

OALC NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2023

THE HEADLINES

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Chairs Q&A session

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The schedule for the rest of the year and booking here
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- Woodstock TC - Clerk



1. **OALC membership subscription invoices** will have been sent to you this morning so that councils that wish to pay before the end of the financial year can do so. However, there is no obligation to pay early.

The membership subscription has gone up by 3.5% which includes a 3% increase on the NALC element of the subscription. The subscription is calculated on your electorate as provided by the district councils at January this year; the electorate figure can fluctuate so the invoice despite the 3.5% increase may (or may not) be less than last year. If you don't receive the subscription email, please let us know.

2. **Please help Sally Thurston, Town Clerk Faringdon Town Council** who is doing a Master's Degree in Public Leadership. As part of her degree she is undertaking her dissertation on in/civility in public life.

She would like to interview anyone, Clerk or Councillor, that may have been subject to bullying. She has set out below what her research entails. If you feel you can help please contact Sally directly. Her contact details are below -

I am town clerk to Faringdon Town Council and am undertaking a master's in public leadership with a De Montfort University.

For my dissertation I am looking at causes of incivility in the town and parish council sector. I would like to carry out interviews with both clerks and councillors. They may have been a witness, a victim, accused of bullying or even have an opinion about what they think the causes of incivility are based on experience. Participation is anonymous.

The research is important and could help to inform the work currently being undertaken to address the issue.

If you would be interested in participating, please send me an email, in confidence, to my university email address: P17034805@my365.dmu.ac.uk

If you know someone who may be interested in taking part, please feel free to forward this email. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Many thanks

*Sally Thurston FSLCC, Town Clerk BA (Hons) Community Governance
Faringdon Town Council, The Pump House, 5 Market Place, Faringdon SN7 7HL
01367 240281*

3. **Paying your Clerks salary on time** – please also see the Employment briefing this month on what a council as employer is required to do.

We have become aware in the last month of a number of councils that are failing to pay their Clerk on time.

This is unacceptable. Providing the payments have been set up there is no excuse for councillors not making the required online authorisation. I am making the assumption that payments are online not by cheque, after all this is 2023.

Treating staff in this cavalier manner perpetuates the outdated concept of the Clerk being a volunteer who does it for the love of it! Nothing is further from the truth. The council is an employer and has a duty to its employee (s).

Our HR consultant Chris Moses view on this is clear and trenchant...

“Section 1(4)(a) of the Employment Rights Act 1996 requires a Council to state clearly what the pay is and how, including how often, it will be paid. This is written into the Employment Contract.

Consequently, if a Council fails to comply with this requirement, the Council has breached this contractual obligation which would entitle an employee to resign and claim Constructive Dismissal and breach of contract due to the Council’s failure to pay them in accordance with their S1(4)(a) contractual commitment.

Claims for Constructive Dismissal can normally only be made by people who have 2 or more years’ service. However, if an employee can prove that their statutory rights have been breached, they can make such a claim without having qualified through length of service.

Section 1(1) of the National Minimum Wage Regulations 1998 require a Council to pay the NMW rate of £9.50 for each hour worked within any pay reference period. Failure to pay someone within the pay period of a week or month they were expecting to receive their pay, would breach this statutory requirement. I doubt the Courts would take a one-off problem too seriously, but if this is an ongoing systematic problem within a Council they may take a different opinion and treat this as unacceptable conduct of such magnitude as to breach the contract.”

If your council is unsure of its duties as an employer please come on our Essentials of Employment training on 23rd May more details here - <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000172>

4. Don’t forget the regular Chair’s sessions

All Chairs, new and experienced, are very welcome to join our monthly one hour virtual session, it 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. We will hold the sessions alternatively during the day and in the evening so those who are working can join too.

OALC virtual monthly Chairs Q&A session on 7th February 2023 6.30pm

13 Chairs joined from:

- Cherwell DC – Deddington, Fritwell, Adderbury, Hook Norton, Launton
- West Oxfordshire DC – Filkins & Broughton Poggs, Enstone,
- South Oxfordshire DC –East Hagbourne, Brightwell cum Sotwell, Kidmore End, Chinnor
- Vale of White Horse DC –Wantage, Bourton
- Oxford City

The main topic of the session was elections. The discussion covered a wide range of topics around the main election theme including:

- Difficulties of recruiting new councillors
- The need for care over controversial issues in the pre-election period and for candidates not to hijack meetings for their own electioneering
- The difficulty of single-issue candidates
- The difference between non contested and contested elections

The County Officer briefly mentioned other issues:

- OALC 'So you want to be a councillor' one-hour online sessions 13th February and 15th March more info here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>
- Coronation – Wantage reported on a letter received from Michael Gove concerning plans for the event and information which was included in the last OALC monthly Update- <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-weekend-plans-announced>
- Kiera Bentley OALC Chair reiterated that her Clerk was still willing to receive examples of bullying in confidence for her Master's Dissertation. Information on this was circulated to all councils after the meeting.

OALC Chair's Q & A Zoom sessions 2023

We will ask you to observe good online 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

- **March Wednesday 1st 2.30pm**
- April Wednesday 5th 6.30pm
- May Tuesday 23rd 2.30pm
- June Tuesday 6th 6.30pm



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. **£150,000 in funding has been allocated to identify opportunities to deliver tree planting across the county**

Oxfordshire County Council has also been successful in receiving £150,000 in funding from the Government's Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund to kickstart tree planting activity across the county. Two new community tree and woodland planting roles have been created as part of a collaboration with the district councils. The new recruits will work to increase tree cover by training volunteer groups and further engaging the local community in woodland creation activities. More information here <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/funding-to-create-green-jobs/#:~:text=The%20Woodland%20Creation%20Accelerator%20Fund,activity%20at%20a%20local%20level.>

2. **Free service supports thousands of residents in Oxfordshire with their home energy - BHBH**

Residents in Oxfordshire can benefit from the advice and support of Better Housing Better Health , a service that helps those worrying about their home energy to create warmer, healthier and happier homes. Last year, through the service's free helpline and their free home visit service (BHBH+) – their team of trained advisors helped over 2500 residents with the aim this year to help even more.



The service can help:

- Residents who are finding it hard to understand energy bills, pay for fuel or read meters
- Access funding to replace old and broken heating systems
- Access funding for insulation measures
- Reduce damp, condensation and mould by better ways of managing a home
- Understand and programme heating controls
- Making onward referrals to additional support services, such as Benefits advice and debt support
- For some residents they may be eligible for additional heating support depending on their situation

To speak to the friendly team, call 0800 107 0044 or visit www.bhbh.org.uk and complete the online referral form or find our e-mail address.

3. **OCC Emergency Planning Dept.** has just sent to all town and parish councils their annual survey review for Community Emergency Plans with a **deadline of 1st April.**

This is their annual communication with you to encourage you to create/revise your council's Community Emergency Plan. **Please respond to them.**

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/emergency-planning/community-resilience>

4. **Oxfordshire residents urged to help county 'win at waste'**

Visitors to Oxfordshire's household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) are being asked to separate recyclable material from their general waste before disposing of it.



[Visitors to recycling centres asked to sort out their waste beforehand \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](http://oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Oxfordshire County Council wants residents to sort their mixed rubbish out before their visit, in a bid to prevent items that can be recycled from ending up in the general waste and bulky skips.

Visitors are encouraged to separate their recycling so it can be put into the relevant containers which are on site, including plastics, card, textiles and shoes, metals and electrical items, before setting off.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE

Over 1,300 hedgerow whips are being planted across West Oxfordshire through the collaborative efforts of the District Council and local volunteer groups to celebrate the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. Launched last year to honour the now late Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, the project encourages individuals and communities across the UK to plant more trees to create a lasting living legacy for generations to come. The plants for the hedgerows are all native species and aim to improve habitat connectivity across Council-owned land and beyond.

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

Street parties for the Kings' Coronation

Planning a bash for the King's Coronation in May? Whether you're planning a street party or another fun event, we'd love you to join the celebrations!

You can now apply for a temporary road closure, applications close Friday 31 March. More information on how to apply for a road closure is on the [South website's Temporary Road Closure page](#)

Visit our website for more information about arranging a public event and to stay up to date with local and national events as we get more details over the coming months. Find out more on the [South website for details of the Kings' Coronation and events in South Oxfordshire](#)

The Great British Spring Clean returns for 2023 from 17 March to 2 April and we'd love to see lots of people carry out litter picks and get involved with community events across the district.

If you get in touch with our Waste team, they can provide you with litter picking equipment and if you are involved in a pre-arranged group litter-pick they can also arrange for your bags of litter to be collected afterwards.

We've already had lots of interest, so don't miss out! To find out more and to book your equipment or collection slot, visit [our South community litter-picking page](#).

CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III



Letter dated 26th January –

HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III'S CORONATION

The Coronation ceremony for His Majesty King Charles III will take place on Saturday 6 May 2023 at Westminster Abbey. His Majesty's Government, led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is delighted to be

supporting Buckingham Palace in planning and delivering celebrations to mark this historic occasion.

The Coronation will see people across the UK and the Commonwealth come together to celebrate. The Coronation programme will include the procession and service at Westminster Abbey on 6 May, the 'Coronation Big Lunch' across the country on 7 May (with a concert taking place in Windsor in the evening), and 'The Big Help Out' community activity on the bank holiday, Monday 8 May.

I know that efforts by you and your local communities will be central to making this a momentous weekend of UK-wide celebration. I would ask you all to take every possible action to help your

communities in their preparations - making processes cost-free for residents, cutting red tape, and being completely flexible when receiving applications for road closures. I know that your work in doing so for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022 contributed greatly to such memorable community events for so many.

I set out further opportunities for councils and communities to plan local events below:

Street Parties

Street parties should be encouraged, and you can support residents who want to organise parties for their neighbours, for example, by relaxing road closure rules to enable street parties to take place as easily as possible. Your residents should be made aware of all the support that is available and no one should be put off by needless red tape. [Guidance for residents on how to organise a street party can be found here.](#) You can also highlight [guidance on 'Street Meets'](#), which offer an even easier way to bring neighbours together.

The Coronation Big Lunch

The Coronation Big Lunch, on 7 May, will encourage communities to come together, celebrate their connections and get to know each other better. It will bring the Coronation festivities into the heart of every community. [More detail on getting involved is available on the Coronation Big Lunch website.](#)

The Big Help Out

The Big Help Out, on 8 May, will provide an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of His Majesty's service and showcase the impact of volunteering within communities. People across the UK will be able to get involved and [more detail is available on The Big Help Out website.](#)

Coronation events and projects organised by council-owned civic amenities

Civic amenities, including libraries, museums, leisure centres and heritage sites, are welcome to host their own events and projects to mark the Coronation. This could include exhibitions, concerts or special talks.

Council-led events

Councils are welcome to organise Coronation events and celebrations within their towns and cities, which could include their own civic occasion, for example, "The Mayor's Coronation Party".

Public broadcasts

Large screens in public places can be used to show television coverage of the Coronation, which could include the Ceremony and Procession on 6 May and the Coronation Concert on 7 May. These screenings could be complemented or enhanced by being a part of a wider local event.

National Lottery funding

Funding is available of up to £10,000 for events and activities through the National Lottery Awards for

All programme and you can encourage community groups to apply. National Lottery Awards for All does not have a deadline, but it can take up to 12 weeks from the point of application submission to receiving funding, which means applications for the Coronation weekend should be made before the middle of February. [All funding criteria and terms and conditions are here.](#)

As with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022, DCMS will be launching a Coronation website with resources and an interactive map. This will be publicised in our local government bulletin once available. [You can subscribe to the bulletin here.](#) I look forward to seeing the exciting and creative ways in which you and your communities choose to mark the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

With every good wish,

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

PLUNKETT FOUNDATION – COMMUNITY PUBS AND SHOPS



We hope all parish councils in Oxfordshire are aware of the [Plunkett Foundation](#) and the positive work it does for rural communities. Plunkett is a national charity, founded in 1919 by Sir Horace Plunkett. Its office is in Woodstock; [Action with Communities in Rural England \(ACRE\)](#) main office is next door in The Quadrangle, Banbury Road.

Plunkett's vision is to encourage and support resilient, thriving and inclusive rural communities. Two of its

main areas of work are community businesses such as pubs and shops.

The charity assists communities that want to embark on the adventure of saving the village pub or opening a community shop. There are 146 known community pubs across the UK, several are in Oxfordshire:

- Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst Oxford
- The Bull, Great Milton
- The Plough West Hanney
- Red Lion, Northmoor
- Abingdon Arms, Beckley
- Seven Stars, March Baldon

According to Plunkett, the average cost of purchasing a community pub during 2020 was approximately £314,000 and the average set up cost was £244,000, (but with wide variations.

Plunkett also assists with the setting up of community shops. Their 2022 report writes:

- in 2021 12 new community shops opened
- 407 community shops were trading
- the average turnover increased by 10% to £184,000. The whole community shop sector had an estimated £75m annual turnover
- 220 community shops offer post office services
- An estimated 1,300 people who in casual, full-and part-time jobs
- The sector has a workforce of approximately 7,550 volunteers.

In Oxfordshire there are quite a few community shops, all are magical in their own way:

- Islip
- Ewelme
- Bampton
- South Stoke
- Appleton
- Little Milton
- Aston

GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM TOE'S LOCAL ENVIRONMENT FUND

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) is the county's independent environmental funder. Community groups, charitable and non-profit organisations (including Parish and Town Councils) seeking funding for wildlife and environmental projects in Oxfordshire can apply for

- a small grant of up to £1,000,
- a standard grant worth between £1,000 and £15,000, or
- a transformational grant of up to £25,000

Applications for a Small Grant can be submitted any time and applicants will find out if they have been successful in just a few weeks. TOE has a quarterly funding cycle for standard and transformational grants.

TOE is looking for projects that protect, enhance and create new natural places for wildlife and/or improve access for more people to green spaces, nature and the wider countryside. An example of an eligible project is the creation or restoration of a pond, a feature in many communities. As well as providing essential water for life, ponds and wetlands managed for wildlife sequester carbon, something being considered by many Parish Councils. Using a grant from TOE, the Friends of Island Pond Wood in Launton employed a contractor to dig a new pond last month. The pond has been fenced to prevent dogs going for a swim which will maximise the pond's value for wildlife. All that's needed now is some rain...



The Local Environment Fund is administered by TOE and supported by funds from Grundon Waste Management Ltd as part of the Landfill Communities Fund. Detailed information and application forms are on www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/local-environment-fund To check that your project idea meets TOE's funding criteria, contact Rachel Sanderson, Local Environment Fund grant administrator admin@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk and 01865 407003.

PLEASE COULD YOUR COUNCIL ASSIST BY PUBLISIZING THIS SERVICE IN YOUR NEWSLETTERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Introducing the Oxford Health School Aged Immunisation Service



Dear Parish/Town Councillor,

We are a friendly, and experienced team of nurses and administrators who work to provide vaccinations to all school-aged children across Oxfordshire.

For the most part these vaccinations are carried out to children in the school environment and we correspond directly with schools and provide information to parents via their child's school.

We have a community engagement team who specialise in reaching out to school-aged children and young people who are not able to access immunisations in a school setting. These children may not be attending school, as they are home schooled or for a variety of other reasons. We need to ensure these children are offered the same vaccinations as those attending school.

To ensure every school-aged child is offered their vaccinations we need to reach every family in each parish across Oxfordshire. It is in this regard that we welcome your help and co-operation.

We would like each parish to assist with the following:

- Take a small poster/s from us about our service, to be placed on any village/parish noticeboard/s.
- Allow a small advert to be placed on your parish/village webpage and/or in your parish newsletter (this would only need to be two or three times a year at the start of each vaccination programme).

If you can supply this information to us, please complete the details via this link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/sZRiPKw7Dx>

Alternatively, please contact the team at SAISCommunityEngagement@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk if you are the point of contact for your parish or if you can direct us to the individuals that may be able to assist us with this task.

We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Mary-Ann Shaw Administrator (Community Engagement), School Aged Immunisation Service (SAIS)
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/imms/

OXFORD CITY LOCAL PLAN ANOTHER CONSULTATION 13TH FEB – 27TH MARCH

Oxford City Council cabinet approved on 8th February consultation on a further preferred options document focusing on housing needs following an independent report providing the evidence base for the plan.

The evidence-based report is a housing and employment needs assessment (HENA) that was jointly commissioned by Oxford and Cherwell District Council to support the development of their respective local plans.

Oxford said the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out a standard method as a starting point for assessing housing needs, had not been adjusted to take account of the 2021 Census. The NPPF allows for alternative approaches “*where there are exceptional local circumstances*” as in Oxfordshire, it added.

The county’s “strong and diverse economy” is forecast to keep growing, even during a prolonged period of economic volatility caused by Brexit, Covid-19 and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, said the council. This is primarily because of Oxfordshire’s world-class life science, education, and technology sectors, with strong and growing demand for laboratory and research and development space.

Oxford said it has concluded from the HENA analysis that “the best way” to objectively measure housing need is to forecast future job growth and then calculate the number of homes needed to support this sustainably.

Under this model – referred to as the Cambridge Econometrics Baseline Trend – Oxford will need 1,322 new homes and Cherwell will need 1,009 new homes each year between 2020 and 2040.

“The local plan 2040 will set out how and where we deliver homes, jobs, and community facilities in Oxford for the next 20 years,” said cabinet member for planning and housing delivery Alex Hollingsworth. “This third round of consultation sets out our evidence base for the number of homes we’ll need over the lifetime of the plan and we need to know what you think.”

The latest move is the third round of public consultation on the emerging local plan and follows a consultation on emerging issues in 2021 and on preferred options in 2022.

More information here https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20067/planning_policy/1460/oxford_local_plan_2040

OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION - COMMUNITY CAPACITY GRANTS

The Community Capacity programme, first launched in autumn 2022, is now open again for a second round of applications. We are pleased to have approximately £60,000 still available to distribute to grassroots organisations throughout Oxfordshire.

Community Capacity grants aim to create the conditions for people to connect with others and thrive, promoting independence and self-reliance within local communities. Resourcing and retaining the community activity developed during the last two years ensures that new infrastructure, connections, and expertise forged through the pandemic are not lost. These grants are funded by Oxfordshire County Council, Adult Social Care, promoting the Oxfordshire Way.

Amounts available: £5,000-£10,000

Group annual income: Under £1,000,000

Type of cost: Ongoing running or project costs

Closing date: 13th March 2023 at midday

[Community Capacity grants - Oxfordshire Community Foundation](#)

OX-CAM ARC RENAMED PAN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

A press release issued on 20th January is entitled - Government backs new Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership -

Secretary of State Rt Hon Michael Gove MP confirms support for the establishment of an Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership.

The endorsement follows a proposal submitted to government by leaders from local councils, local enterprise partnerships, the Arc Universities Group and the area's transport body, England's Economic Heartland.

Backing for the pan-regional partnership unlocks access to up to £2.5million government funding for the Partnership to support its priorities in delivering sustainable growth and environmental enhancements for the region.

The Partnership has a new website which has very little on it yet - [OxCamPartnership \(oxford-cambridge-partnership.info\)](https://OxCamPartnership(oxford-cambridge-partnership.info))

While this Financial Times article dated January 25th provides more background information on the ebb and flow of enthusiasm for this regional growth concept

ELECTIONS

If your council has elections in May your district's democratic services team will have been in contact with information; some are offering virtual briefings in addition to their written briefings.

We are offering free one hour online sessions on ***So you think you would like to be a parish councillor!*** To promote the basics of being a councillor and to encourage more diverse people to get nominated. More details here - <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

There are **election resources** on the NALC website here - [ELECTIONS \(nalc.gov.uk\)](#) and in the Members Area of our website too - [Events - OALC](#)

The Electoral Commission has extremely useful – guidance for candidates [P and C - Overview - NDS \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](#), the timetable for all elections (inc. district council) [LGE election timetable 4 May 2023 \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](#)

Pre-election advice

I am reproducing the pre-election advice that SODC/Vale has issued to its own district councillors. Please note the date for other districts when the pre-election period starts is 27th March. And bear in mind that district council elections tend to be more political than town/parish council elections so I have omitted phrases that are only pertinent to district councils.

*“The guidelines and restrictions on publicity during the pre-election period (formerly referred to as Purdah) that starts on **20 March 2023 at both South and Vale**. Any restrictions apply to all elections happening during this period.*

Local government sometimes views this period as a time when communication has to shut down completely. This is not the case, and the ordinary functions of councils can continue to carry out business as usual, but some restrictions may be imposed by law. During this period, we will keep all decision making under review and postpone anything which is particularly contentious / could become an election issue.

Here is a link to the short, but helpful, guidance prepared by the Local Government Association. <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period#annex-a-template-letter-for-sending-to-councillors-ahead-of-local-elections>

Publicity

From the start of the pre-election period, the council must comply with restrictions outlined in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. In addition, a Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in 2011, which you can access [here](#), makes clear that particular care should be taken in periods of heightened sensitivity, such as in the run up to an election.

The Act defines publicity as “**any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public.**” Generally, the Act says that we should “**not publish any material which, in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.**”

The Code of Practice recommends that authorities should generally not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters and that publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute...

Decision making

In relation to decision making within the council, the position remains that it is ‘business as usual’ unless there are very good reasons why this should not be the case. In the vast majority of cases, the pre-election period will have no impact on normal council business,...

What this means

The primary restriction is on proactive publicity by the council which particularly relates to candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election.

The council can still issue media releases on factual matters provided that these do not identify individual councillors or groups of councillors, these will normally be phrased as a ‘council spokesperson’.

Councillors are still free to respond to enquiries received from the media in a personal capacity and can issue their own statements, write letters to the local newspaper(s) for publication, contact the media directly or say what they like in a personal capacity and can refer to themselves as a councillor when doing so, but you **must not use council resources** to do so.

It is still possible for the council to issue statements on behalf of a councillor holding a key political or civic position provided it relates to important events which are outside the council’s control and can be shown to justify a member response. These occasions are likely to be rare and to be the exception, rather than the rule.”

SODC/Vale will accept completed nominations, hand delivered to the appointed room at their offices in Abingdon – Abbey House, Abingdon OX14 3JE in normal working hours (10am -4pm) between 20th March – 4th April including Saturdays, no appointment necessary.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 4 MAY 2023 TIMETABLE

Event	Working days before the poll (deadline if not midnight)	Date
Publication of notice of election supplied by the	Not later than 25 days	Not later than Monday 27th March

district council for display in your parish		SODC and Vale are publishing on 20 th March
Pre-election period (used to be called purdah) starts. The council has to be more careful about publicity and not allowing potential candidates to use council business for self-promotion.		
Delivery of nomination papers to the district council in person/by hand	From the date stated on the notice of election up to 4pm on the nineteenth working day before the election	From the date stated on the notice of election up to 4pm on Tuesday 4 April
Deadline for withdrawals of nomination	19 days (4pm)	4pm on Tuesday 4 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	Not later than 18 days (4pm)	Not later than 4pm on Wednesday 5 April
Deadline for receiving applications for registration	12 days	Monday 17 April
You will now know whether your council is going to have a contested election		
Publication of notice of poll	Not later than 6 days	Not later than Tuesday 25 April
Deadline for notification of appointment of polling and counting agents	5 days	Wednesday 26 April
Polling day	0 (7am to 10pm)	7am to 10pm on Thursday 4 May
Councillors retire	4 days after the election	8th May
New Councillors take office		9th May
Hold Annual Meeting of Parish Council	Within 14 days of councillors taking office	Between 9th – 24th May
Councillors to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office	On or before Annual Meeting of the Parish Council	As above
Councillors to complete Register of Interests	Within 28 days of taking office	By 6th June

NATIONAL NEWS

NEW DEVELOPMENTS TO DELIVER FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE – BIO-DIVERSITY NET GAIN

On 21st February, the government [announced](#) that new housing, commercial and infrastructure developments are set to be “nature positive” from November onwards.

Developers in England will be required to deliver 10% “Biodiversity Net Gain” (BNG) when building new housing, industrial or commercial developments so there is a positive benefit for nature.

This means they will have to assess the type of habitat affected and its condition before submitting plans to the local planning authority detailing how they will deliver a 10% benefit for nature.

How BNG is enforced and delivered has been subject to a consultation on regulations and implementation, and the government has published the response today. The response confirms the phased introduction for BNG, details of a last resort statutory credit scheme for developers, and that draft legislation is due to be published later in 2023.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>

1,000 LOCAL COUNCILS SIGN THE CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

NALC is delighted to announce that 1,000 local (parish and town) councils have now signed up for the [Civility and Respect Pledge](#). Launched just six months ago as part of the joint [Civility and Respect Project](#), the Pledge demonstrates that councils are

committed to standing up to poor behaviour and driving through positive changes that support civil and respectful conduct. And the more councils that [sign the Pledge](#), the more impact it will have in lobbying the government to re-visit its response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life report on local government ethical standards. Can I urge all councils yet to sign the Pledge to do so.

NEW LIMITS FOR CONTRACT FINDER

Please find a link below to the Cabinet Office policy notice which details the new limits for publishing contract information on Contract Finder – (see the Finance Briefing on page 37 for the full story)

[2023-01-04 Procurement Policy Note – update to legal and policy requirements to publish procurement information on Contracts Finder \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE: LIMIT FOR 2023-2024

The letter from Ben Greener, Deputy Director, Communities & Integration Directorate, Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities to Jonathan Owen, CEO of NALC, dated 6th February states:

This is to notify you that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for parish and town councils in England for 2023-24 is £9.93.

This is the amount as a result from increasing the amount of £8.82 for 2022-2023 by the percentage increase in the retail index between September 2021 and September 2022, in accordance with Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act.

[The government confirms the Section 137 expenditure limit for 2023/24 - News \(nalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/the-government-confirms-the-section-137-expenditure-limit-for-2023-24)

UPDATE FROM CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER IN HER LETTERS OF 13TH JANUARY AND 7TH FEBRUARY

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

On 31st January, Defra launched the cross-Government Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23), the first five yearly refresh of the original 25 Year Environment Plan.

EIP23 sets out a comprehensive delivery plan for the government's approach to halting and then reversing the decline in nature, with progress measured against stretching interim targets. It builds on the vision in the 25 Year Environment Plan and sets out a delivery plan for each of the goals and targets.

Taking these actions will help us restore nature, tackle environmental pollution, and increase prosperity. EIP23 sets out the breadth of our domestic plan, including climate mitigation and climate adaptation. It also links to our international commitments and agreements, including the ambitious Global Biodiversity framework agreed at the UN's Nature Summit CBD COP15, to halt the decline of nature by 2030 and protect 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030.

Environmental improvement will be fully reflected in the review of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2023. The new system of Environmental Outcomes Reports under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will be aligned to EIP23 and ensure that decision makers know how far a plan or project contributes to Environmental Targets.

You can view the EIP23 here and the Government's press release [here](#): Ambitious roadmap for a cleaner, greener country

Active Travel England: Supporting cycling and walking through the planning system

Active Travel England (ATE) is a new executive agency that has been set up to make walking, cycling and wheeling the natural choice for everyday trips. With an overarching target of 50% of trips in towns and cities being walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030, ATE is supporting the Government's objective to embed active lifestyles and healthy travel principles in communities, putting active travel at the heart of plan-making and decision-making, and promoting good design as a way to build inclusive and active communities.

From 1 June 2023, ATE will become a statutory consultee on certain planning applications, as listed below. This will help to ensure that when new developments are being considered, the opportunity to build in active travel routes is fully maximized. This is about making people-friendly streets sit at the

heart of planning. To that end, after 1 June, local planning authorities will be required to consult ATE on planning applications where developments meet the following minimum thresholds:

- 150 residential units (dwellings)
- 7,500m² commercial area; or
- Site having an area of 5 hectares or more.

This will apply outside of London. Inside the capital current arrangements between the Boroughs, the GLA, and Transport for London will apply unless otherwise agreed on a case-by-case basis.

Over the course of March 2023, ATE will undertake a series of roadshow events across the country to engage directly with local stakeholders, and in particular, planning officials. These events will provide an opportunity to hear about how the agency is developing, how the planning team will assess planning applications and other functions, including inspections and investments.

Following the 'go-live' of its statutory consultee function, ATE will also look to provide advice in the preparation of local plans and supplementary planning documents, as well as encouraging prospective applicants to take advantage of pre-application advice. Further details will follow.

Community Land Auctions: Call for participation

On 17 November 2022, a time-limited, piloted measure of Community Land Auctions was introduced by Government amendment to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill.

CLAs are a new way of capturing land value from land when it is allocated for development in the local plan that can be used to provide vital infrastructure, including schools, roads, GP surgeries, and the affordable housing that communities need.

Alongside the need for piloting authorities after the Bill receives Royal Assent and the secondary legislation has been made, DLUHC are looking to hear from local planning authorities and other key stakeholders who might be interested to attend workshops and roundtable discussions to find out more information about the Community Land Auctions pilot.

Those who wish to find out more are invited to get in touch with the developer contributions team at: DeveloperContributions@levellingup.gov.uk

New Toolkit for Local Authorities published to maximize the benefits of trees and woodlands in communities across England

A new [Trees and Woodland Strategy Toolkit](#) has been published to equip Local Authorities to plan, create or update their own Trees and Woodland Strategies (TAWS) and harness the long term benefits that trees can bring to local communities. It provides practical guidance and insightful case studies from Local Authorities around the country.

Funded by Defra, and co-created by The Tree Council, Forestry Commission, Fera Science, and Forest Research, the Toolkit also highlights how Local Authorities can draw on the current

Government funding for tree-planting, to enhance treescapes for local communities and respond to climate change and biodiversity loss.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Planning consultancy Lichfields has identified 28 planning authorities which had delayed or shelved their Local Plans amid uncertainty over the direction of policy caused by the government's proposals to reform the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) covering the Housing Delivery Test, the five-year land supply, development density and character as well as agricultural land and onshore wind farms.

The government's consultation on the NPPF includes suggested transitional arrangements for those authorities that are preparing local plans. This encourages local authorities to continue preparing local plans and for them to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by 25 June 2025 at the latest.

FUNDING FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

The government on 21st February announced that UK drivers will benefit from £56 million in public and industry funding for increasing electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints that will help deliver 2,400 chargepoints while working to support councils to deliver more in the long term.

The funding will expand the current Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot, boost the existing On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) and help councils secure dedicated resource to develop in-house capability to coordinate chargepoint plans and work with private operators.

In addition to expanding three of the original LEVI pilot schemes, the announcement will launch 16 new pilot scheme areas.

On the same day the government launched the £8 million LEVI Capability Fund which will help councils work in tandem with private business and chargepoint operators on their plans to deliver their chargepoint plans for their area.

Announcement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/56-million-of-public-and-industry-funding-electrifies-chargepoint-plans-across-the-country>

NEW FLY TIPPING OFFENCE STATISTICS FROM DEFRA

The National Rural Crime Network (NRCN) Chair, Tim Passmore and Network partners have been responding to the latest data and the impact of fly-tipping on our rural communities:

- NRCN Chair, Tim Passmore, says there is still much more to be done to tackle the anti-social behaviour of rural fly-tipping.

- The NRCN is campaigning for significantly tougher penalties and the establishment of a new National Rural Police Crime Unit to tackle rural fly-tipping as part of a 6-point plan.
[Click here to view the plan](#)
- The NRCN is also calling for more financial support for responsible private landowners who are victims of fly-tipping.
- Sarah Lee, NRCN Board Member and Director of Policy and Campaigns at the Countryside Alliance spoke to the BBC about the shocking levels of fly-tipping and the damage to our rural communities.
[Click here to read this BBC news item](#)

To see the Defra report click here [Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE - CHARITY ADVISING ON CARE OF BURIAL GROUNDS

We began as a small Shropshire based initiative in 1997 after being inspired by the National Living Churchyard and Cemetery Project (LCCP). Caring for God's Acre was established in 2000 as a national charity, promoting the conservation of burial sites and supporting the volunteers who look after and maintain them. There are around 20,000 burial grounds in England and Wales, ranging from small rural medieval churchyards to large Victorian city cemeteries, spanning different cultures, religions and centuries. Often these sites have been set apart for centuries and as such offer much needed refuge for our native wildlife of all varieties – plants, mammals, invertebrates, reptiles.



Many burial sites are managed by a few volunteers who are keen to preserve both the monuments and the wildlife but want guidance on how best to achieve this. Our input can help them to preserve rare species of plants and wildflowers and we advise on management of grassland to encourage wildlife whilst still allowing access to visitors and relatives. Issues such as lichen on gravestones and monuments falling into disrepair are also part of our remit and we run a telephone and email advice service for burial ground managers, signposting to other experts if required.

[Caring For God's Acre – the conservation charity for burial grounds across the UK – Protecting Wildlife, Preserving Heritage, Involving People \(caringforgodsacre.org.uk\)](#)

2023/24 TRADES UNION PAY CLAIM

NALC has been advised by the Local Government Association that the Trades Unions representing local government services submitted their 2023/24 pay claim in the first week of February.

The main element of the claim is:

- RPI plus 2% on all pay points, a likely total of 12.7%.
- Consideration of a flat rate increase to hourly rates of pay in order to bring the minimum rate up to £15 per hour within two years
- A review and improvement of NJC terms for family leave and pay

- An additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes
- A homeworking allowance for staff for whom it is a requirement to work from home
- A reduction in the working week by two hours
- A review of the pay spine, including looking at the top end, and discussions about the link between how remuneration can be used to improve retention

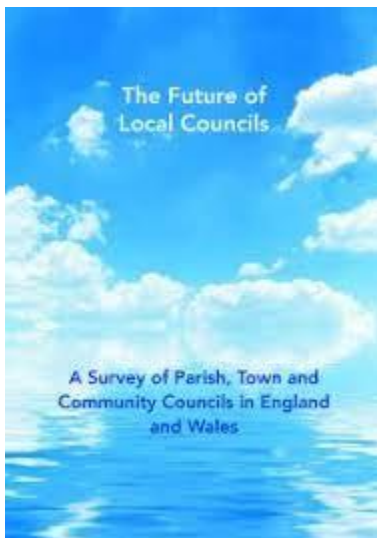
The Retail Prices Index (RPI) figure for December that was published on 18 January 2023 was 13.4%. The employers point out that to give an increase of 15.4% would add £2.6 billion to pay bill costs.

The employer's side of the National Joint Council (on which NALC is not currently represented) representing principal councils will be meeting and holding briefings in February. Clearly, this is a significant claim which will be the subject of intense negotiations and I would stress has not been agreed. We will keep you informed as the negotiations progress.

Meetings are expected to start on this shortly and we will keep member councils updated as developments unfold.

THE FUTURE OF LOCAL COUNCILS

An interesting [report](#) has been produced by De Montfort University looking at the future of local councils. The research is the result of a collaboration between the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Local Governance Research Centre (LGRC) at De Montfort University (DMU). There are some interesting statistics in the report but unfortunately, the statistical basis is skewed as the survey was carried out by SLCC of its members, thus the responses reflect the views of a sub section of the clerking profession.



The data was collected from an online survey of 591 town/parish council clerks between 23rd September 2021 and 22nd October 2021.

The sample represented approx. 7% of all local council clerks, which is not statistically representative.

The report is divided into three sections:

1. the local council, its councillors and its clerks, and standards in public life.
2. the work of the council, analysing council meetings and the functions of local councils, engagement with communities and collaborations between councils and other tiers of government also other organisations.
3. areas of expenditure of local councils, their staffing, and their assets.

The Council and Councillors

- The membership of councils ranged from 5 to 31 councillors.
- The average size of a local council was 12 councillors, but the most common size was 7 councillors

5-9 councillors	38%
10-14 councillors	35%
15-19 councillors	23%
20+ councillors	<5%

- Increase in councils controlled by national political parties – 1991 10%, 2021 23%
- In 2021 women councillors remain under-represented, male councillors outnumber female counterparts in 76% of local councils
- The overall level of co-options remains high, 74% of councils co-opted members in 2021 an increase on 1991 when it was 56%
- 45% of councils had dual hatted councillors an increase on the 1991 figure when it was 34%
- 15% of councils had triple hatted councillors
- Length of service of Chair –

1 year	36%
1-3 years	33%
3-10 years	25%
10+ years	7%

The Clerk

- 74% of clerk respondents were female but men remain relatively over-represented in the posts of clerks to larger councils
- 34% of clerks worked full time; in 1990 only 4% were employed full time
- 23% of clerks worked for more than one council
- **Education level –**

Postgraduate	20%
Undergraduate degree	34%
Highest qualification A levels	20%
Highest qualification GCSE/O level	12%

- 72% of clerks had a previous job in a professional or managerial position
- 89% reported having specific training for their post as clerk.
- 71% had undertaken courses put on by their CALC

- Eight in ten councils had a training budget but the budgets ranged from £30 - £28,000
- **Age of clerks –**

31-40 years	5%
41-50 years	21%
51-60 years	39%
61-70 years	27%
70+ years	6%

- Significant lack of diversity in clerks <1% identified as from an ethnic minority

Standards in Public Life

- In the last 4 years, over half of councils had experienced poor behaviour from councillors, including bullying and disrespect.
- 11% of councils had experienced at least one incident so serious it prevented the council or its officers carrying out some or all of their functions
- 44% of councils had not experienced any notable behavioural issues

Council meetings

- 52% of councils don't have an office in which to meet
- 97% continue to advertise their meetings on a noticeboard but the most common method was via the council website
- Social media is used as part of a broad communication strategy – 74% had a Facebook presence, 27% use Twitter, 13% Instagram and 12% YouTube.
- 83% of clerks reported public attendance at council meetings, down from 92% in 1991
- Significant increase in members of the public speaking at meetings.
- Only 10% of councils live streamed meetings. Of those who didn't 86% lacked capacity
- 77% reported no presence by the local press at meetings

Functions of local councils

- 38% had used the General Power of Competence
- 6% used the Community Right to Bid, <1% used Community Right to Challenge
- 31% had completed a Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Only 1% of councils reported making any by-laws
- 96% of councils were always consulted on planning applications in their area
- 52% made representations at planning appeals
- 45% took action to maintain Rights of Way in the last 12 months
- In the last 12 months 61% of councils had undertaken one or more consultation exercises or surveys with local communities. Some councils did many consultations but 39% had not done any although Covid may well have affected these figures
- 5% of councils had a Youth Council

- 52% of councils nominated or appointed trustees to a broad range of local charities.

Collaboration and engagement

- 77% of councils reported collaboration across other tiers of local government
- Over a fifth of councils were largely disconnected from County Councils

Over the last 12 months how often has your council engaged with... (%)	Often	Rarely	Never
County Council	65	13	15
District Council	65	6	19
Other parish or town councils	55	38	4

- 52% of councils had no contact with a central government department
- 56% had rarely engaged with local MP's
- 76% had rarely engaged with the LEP
- Local councils had regular contact with the Police, 55% engaging often
- Only 4% engaged with the local Clinical Commissioning Group
- 85% of councils were members of their CALC and 71% of the clerks to those councils had attended a CALC course, seminar or conference
- 64% had regular contact with their CALC but 24% rarely engaged with it

Expenditure

- Spending by councils covered a very broad range from public clock maintenance, pest control and beach cleaning to support for a PCSO and youth services. The main areas were:
 - custodianship - grass cutting, grounds/building maintenance, cemeteries
 - public realm – play areas, street scene, toilets, street lighting, litter
 - community – grants, events, newsletter, Neighbourhood Plan
 - running costs – office, staff, insurance, fees, rates, subscriptions
- 20% of councils listed grants to community groups as one of their three highest areas of funding
- 94% of councils employed paid staff

Assets

- Councils are stewards of extensive assets on behalf of their communities. 68% own, lease or hold on trust playgrounds, 62% provide parks and open spaces, 52% make allotments available

NALC'S DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION BILL

10 FEBRUARY 2023

PR2-23 | LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION BILL – REFORMS TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

1. NALC has signed up to the proposition that there is a climate emergency and will therefore, as a general principle, promote and support moves and policies which help to mitigate it. For instance, NALC supports the need for Local Plans and large developments to be subject to environmental appraisals and it supports energy efficient homes and more trees.
2. NALC will support a planning system which incorporates a significant role for local (parish and town) councils. It will not support any diminution of local councils' statutory right to comment on planning issues at all stages of their evolution, whether they be development planning matters or spatial planning policies.
3. NALC will support a soundly based planning system which represents the most reliable tool for the sustainable allocation of land and which represents the three pillars of sustainability equally, i.e. social, economic and environmental factors.
4. NALC will support changes to the planning system which it perceives will strengthen the system and the voice of democracy and lead to better quality, appropriately sited developments. It will not support planning changes which it perceives will work in the opposite direction.
5. NALC would support a very much strengthened version of the 'duty to co-operate' between neighbouring local authorities or an alternative policy which made it compulsory for neighbouring LAs to work in close co-operation with each other on spatial planning.
6. NALC does not support an across-the-board extension of permitted development rights in the planning system. Policies on permitted development rights should be the prerogative of LAs in their Local Plans or Neighbourhood Planning Groups.
7. NALC supports the recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.
8. NALC recognises the need for more affordable housing and would welcome initiatives that would enable LAs and local councils to deliver some. In addition, NALC would like to see more housing delivered that is suitable for the disabled and those with mobility impairments and also a range of different types of tenures facilitated.
9. NALC wants to see a fair infrastructure levy system which gives local councils a voice and benefits them financially so that they in turn can deliver more for their local communities.
10. NALC has concerns about housing tests based on standard methodologies/ algorithms. It wants to see a planning system which recognises that every planning application and every location is different.

The consultation closes on March 2nd on the National Planning Policy Framework [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy) .

VOTER ID REQUIRED FOR ELECTIONS MAY 2023 - IMPORTANT



For the first time, voters will need to show photo ID to vote at local elections in England on 4 May, following new requirements introduced by the UK Government's Elections Act 2022.

More information here

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>

For all voters, including older people and disabled voters, the voting process in May will be very similar to how they voted before, with the added requirement to present photo ID. A staff member will ask voters for their name and check they are on the electoral register and then ask to see their ID and check it looks like them. They will then cross the voter's name off the register and hand them a ballot paper. Polling station staff will be on hand to support them with any questions and assist them in showing their ID. We're encouraging people to check now if they have one of the accepted forms of ID, and to apply for the free voter ID, or indeed to choose one of the other voting options available if they do not want to show ID.

Voter ID

- Accepted forms of ID include some concessionary travel passes, such as an Older Person's Bus Pass or an Oyster 60+ card. Other accepted forms of ID are:
 - A passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state, or a Commonwealth country
 - A driving licence issued by the UK, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state
- People will be able to use expired photo ID if they are still recognisable from the photo..

Applying for the Voter Authority Certificate

- A new form of free ID, the Voter Authority Certificate, will be available for those who do not have another type of accepted ID.
- Voters can apply for free voter ID by completing and posting a paper form to their local council's electoral services team. Some local authorities may accept applications in person. Voters will need to provide a photograph, their date of birth and National Insurance number as part of the application.
- Voters can also apply for free voter ID online at voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/
- **Anyone who needs voter ID to vote in the May 2023 elections, must apply by 5pm on Tuesday 25 April.**

Absent voting

- If a voter would prefer not to show ID at a polling station, they can apply to vote by post or proxy. Photo ID isn't required to apply or vote by post or proxy. Though, their proxy will be required to show their photo ID at the polling station.
- **For the May 2023 elections, the deadline for applying for a postal vote is 18 April 2023, and the deadline for proxy is 25 April 2023.**
- Voters can apply to vote by post by filling out a form and sending it to their local council. People can also contact their council to ask for the form to be posted to them, if they are unable to print it. The process is similar to a proxy vote, and voters will need to fill out a form explaining why they can't get to their polling station.

For voters who are not comfortable with using technology to find out additional information about voter ID, different ways of voting, or how to obtain the free voter ID they can call the Electoral Commission's helpline on 0800 328 0280, or their local council.

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK – RURAL COST OF LIVING SURVEY, YOUR HELP REQUESTED

[Research](#) commissioned by the Rural Services Network last year shows rural areas are suffering more acutely from the rise in the cost of living compared to urban areas.

The purpose of the survey is to understand more about rural household budgets at, what is, a very difficult time for many.

Results from the survey will help us to engage more effectively with Government Departments, MPs and other policy makers. **The survey can be found at the following link:**

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Rural_Households_Cost-of-Living

Please forward the survey link to all your contacts, networks, family and friends living in rural areas – the greater the response the better.

Note the survey closes on 31 March 2023.

THIS MONTH'S INTERESTING NUMBERS...OVERCROWDED HOUSING & PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

1. Crowded housing



- An average of 829,000 households, or 3.5% of all households lived in overcrowded conditions between 2017/8 and 2019/20.
- An average of 344,000 or 8.7% of all social-renting households and 302,000 (6.7%) of all private renting households were overcrowded in the same period.
- By comparison 183,000 or just 1.2% of owner-occupied households were overcrowded.

This represented a decline in overcrowding in owner occupied housing since 1995 but rented housing saw a significant increase in overcrowding in the same period.

Source: English Housing Survey 2019-2020 [English Housing Survey 2019 to 2020: headline report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report)

2. Planning enforcement

For all those parish and town councils that bemoan the lack of planning enforcement by their district council this report may explain why. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities commissioned the Royal Town Planning Institute to research the enforcement situation.



The report - *Planning Enforcement Resourcing* [RTPI | Planning Enforcement Resourcing](#) paints a bleak picture of under resourcing –

- 43% decrease in net expenditure by local authorities on planning as a whole, from £844m in 2009-10 to £480m in 2020-21
- 73% of planning authorities had struggled to recruit enforcement officers in the last 5 years
- 80% of planning authorities said there weren't enough enforcement officers in their team to do the work
- 89% said they have a backlog of cases

NATURAL ENGLAND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK

A major new tool to help towns and cities turn greener was launched on 2nd February by Natural England. Aimed at planners and developers, the [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) will help increase the amount of green cover to 40% in urban residential areas.

Parks and greenspaces in England deliver an estimated £6.6 billion of health, climate change and environmental benefits every year. But with 80% of people now living in towns and cities, one third of people do not have access to good quality green and blue space within 15 minutes of their home. The government's [Environmental Improvement Plan](#), published on 1st February, includes a commitment that the public should be able to access green space or water, such as woodlands, wetlands, parks and rivers, within a 15-minute walk from their home.

The Green Infrastructure Framework (GIF) provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area.

From parks to green roofs, and increased tree cover, the Green Infrastructure Framework will make a significant contribution to nature recovery by embedding nature into new developments. Increasing the extent and connectivity of nature-rich habitats will also help increase wildlife populations, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and ensure our cities are habitable for the future.

As a key resource for developers and local planning authorities, the framework integrates green infrastructure tools, principles, standards and design guidance. It is structured by five key standards:

- Urban Nature Recovery Standard – aims to boost nature recovery, create and restore rich wildlife habitats and build resilience to climate change. Incorporating nature-based solutions, including trees and wildflowers, into the design of towns and cities will increase carbon capture, prevent flooding and reduce temperatures during heatwaves.
- Urban Greening Factor (UGF) for England – This planning tool improves the provision of green infrastructure and increases the level of greening in urban environments. The standard is set at 0.4 for residential development, which means there is a target in place for approximately 40% of residential developments to have green and blue spaces, green roofs or green walls. When adopted by a local planning authority it provides clarity about the quantity and quality of green infrastructure required to secure planning approval in a major new development. The Greater London Authority is already applying this principle.
- Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard – promotes an increase in tree canopy cover in urban environments. Trees are vital for capturing carbon and can mitigate flood risk as they absorb excess water during flooding incidents. The standard sets out that major residential and commercial development should be designed to meet locally agreed targets.
- Accessible Greenspace Standards – promote access to good quality green and blue space within 15 minutes' walk from home. The People and Nature Survey published by Natural England found that 82% of adults agree that being in nature makes them very happy over but [one third of people in England do not have access to green space within this distance](#). The Framework includes an award-winning mapping tool that can help to identify places where green space is needed most. The government has already used the tool to ensure the £9 million Levelling Up Parks fund reaches low-income areas with limited access to green space.
- Green Infrastructure Strategy – This standard supports the National Planning Policy Framework's policy that local authorities should develop strategic policies for green infrastructure. On an area wide scale, the Green Infrastructure Standard will see Local Authorities develop Delivery Plans to support the creation and enhancement of new and existing greenspaces.

As a comprehensive tool, the Green Infrastructure Framework and accompanying Design Guide will support local planning authorities and developers design and create more nature-rich urban greenspaces to meet mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and support the development of the Nature Recovery Network.

To learn more about the Green Infrastructure Framework, visit: [Home \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

CLIMATE ACTION

CARBON COPY

Inspired by the findings from Climate Assembly UK in 2020 at the start of this 'decade of action', Carbon Copy gathered community actions into similar categories, to reflect its focus on collective rather than individual action. Each initiative is an exemplar of big-thinking local action and together they hit all the big themes identified by the citizens' Climate Assembly.

Community Action Guide 2023



Carbon Copy is a national charity promoting local climate action and their latest campaign - 23 Community Actions in 2023 - is an interactive guide on how to kickstart or support change near you.

There are 6 broad categories with sub-sections containing videos, case studies and ideas on:

- Green Energy and Heating
- Climate Resilient Places to Live
- Affordable Sustainable Travel
- Nature Based Climate Solutions
- Farm to Fork
- Reduce Reuse Repair Recycle



climate Action Oxfordshire
your choices matter

Don't forget the Oxfordshire Climate Action website: Actions | [Climate Action Oxfordshire](https://climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk)

Make your community part of Low Carbon Hub

Low Carbon Hub works with community groups across Oxfordshire to offer advice and support their activities, including with grant funding.

Community groups who choose to join the Low Carbon Hub Community Interest Company (CIC) as community shareholders gain access to their advice, support, and funding for low carbon activities.

To become a Community Member, a group needs to be working on low carbon and sustainability in their area, with energy as a central focus.

PROJECT LEO



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

Watch this YouTube film to understand more about what Project Leo does - <https://youtu.be/4DHtkHxDt7Q>

The Project LEO team were delighted to recently welcome a new partner that will provide innovative, smart technology to help us to test the impact of energy reduction on our local electricity network.

Find out more about equiwatt and their free smartphone app that rewards homes for reducing their peak-time electricity usage by reading our article [here](#).

Our Project LEO partner equiwatt is carrying out energy balancing trials in Oxfordshire and we wanted to let you know more about the aim of the trials, and opportunities to support should you know anyone who might wish to get involved.

The trials are taking place between January and March this year. Through them we want to learn how collective electricity demand reduction at the grid edge - where households connect to the electricity network - can contribute to the decarbonisation of our energy system.

The key trials are taking place in specific communities which are listed on the Project LEO website, along with background information and simple ideas for getting involved - these have been written with community groups in mind but could easily be adapted to share the opportunity with your Oxfordshire based staff, customers or contacts.

If you live in one of these areas, know someone who does, or can help us reach residents in any of the trial areas, equiwatt would love to hear from you. Householders can learn more about the trial and sign up [here](#)

COMMUNITY ENERGY SOUTH HAS DEVELOPED A CLIMATE AND ENERGY TRAINING PACKAGE

Community Energy South has developed a climate and energy training package which is aimed partly at PCs in the south-east. This includes the full 'Carbon Literacy' course and also a simpler 2 hour course - which also brings in energy saving and fuel stress. See: <https://www.communityenergysouth.org/carbon-literacy-programme>

OALC GREEN/SUSTAINABILITY DAY 24TH MARCH

OALC is running a Green (training) Day on Friday March 24th March. We are calling it 'How to make your council more sustainable'. The day will concentrate on practical examples and case studies which provide inspiration, direction, funding and advice sources to help your council address the climate crisis.

It will be held at Cholsey Pavilion, a modern sustainably designed community building with ground source heat pumps. The thinking and design behind the building will be explained in one of the presentations.

The day will start with Cllr Pete Sudbury, OCC lead on Climate Change setting the county context. Other speakers will cover a wide range of topics from environmental projects (ToE and Wild Oxfordshire) to energy (Low Carbon Hub), insulation, parish council projects (Charlbury, Cumnor), green investment and more.

We will update as we finalise the details. More information and booking here - <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000167>

CONSULTATION

1. **Invitation to respond to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation**

See previous article on Planning page 13

As set out in the Secretary of State's [Written Ministerial Statement](#) of December 6th, the Government announced it would publish a National Planning Policy Framework consultation. This consultation was published on [gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-billreforms-to-national-planning-policy](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-billreforms-to-national-planning-policy) on 22nd December 2022.

This consultation is on proposals both for immediate implementation and then for a fuller update of the NPPF later in 2023. The proposed immediate changes are highlighted in the [tracked changes NPPF document](#) which is published alongside [the Prospectus](#). It provides wording that is indicative of what would be implemented immediately, subject to the results of this consultation.

The consultation is open until 2 March 2023 you can respond [here](#). The Government will respond to this consultation in Spring 2023, publishing an updated NPPF as part of this, so that policy changes can take effect as soon as possible.

2. Charity Commission seeks input on its draft social media guidance

The Charity Commission is seeking views from charities, their trustees, staff and supporters, representative bodies and the wider public on its new draft guidance, which is intended to help trustees use social media appropriately and with confidence.

The guidance is designed to help trustees understand their responsibilities and manage the risks; it encourages them to adopt a social media policy for their charity and outlines what can be included in the policy.

The consultation closes at 5:00pm on 14 March, with the final guidance due to be published in the summer.

Councils are encouraged to share this information with charities in their local area. More information here [Charity regulator seeks input into new draft social media guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



3. A 10 week consultation has just started on proposals for new council wards and ward boundaries for Oxfordshire County Council.

The consultation will close on 8th May. After the close of the consultation draft proposals will be published in August 2023. There will be further consultation with the final recommendations published in January 2024 and the new electoral arrangements coming into effect for the elections in May 2024.

The Local Government Boundary Commission website <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/oxfordshire/oxfordshire-county-council>

The electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire. The LGBC will propose:

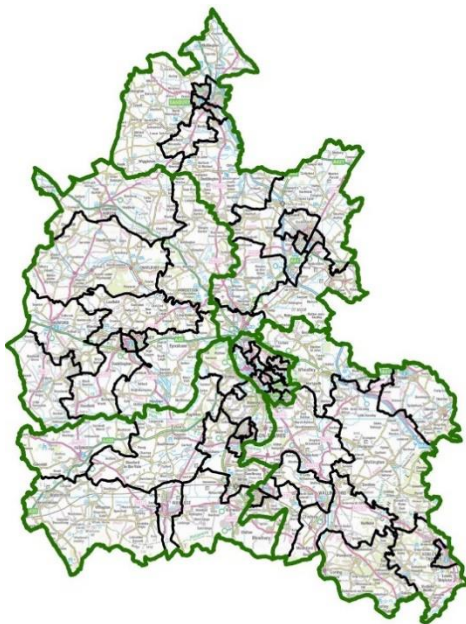
- the total number of councillors elected to the council in the future;
- the number of wards;

- the number of councillors representing each ward;
- ward boundaries; and
- the names of wards.

This is a public consultation and the LGBC welcome views from individuals and organisations across Oxfordshire on where they think new ward boundaries should be drawn.

The LGBC is minded to recommend that 69 councillors should be elected to Oxfordshire County Council in the future. This is 6 more than the current number of councillors.

The Commission is now inviting proposals to help it draw up a pattern of wards to accommodate the 69 councillors.



In drawing up new electoral wards, the Commission must balance three legal criteria:

- to deliver electoral equality: where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the county;
- that the pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities;
- that the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

If you wish to put forward a view, the Commission urge you to ensure that evidence supports your submission. For example, if you wish to argue that two areas should be included in the same electoral ward, make sure you tell them WHY they should be together, providing evidence about community facilities, ties, organisations, and amenities, rather than simply asserting that

they belong together.

FINANCE BRIEFINGS



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

1. VAT on sporting fees

HMRC concede that charges for council sports facilities are non-business

HMRC's existing guidance is that local authority sports and leisure services can either be taxable or exempt from VAT. This has been challenged in the courts, with test cases for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland going on for several years.

In *Chelmsford City Council* [2020] UKFTT432(TC) the First Tier Tribunal determined that such services are provided under a 'special legal regime' and can be treated as 'nonbusiness', providing that does not give rise to significant distortions of competition.

HMRC unsuccessfully appealed the first part of that decision, as they did not accept the reasoning that local authority sports services are subject to a 'special legal regime'. The Upper Tier Tribunal [2022] UKUT149(TCC) dismissed that appeal in March 2022.

On 26 January 2023, HMRC advised Chelmsford City Council that they will NOT be pursuing the 'significant distortion of competition' argument and accept that local authority sports services can be treated as non-business and outside the scope of VAT.

HMRC have yet to issue any further guidance as to the basis on which they accept no significant distortion of competition would be caused, how far the interpretation of "sport and leisure services" extends or what steps councils should take to recover VAT.

We suggest that councils consider the following steps in relation to sports facilities, bearing in mind that HMRC have not issued any guidance and might refuse claims or require them to be submitted in a particular way:

- 1) If you're VAT registered and charging VAT on your sports services, you should:
 - a. stop doing so as soon as possible and certainly before 1 April 2023,
 - b. compile and submit a claim to HMRC for a refund of such VAT declared for the past four years, and
 - c. consider whether you will refund that VAT to the bodies charged for sports.

- 2) If you're not VAT registered and have avoided reclaiming VAT on sports facilities because you thought they were taxable supplies, you should reclaim any such VAT incurred over the last 4 years.

- 3) If you treat any sports services as VAT-exempt and include VAT incurred on those activities in your partial exemption calculation, you should:
 - a. take that VAT out of the 2022/23 calculation,
 - b. if you had any irrecoverable VAT in the 2018/19 to 2021/22 calculations, review them to see if you can now reclaim some or all or of that VAT, and
 - c. if you have done a 7-year average calculation for any of those years or to forecast a future year, review it to see if you can recover any further VAT.

Please note that VAT126 reclaims must be submitted within 4 years of the end of the month in which

the supply of goods or services occurred, so a council can still claim for purchases in February 2019 until the end of this month.

For VAT-registered councils, adjustments cannot be made more than 4 years after the due date of the VAT return that is being amended, so the oldest return that can be adjusted is the one for the January to March 2019 quarter, unless you submit monthly returns or have non-standard VAT quarters.

In reclaiming any VAT charged, councils must avoid “unjust enrichment”, which might occur if you reclaim the VAT and keep it, rather than refunding it to your customers. Where council facilities are subsidised and operate at a loss due to low charges, or where charges were made VAT-inclusive rather than being increased, HMRC are unlikely to consider that unjust enrichment.

Please note that the tribunal decisions only relate to charges for sporting services and should not be applied to meeting room hire, or other taxable or exempt business activities at this point. If you are in any doubt as to whether an activity is affected by this change, please consult your county association of local councils in the first instance.

2.Procurement Thresholds

The £25,000 threshold increased to £30,000 from 21 December 2022 (SI 2022/1390)

Public contracts, with an estimated value (including VAT, from 1 January 2022):

- over £213,477 (previously 189,330 ex VAT) for goods or services, or
- over £5,336,937 (previously £4,733,252 ex VAT) for public works (construction),

must comply with the full requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. These include specific tendering methods and timescales, as well as a requirement to advertise on both the Contracts Finder website and Find-a-Tender (the UK e-notification service).

Where a contract will run for several years, it is the total (not annual) value that matters. Where the estimated total value (including VAT) is below these thresholds, but exceeds £30,000 (after 21 December 2022), a council is required to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder if they publish an open invitation to quote/tender. If they are inviting specific firms and not opening up to wider competition, they don't have to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder (Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Reg. 110(5)(b)).

However, a council must comply with its own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and if those regulations require an open invitation and a formal tender process, the council should follow them. Tendering processes ensure fair competition, achieve value for money and avoid anti-competitive behaviour. They protect the council and taxpayers.

If a council simply chooses specific firms to invite, it must avoid allowing non-commercial considerations (defined in Part 2 of the Local Government Act 1988) to influence its decisions. If a council invites some suppliers and not others, it should record its reasons.

If the council genuinely believed the value would be under £30,000 but the tenders came in above that, the Regulations do not require it to go back and start again.

Regardless of whether the opportunity was advertised, Regulation 112 requires a council to publish the award of a contract over £25,000 prior to 21 December 2022, or £30,000 thereafter, on Contracts Finder within a reasonable timescale. There is no specified timescale for parishes, but we suggest within 3 months.

Disclaimer

This bulletin is only intended as a brief guide about a developing situation and councils should ensure they follow the Regulations and guidance on www.gov.uk, read the tribunal decisions and seek professional advice if they are in any doubt. The Parkinson Partnership LLP accepts no liability for any loss arising from situations where councils have not followed the applicable law and guidance

EMPLOYMENT BRIEFING

Employment law is complex and specialized. OALC can assist with general employment queries but we retain the services of Chris Moses, Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd. to provide expert advice to our member councils. We have retained Chris for four hours per month 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.



Things Councils should do as employers, but some don't!

1. Check Entitlement to Work in the U.K.

Does your Council have evidence of every employees' entitlement to work in the U.K, regardless of their national origins?

It is a legal obligation for all employers, including councils, to check their employees' passport, birth certificate, Work Visa or Settled Status details. Passports or Birth Certificates must be photocopied in front of the Employee, and handed back to them straight away, the Council cannot retain these documents.

There are other options other than passports or birth certificates that can be checked. Details are available at ["view a job applicants right to work"](#) at GOV.UK.

This applies to all staff, regardless of their length of service with the Council or ethnicity. Failure to conduct these checks can result in the Council being prosecuted.

2. Conduct Health and Safety Induction Training

Councils are obliged under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to protect Employees from harm at work. The Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require all Councils to:

- Identify what could cause injury or illness to anyone.
- Assess the likelihood of that happening.
- Take action to reduce or eliminate the possibility of it happening.

With regards Employees the Council should have risk assessments for all activities. This doesn't just concern high risk jobs such as using chainsaws, spraying or ride on mowers. It includes apparently low risk operations such as manual handling in the office or using step ladders to reach files/boxes etc.

Employees must be informed of all risks that they are likely to face in doing their work, and how to address them. The provision of this training is evidenced by the Employees' individual training record, listing what training they've had, when and their confirmation that it took place.

3. Register with HMRC and have a Pension Scheme

80% of Parish Councils employ just one person, the Clerk. It is also likely that the Clerk is part time and earns below the National Insurance Lower Earnings Limit of £123 per week, or the pension automatic enrolment threshold of £833 per month. Under these circumstances it isn't uncommon to find Councils who have not registered with HMRC or have a pension in place.

With regards to tax, **the Council has to register itself as an Employer.** Furthermore, if the Employee has other jobs, their cumulative income may take them over the threshold, which could then create tax liabilities for all of their Employers, including the Council.

With regards pensions all Employers are required to be part of a pension scheme, regardless of whether or not their Employees wish to join.

4. Check the Employment Status of contractors

We deal with a number of Councils who have "an arrangement" with a handyman or gardener, who works on a weekly basis for the Council, and submits an invoice at the end of the month. The Council may have considered this person to be a self-employed contractor, but the technical truth can often be that they are an Employee. This normally comes to light either when the Council wants to terminate the arrangement, or the Employee wants holiday pay, or HMRC get involved.

The tests used to address whether or not someone is an Employee are:

- a) Does the Council control what the Employer/worker does? If you consider the nature of what an Electrician or Plumber would do if you wanted some work doing, they would be left to their own devices. Consider this in terms of how the Council's contractor works. Does the Council give clear instructions as to what work it wants doing and how to do it, and supervises the outcome? If so, the key question of Control appears to show that they would be an Employee.
- b) Financial Investment. The Plumber or Electrician would bring their own tools and equipment. If the Council's contractor uses their own equipment, that would make them a Contractor. However, if they use the Council's tools and equipment, there is no financial investment by the worker and they are in all likelihood an Employee.

- c) Mutuality of Obligation. Again, you don't care who the Plumber or Electrician is, as long as they get the job done. Does the Council expect the same person to turn up on a regular/weekly basis and do the job? If so, they are treating them as an Employee.

If the above tests demonstrate that the person is engaged by the Council as an Employee, they will qualify for the National Minimum Wage rate of pay, and also accrue holiday entitlement during their tenure at the Council. Furthermore, they could claim Unfair Dismissal if the Council tried to terminate the contract, or Constructive Dismissal due to the loss of their basic statutory rights such as holiday pay.

5. Have a secure, encrypted memory cloud storage base, if the clerk works from home.

The Clerk's home office will no doubt store a lot of confidential and/or important information. Should a problem arise, and the Council are unable to have access to this information, it can result in upheaval. However, if this information is routinely stored on a cloud-based memory facility, with the Clerk, Chair and representatives of key committees holding the password, the problem would be avoided.

Statutory Payment Rates from April 2023

Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)	
Statutory rate of £172.48 or 90% of employee's weekly earnings if lower.	
Maternity Pay (SMP)	
6 weeks at 90% of average weekly earnings. Then statutory rate of £172.48 or 90% of employee's weekly earnings if lower.	
Adoption Pay (SAP)	
6 weeks at 90% of average weekly earnings. Then statutory rate of £172.48 or 90% of employee's weekly earnings if lower.	
Paternity Pay (SPP)	
Statutory rate of £172.48 or 90% of employee's weekly earnings if lower.	
Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP)	
Statutory rate of £172.48 or 90% of employee's weekly earnings if lower.	
Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)	
£109.40 pw for 28 weeks subject to earnings (average £123 per week)	
Minimum Wage from April 2023	
Workers aged 23 and over (National Living Wage)	£10.42/hour
Workers aged 21–22	£10.18/hour
Workers aged 18–20	£7.49/hour
Workers aged 16-17	£5.28/hour
Apprentices under 19, or over 19 and in first year	£5.28/hour

PROFILE

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

NALC EVENTS

Standards Matter conference — 3rd March 2023

NALC's [Standards Matter](#) conference will take place on 3 March 2023 in London.

This is an in-person event at the America Square Conference Centre in London.

This will focus on the important issue of standards, including good governance, civility and respect, training and development, and continuous improvement. There will be opportunities to put your questions to our expert panelists and speakers, visit the sector-specific exhibition, network and share good practices, and participate in The Big Debate.

Ticket prices start from £60. The conference is sponsored by BHIB Councils Insurance, Blachere Illumination and CCLA.

[Register your place and find out more about this event](#)

OPEN SPACES SOCIETY - PROTECTING COMMONS, GREENS AND OPEN SPACES



Learn the fundamentals on this comprehensive course.

Core modules:

- What are commons and village greens, why they are important and relevant legislation (essential module)
- Finding out about commons and greens
- Works on common land and greens
- New village greens: registering land as a new green
- Management and dealing with encroachments
- Local Green Space Designation

This course can be offered to groups either in person (full day) or online (two half days/mornings).

We are also delighted to offer this course to individuals (online only) on the following dates subject to interest and availability (there are approx. 10 spaces left on the April course – cost £80

2023 dates:

18th and 19th April (9.30am to 1pm both days)

31st October and 1st November (9.30am to 1pm both days)

More information via Open Spaces Society website - [Professional Training Courses from the Open Spaces Society \(oss.org.uk\)](https://www.oss.org.uk)

OALC TRAINING PROGRAMME

Our training schedule for this year is being firmed up; in March we have four sessions planned on three separate days:

1. Audit 8th March in the morning a session for those under £25,000
2. Audit 8th March in the afternoon a session for those over £25,000
3. **'So you want to be a parish councillor!'** last in a series of monthly sessions before the elections: 15th March 2-3pm online Zoom 1 hour
An online hour for anyone interested in becoming a councillor, letting them know what they are letting themselves in for! A short introduction and open question time.
Covering eligibility, skills, expectations and some basics about life as a councillor

No booking necessary, more info here on the events section of our website - <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000161>
4. Green Day how to be more sustainable, 24th March A day at Cholsey Pavilion covering a wide range of topics to show how your council can be more sustainable.

More information here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

Please note due to unforeseen circumstances the Play Inspection training scheduled for 27th May has had to be postponed, we will reschedule.

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)

Woodstock Town Council Town Clerk

Woodstock Town Council is looking for a highly motivated individual with an interest in the local community to become its next Town Clerk.

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

This role includes administration, agenda preparation and minute-taking at meetings, advising Town Councillors on procedural and legal matters, and supervision of the Council's other part-time members of staff include the RFO and facilities management staff.

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

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

The position is part time - 30 hours per week, preferably worked 5 hours per day Monday to Friday. The pay scale is LC2 (SCP 24-28) £29,174-£32,798 pro-rata. And a workplace pension is also provided.

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

An application pack and supporting information can be obtained from the Vacancies section of Woodstock Town Council website or by emailing clerk@woodstock-tc.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is **Friday 3rd March 2023** and it is proposed that interviews will take place on Monday 13th March and/or Saturday 18th March 2023, although other dates can be considered.

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

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