cornerstone for anyone to help themselves. The Big Apple Take-Aways are a great way to support and share local produce.

Just before covid we set up the [Charlbury Repair network](#) on a drop-off and collection basis which continued through lockdown. This has been very successful with many electrical items being able to be fixed rather than thrown away."

Many thanks to Christine Elliott, Vice Chair of Charlbury Green Hub, for this contribution. Follow Charlbury Green Hub on [Instagram](#) for more information and to keep up to date on their activities.



## PROJECT LEO PLACE BASED TRIALS



Project LEO (Local Energy Oxfordshire) is one of the UK's most ambitious, wide-ranging and innovative energy trials, seeking to accelerate the UK's transition to a zero-carbon energy system.

Project LEO is running trials in Oxfordshire to understand how new technologies and services, particularly at the 'edge' of the network – closest to the point where people are using energy – can benefit local people, communities, and the energy system.

This [cross sector collaborative project](#) is building a broad range of reliable evidence of the technological, market and social conditions needed for a greener, more flexible and fair electricity system. It is also learning what changes need to happen within national and local policy to enable this to happen.

Project LEO is running a number of community based trials which will demonstrate how flexibility services can sit at the heart of a smarter, low carbon, locally balanced energy system.

They are working with six varied local communities to trial different flexibility services. We will explore how smart technology and new commercial models can create opportunities in a local energy marketplace and help us to understand how to do this in an equitable and fair way for everyone. One of the trials is in Eynsham, read more here

[Case Studies Archive - Project LEO \(project-leo.co.uk\)](#)

## CONSULTATION

### DCMS CONSULTATION ON SHORT TERM HOLIDAY LETS

On 29<sup>th</sup> June the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) issued an open call for evidence with the aim of trying to understand the impact of an increase in short-term holiday lets in England following the rise in use of rental booking websites and apps, and is apparently seeking to improve the holiday letting market for those living in popular tourism destinations. This is part of the governments post covid [Tourism Recovery Plan](#)

The review will look at the market and the opportunities and challenges presented for consumers and tourism communities.

Airbnb listing data showed a 33 per cent increase in UK listings between 2017 and 2018

The scheme could involve physical checks of premises to ensure regulations in areas including health and safety, noise and anti-social behaviour are obeyed.

Further measures the Government is considering include a registration 'kitemark' scheme with spot checks for compliance with rules on issues such as gas safety, a self-certification scheme for hosts to register with before they can operate, and better information or a single source of guidance setting out the legal requirements for providers.

A lot of villages in Oxfordshire experience the second/holiday home situation. The sharing economy can bring benefits, but it has also prompted a range of concerns. Which include the impact on the housing market and questions around health and safety standards. Other countries and cities have introduced measures to address some of these concerns and the government believes the time is now right to look at the situation in England.

The call for evidence seeks views and data on the size and shape of the market, as well as the positive and negative impacts of short term lets.

There are 12 questions which can be answered on line via this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-a-tourist-accommodation-registration-scheme-in-england>

Alternatively NALC would like to receive copies of your responses so they can compile an England wide response. Please email to [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) by 30<sup>th</sup> August.

NALC will be arguing strongly that any review must include mandatory registration and strengthened legislation to bring AirBnB under the same ambit as other landlord systems. Powers of local inspection and monitoring to be delegated to local planning authorities. But they must be properly funded to do this work.

**The consultation closes on 21<sup>st</sup> September.**

## 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.

Chris will be running training for OALC on **Conduct Issues and Employee Relations** on 13<sup>th</sup> September starting at 10am.

This will cover:

Conflict between elected members and employees is unfortunately not uncommon, and can be extremely disruptive to the running of the council

To help councils respond to such problem we are delivering a 60 – 90 minute interactive seminar which helps Councils to understand

- The need to address the poor conduct by individual councillors
- The potential risks to the council of litigation.
- How a council can respond to problem behaviour within the legal frame work of the Localism Act 2011, the Ledbury authority and latest recommendations by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
- Managing health problems caused as a result of unacceptable behaviour
- Dealing with conduct issues involving the internet / social media.

Book here - <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000150>

This month Chris writes -

### **What is Fire and Re-Hire, and can Councils Change their Employees' Contracts?**

The term “Fire and Re-Hire” was one of those phrases like Furlough Leave and Hybrid Working that have emerged out of the pandemic. But what exactly is it, and can it benefit a council?

Fire and Re-Hire was adopted by big employers such as British Airways during the pandemic as a means of addressing lost income and high wage bills. According to their management teams it was an essential response to extreme and unprecedented trading conditions. However, critics accused the employers of acting immorally and potentially in breach of contract. Although the P&O incident in February 2022 didn't involve the “Re-Hire” element; they recruited agency workers instead of ex-employees; it resulted in a huge backlash from the public as well as a criminal investigation.

Looking at town and parish councils, it is now very clear that a lot has changed in the past three years. Many have experienced a decrease in the use of community facilities, community centres and village halls. At the same time practices such as home working are now much more widespread. As a result many councils are looking at the current terms and conditions and staff numbers, and wondering how they can be updated to respond to these new challenges.

In light of incidents such as P&O, the government has announced that ACAS is planning to produce a new statutory Code of Practice to help employers make these changes, although no date has yet been set for its publication.

However, demand within councils to change and update their workforce continues to be a pressing. The problems caused by loss of revenue and adapting to new working patterns needs to be addressed now. One of the biggest risks to any council when making such changes is that employees will reject them, and submit claims to the Employment Tribunal for “Breach of Contract”.

Rather than waiting for these updated guidelines to be published, ACAS has already set out what steps a council, as with any other employer, needs to follow to be able to do this:

#### **1. Why Make Changes**

An Employment Contract is a legally binding document between a council and its employees, and any changes must be agreed by **both** parties.

Part of that agreement process requires the council to have a real need to make changes, and is acting in pursuit of a legitimate aim – the business case. What has changed to justify the council having to propose terminating its previous agreement? Justification would normally result from something detrimental that had happened, such as loss of revenue due to reduced demand for its facilities, or the loss of a major grant.

When problems such as this happen, the council has to respond, and as the wage bill tends to be one of its biggest budgets, it is understandable that it will come under scrutiny. Typical solutions might include reducing hours, pay rates, overtime rates, pension entitlements or sick pay, but not redundancy.

Councils need to be aware that if hours are significantly reduced, affected employees are legally entitled to reject this reduction and to ask for redundancy. A major financial concern for councils who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) could be top up costs for those who chose to be made redundant. The LGPS should be contacted to see what the liability would be, so that this can be considered as part of the costs, before any decisions are made. This can add tens of thousands to the cost.

## **2. Options for the Council to Consider**

Faced with such a business case, the council has to make proposals to help it respond. This would normally entail conducting a meeting of elected members in closed session, to assess various options. In doing this, members may well want to take into account;

- Potential damage such options may cause to working relationships with staff.
- The risk of claims of breach of contract as well as Constructive/Unfair Dismissal.
- The inevitable stress of going through the change process.
- Loss of valuable staff who don't like the changes.
- Bad publicity within the community.
- Possible industrial action.

To be able to defend their position, members need to make sure that the business case is genuine and sufficiently demanding upon the council that the option of doing nothing simply isn't realistic.

At its meeting the council, or relevant subcommittee, needs to decide which option is most likely to address its problem, and resolve to enter into consultation with employees over this proposed change.

It is essential that all options are referred to as proposals at this stage, and that there is no indication that a decision has already been made. The consultation process has to be seen to be "meaningful" and to do that, it can only concern itself with proposed changes. The final decision will be made by the council once the consultation process has ended.

## **3. Time to Talk**

Following the council's resolution, staff would be informed of the business case, and what the council is proposing to do to address the problem. They would also be informed that the

council is conducting a consultation process with them, to ensure that the proposals are thoroughly tested before any decisions are made.

If 20 or more staff are involved, consultation has to be over a thirty day period. If the number of staff is below 20, the period can be shorter, but still long enough to be considered meaningful. Normally 2 to 3 weeks would be sufficient.

The purpose of consultation is to;

- Enable staff to challenge the validity of the business case.
- Consider alternative proposals that employees want to make.
- Discuss the full financial implications. For example a proposal to reduce hours will obviously reduce pay, but also holiday entitlement and pension payments.

Employees should be able to consult with their line manager at any time during this period, but to make sure that staff have every opportunity to discuss these matters, a specific consultation meeting also needs to be conducted.

#### **4. Decision Time**

Once the consultation period has ended, the council needs to reconvene in closed session to consider all points that have been raised by the workforce. A formal resolution can then be taken to either;

- Reject the proposals altogether.
- Accept the original proposal.
- Implement a changed proposal that has been produced in response to what employees have raised.

Following that resolution, a formal meeting needs to be conducted with the affected employees to inform them of the outcome. They also need to be informed that these changes will only be introduced after either their contractual or statutory notice period, whichever is the longer (statutory notice is one week for each completed year up to 12 weeks).

Employees also have the right to appeal against the council's decision.

#### **5. Working under Protest**

If an employee objects to the changes and appeals, but their appeal fails, they can put the council on notice that they are "working under protest".

They would need to issue a letter stating that they disagree with the change, are working under protest and reserve the right to take legal action.

If their complaint does end up in front of a Judge, the council has to accept that the old contract has been breached as a result of the changes. However, its defence will hinge on;

1. Did it have sufficient justification to do this? Was the problem of such magnitude that the council had no other reasonable option but to make these changes?
2. Was there sufficient and meaningful dialogue between the council and its employee before making the change; i.e. the consultation process.

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)

## NALC TRAINING

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### WORKING BETWEEN THE TIERS

28 September 2022 — 12.00 – 13:15

Local (parish and town) councils are not just at the heart of communities but also the first tier of local government. Their actions make a massive difference in the quality of life for residents. Over the last decade, due to changes in the legislative backdrop of localism, working relationships between local government tiers have changed. How principal authorities engage with local councils varies greatly; different drivers often include financial, political and place-based priorities.

There is a need for effective local governance in communities. Local councils are instrumental in sustaining their communities and ensuring the well-being of residents. The pandemic only exacerbated systemic challenges, such as financial restrictions and devolved services. What does this mean for the local council sector? How can we ensure principal authorities engage with local councils on devolution matters? And how can we ensure local councils have the resources to deliver more services?

Join us to learn more about the different frameworks that can facilitate a better connection between local councils and principal authorities and improve local service delivery.

Speaker: Tony Blake (Shared Intelligence)

Book tickets here [WORKING BETWEEN THE TIERS Tickets, Wed 28 Sep 2022 at 12:00 | Eventbrite](#)

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### EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

7th November 2022 — 10.00 – 16:00

Communities across the country need to be empowered. The government's levelling up white paper recognises the vital role local (parish and town) councils have in shaping those communities. There is a pressing need to create more councils, give them more powers to make a change and more funding to support those changes. The time for empowerment is now.

Joining one of the biggest one-day hybrid conferences in the local council sector will allow attendees to engage in a wide-ranging programme focussing on the hottest topics in the sector, such as civility and respect, climate change, community resilience, health, housing, levelling up, and representation. You will have opportunities to put your questions to speakers and panellists, visit the sector-specific exhibition, network with your peers, and share good practices.

Speakers: Jon Alexander (New Citizenship Project), Cllr Sara Butler (Mayor of Frome), Paul Hoey



(Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd), Andrew Maliphant (The Community Works) and Miriam Turner (Friends of the Earth)

Buy in person tickets here [EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES \(IN-PERSON TICKETS ONLY\) Tickets, Mon 7 Nov 2022 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Buy virtual tickets here [EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES \(VIRTUAL TICKETS ONLY\) Tickets, Mon 7 Nov 2022 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)

## OALC TRAINING PROGRAMME

### 1. CiLCA next set of mentoring starts in September



Our next tranche of Cilca mentoring sessions starts on 19th September. There will be five morning sessions, 9.30am - 1pm:

19<sup>th</sup> September, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The training assists and supports your own learning, giving direction on what the modules are looking for and how to approach answering them (but it doesn't give you the answers!)

We ask new students to complete a training needs assessment before starting, also we advise you not to register with SLCC until Session 1 has been completed. Registering with SLCC starts the clock ticking on the year you have in which to complete your work.

Prior to each session, each student registered with OALC, will receive a work sheet detailing any preparation and documents needed in the mentoring session. Please ensure you have printed a copy of the recent **Portfolio Guide 2021**. It's a good idea to have a skim through it prior to each session to gain an overview of the course.

Each mentoring session will commence with a review of previous sessions and any issues arising. Followed by exploration and discussion on a specified unit from the **Portfolio Guide 2021**. This will enable students to complete the Learning Outcomes before the next mentoring session.

The cost is unchanged from previous years at £275 + VAT. Book here -

<https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000155>

### 2. Training for councillors, and clerks too.

The majority of OALC training is delivered via Zoom although we will have one or two face to face training events this year depending on the topic, the location and the trainer.

Our Zoom 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.

**Bookings close one week before the date of the course. When bookings have closed we will then send to all those booked on the course the Zoom joining instructions, the presentation (where appropriate) and any other papers. We ask that you confirm your attendance, no shows are annoying and a waste of taxpayer's money especially when there is a waiting list.**

Please note our revised cancellation and late payment policy which is on the website

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

date	subject	time	trainer	location
September 13 <sup>th</sup>	Conduct issues and employee relations	10-11.30am	Chris Moses OALC HR consultant	Zoom –lots of places
September 28 <sup>th</sup>	Roles & Responsibilities	10-12 and 1-2.30pm	Liz Howlett	Zoom 6 places available
October 10 <sup>th</sup>	Emergency Planning		OCC Emergency Planning Team	Zoom 2 places available
October 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Internal Controls</b> Budgeting	10-11.30am 1-2.30pm	Steve Parkinson	Zoom lots of places Zoom lots of places
November 8 <sup>th</sup>	Councillor Fundamentals	10am -12 noon	Kim Bedford	Zoom lots of places
November 21 <sup>st</sup>	Planning	10am -1pm	Phil Shaw	West Oxfordshire DC offices Witney

## 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 generic job 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)

## **PARISH COUNCIL CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER VACANCY**

### **Claydon with Clattercote Parish Council**

Working from home

Hours: 15 per month

Salary: NJC Scale LC1 or 2 scale points 5 to 21 (£10.04 to £13.78 per hour), starting point depending upon experience, CiLCA qualification and transferable skills. 8% pension contribution subject to employee making 1% contribution.

#### **Job Description**

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

- Managing the meetings of the council meetings and trustee meetings including preparing the agenda, taking the minutes, monitoring actions and decisions
- Ensuring planning applications are considered, and submitting responses to the District Council
- Managing the Parish Council's finances, preparation of accounts and reconciliation, payroll and PAYE, payment of invoices, banking, end of year accounts, submission of accounts for external audit, VAT reclaim, preparing for budget review and precept
- Dealing with a variety of correspondence and public notices

#### **Qualities**

You will be required to work from home and attend evening meetings on the second Thursday of every other month. You must be computer literate, have some administrative experience and able to maintain accurate accounts.

Candidates must possess a high standard of oral and written communication skills, be proficient in Microsoft Office software (particularly Word and Excel), be capable of working independently and have the ability to deal with a range of issues.

#### **How to apply:**

To apply or for further information please e-mail [cwcclerk@outlook.com](mailto:cwcclerk@outlook.com)

## **ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Town Clerk/ Chief Executive**

Salary range £56,658 to £63,878 (Grade LC4 substantive, NJC pay spine points 50 to 54).

Full time. Abingdon Town Council is a large Town Council in Oxfordshire that offers services and wide support to the local community. We are seeking to appoint a new Town Clerk whose role will be to help Councillors to address current challenges and embrace the many future changes.

The Town Clerk is the Council's chief officer and principal adviser, assisting in the formation of policies and responsible for the effective management of all its business, resources, staff and operations.

We seek a forward thinking and proactive Town Clerk to take responsibility for all aspects of the Council's operation, and hope to attract individuals with the knowledge, experience, and energy to help us achieve our goals while keeping the business and mechanisms of the Council on the 'straight-and-narrow'.

This role does NOT include "s151" Responsible Finance Officer duties, as this is part of the Deputy Town Clerk's function.

Applicants must demonstrate significant managerial experience, and ideally will have relevant knowledge of local government law and procedures and hold (or must obtain) one of the qualifications prescribed to allow the Council to exercise the General Power of Competence.

**Closing date for applications will be Friday 14 August 2022 at 1700hrs.** and applicants selected for interview will be offered an interview on either Tuesday 6 or Wednesday 7 September. For details of the job; the Council; the town, and how to apply, please see our Applicant Pack [here](#)

**Woodstock Town Council    Town Clerk**  
**LC2 SCP 24-28 (£28,672 - £32,234 pro-rata (pay award pending))**  
**30 hours per week**

**Woodstock Town Council is seeking to appoint a highly organised and committed individual who is innovative, forward thinking and proactive as Town Clerk to support the elected councillors in achieving their aims and aspirations for the Council.**

The Town Clerk is a key role which is responsible for the administration, organisation and management of the Council's services, facilities and staff.

Woodstock is an historic market town and civil parish, 8 miles (13 km) north-west of Oxford in West Oxfordshire in the county of Oxfordshire, England. The 2011 Census recorded a parish population of 3,100.

Blenheim Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is next to Woodstock, in the parish of Blenheim. Winston Churchill was born in the palace in 1874 and buried in the nearby village of Bladon. Edward, elder son of King Edward III and heir apparent, was born in Woodstock Manor on 15 June 1330. In his lifetime he was commonly called Edward of Woodstock, but is known today as the Black Prince. In the reign of Queen Mary I, her half-sister Elizabeth was imprisoned in the gatehouse of Woodstock Manor.

This is an exciting time to be joining our small but dedicated team. You will therefore need to be enthusiastic, flexible and community-focused with a hands-on style with sound administrative, interpersonal and IT skills in order to work successfully with councillors, external stakeholders & organisations and community groups.

The Town Council manages properties, cemeteries, play areas, allotments, the Water Meadows and nature reserves; it is also a consultee on local planning decisions.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have relevant experience – a track record of service achievement and innovation, commitment to public service, be motivated, community focused and possess sound managerial, communication and organisational skills.

Candidates should have a knowledge of local government. The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification is preferred as a minimum, or a willingness to achieve this within two years of commencement.

Attendance at evening meetings and weekend events will be required, for which time off in lieu will be granted.

For an informal discussion please contact the Locum Town Clerk, Karen Crowhurst by email at [clerk@woodstock-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@woodstock-tc.gov.uk) Tel: 07725866739

**The closing date for the receipt of applications is 12 Noon on 15 August 2022.**

Interviews will take place on the week commencing 29 August

## **ARDINGTON AND LOCKINGE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **PARISH CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER (RFO)**

**SALARY:** 1. Depending on experience, in the range £13.21-£14.67 per hour (LC2 (18-23)). 2. A home office allowance of £26 per month.

**HOURS:** 5 hours per week (of which 28 hours per year are paid holiday).

**LOCATION:** generally working from home, but with regular physical inspection of Council assets in the two villages. A laptop and printer are provided.

The villages of Ardington and Lockinge, two miles east of Wantage, share a single Parish Council and lie within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**DUTIES:** The Clerk provides administration and clerical support to the Council and, as RFO, manages the Council's finances. The Clerk also provides guidance on the Council's legal powers and duties.

**SKILLS:** - Basic knowledge of local government (training will be provided if needed) - IT skills including Word, Excel and PAYE tools - Good verbal and written communication skills - Strong organisational ability. - Tact and diplomacy.

Please contact the Chairman ([hughroberts@btinternet.com](mailto:hughroberts@btinternet.com)) if you have any questions.

Or if you wish to apply for the post, please send the Chairman a covering letter and a CV by email.

**The closing date for receipt of applications is the close of business on Friday 2nd September 2022.**



## **Chipping Norton Town Council**

### **Facilities and Events Manager**

Salary: LC2 SCP J8 24-28; £29,174-£32,798 (£23,655-£26,593 pro -rata)  
Part time post 30 hours per week to include some evening and weekend working.

This an exciting opportunity to join an active Town Council in a beautiful Cotswold town on the brink of substantial expansion and change.

Chipping Norton Town Council is one of the largest and busiest Town Councils in West Oxfordshire. The Council seeks an aspiring and initiative-taking officer to help lead it into the future.

Chipping Norton Town Hall is a beautiful Grade II\* Listed Building in the heart of the Town. This is an exciting opportunity for the right person to lead the Town Hall to its full potential in terms of accessibility, facilities, community engagement and generating funds and revenue. As well as project managing the Town Hall, the Facilities and Events officer will help deliver a year-round programme of sustainable cultural activities and events, which will be accessible to the whole community. You will need to be creative, friendly, approachable with excellent management and communication skills.

Applicants should have previous experience in a similar role or demonstrate transferrable skills and be able to have a flexible approach to their working week

Benefits include: Competitive salary, automatic enrolment into the Local Government Pension Scheme (subject to eligibility), supportive working environment and 22 days annual leave. This is a real opportunity for an experienced and solution-focused manager, who is innovative, has an eye for detail, and who will collaborate with Councillors to meet the aspirations of the people of Chipping Norton.

**Closing date for applications is Monday 12th September 2022.**



For an informal chat to discuss your suitability for the role please contact Luci Ashbourne, Town Clerk on 01608 697142 or email [townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk)

More information here -

[We are recruiting! - Chipping Norton Town Council \(chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk\)](http://chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk)