

OALC NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2023



NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
STRATEGY FOR PARISH
& TOWN COUNCILS

THE HEADLINES

OALC – new team member, subs, election of Chair, Join our Exec, Chair's sessions

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- **Elections**

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- **5 articles**

Consultations- LGBC, Comm benefits for Electricity Transmission network, Infrastructure Levy, Env Outcomes Reports

Employment briefing – Procedures

Training Programme 2023

The schedule for the rest of the year and booking here

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

VACANCIES – page 28

- **Upton PC – Deputy Clerk**
- **Drayton (Abingdon) PC – Clerk/RFO**
- **Wantage TC - Town Clerk**
- **Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe PC – Clerk/RFO**



1. **New member of staff at OALC.** OALC is pleased to announce that Rachel Brown has been appointed as the new Assistant County Officer; she will be starting with OALC in June. Rachel is a Cilca qualified Clerk having worked at Kennington and Carterton councils. We look forward to her bringing a fresh pair of eyes and new ideas to invigorate OALC and its service to member councils. Lucy Dalby has been promoted to County Officer. Christine Lalley, County Officer will be retiring in June after 11 years in the role.
2. **OALC membership subscription invoices** were sent out in the last week in February. Thank you very much to the councils that have already paid, we appreciate and value your membership.

For other councils who prefer to pay in the financial year to which the subscription applies we look forward to receiving your payment soon

If you didn't receive the subscription email, please let us know.

3. **Election of Chairman at the Annual Parish Council Meeting**

By the end of May every parish council should have held their Annual Parish Council Meeting, this is the meeting where the Chair is elected and is the start of the council year.

We know that there is still confusion in some quarters about what happens at the Annual Meeting of the Parish and at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council - hardly surprising when they have such similar words in the titles. But if you remember that the Annual **Parish Council** Meeting is what is says on the tin - a meeting of the parish council at the start of the council year. The Annual Meeting of the **Parish** is a meeting of and for the parish, it is not a parish council meeting, nothing is generally decided at it, it is for information purposes.

To summarise:

- The Annual Parish Council Meeting must by law be held in May. This is a statutory requirement.
- The first business of the Annual Parish Council Meeting must be the election of the Chairman. This is a statutory requirement. If no Chairman can be elected the meeting cannot continue beyond this agenda item.
- There is no statutory requirement for a Councillor to be present at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in order to be elected as Chairman.
- The Clerk should not be in the chair during the election of Chairman, this is a common misunderstanding. A Clerk can never take the chair of a council meeting.
- The current Chairman must by law use their casting vote in the case of a tie in the election of Chairman (see NALC Legal Topic Note 2 for full details).
- The newly elected Chairman must sign a declaration of acceptance of office form before taking the Chair, which they should do immediately following their election.

- There is no statutory process or requirement for nominations. Your council's Standing Orders may provide for this, but if they do not then any councillor can stand for election as Chairman at the Annual Parish Council Meeting without notice or nomination by another.
- The Annual Parish Meeting is not a Council meeting, but rather is a meeting of local government electors registered for the area for which it is held. It must be held between 1st March and 1st June. It is entirely separate from the Annual Parish Council Meeting, though is sometimes held on the same evening.
- The minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting must be approved at the next Parish Council Meeting, and should not be held over until the following year's Annual Parish Council Meeting.

4. **Would you like to stand for a place on OALC Executive Committee?**

Our Executive Committee has a four-year term of office which mirrors that of parish councillors. The current term of office for members of the Executive Committee comes to an end this summer.

We are seeking nominations from any councillor who serves on a parish council or parish meeting in Oxfordshire. Nominations have to be endorsed by your own council, so it has to go on your own council agenda to be ratified. The new term is from 2023-2027.

We are seeking two representatives from councils within each of the district council areas - South, Vale, West and Cherwell and one representative from the 4 parish councils in the City, a total of 9 nominations. The nomination form is here

<https://oxonassoclocalcouncils.sharepoint.com/sites/Documents/Shared%20Documents/Document%20s/OALC/Executive%20Committee/Nomination%20Form%202023-27.doc>

Nominations open from 1st May until a day before our next Executive Committee on 12th June, i.e., **nominations close at the end of play on 11th June.** Although if your council has an uncontested election, nominations will be accepted before then. All nominations received will be reported to 12th June meeting. If there are more nominations than places an election will take place at our AGM on 3rd July 2023 which will be held at Beckley Village Hall - [Beckley Village Hall](#)

Existing Executive Committee members can be nominated by their own councils for a further four-year term but nominations from new candidates will be very much welcomed.

The OALC Executive Committee is comprised of:

- Hon. Officers – President, Hon. Treasurer, Chair and Vice-Chair
- Representatives from principal councils – one from each district council (5), one from County Council (1)
- Representatives from town and parish councils – two from each district council area and one from City (9)

The Executive Committee oversees the work of OALC, it appoints members to outside bodies. It currently meets virtually usually on a Monday afternoon.

If you are interested and would like to discuss this further, please do call the office – 0774 69430876 or 0751 9367709

5. **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 topical matters, both national and local, which we think you should know about. We hold the sessions alternatively during the day and in the evening so those who are working can join too.

14 Chairs joined from:

- **Cherwell DC** – Deddington, Fritwell, Bourtons
- **West Oxfordshire DC** –Enstone, Wootton (Woodstock), Swinbrook, Brize Norton
- **South Oxfordshire DC** –East Hagbourne, Brightwell cum Sotwell, Kidmore End, , Crowmarsh
- **Vale of White Horse DC** –, Kingston Bagpuize, Uffington
- **Oxford City** – Old Marston

The County Officer briefly mentioned two issues:

- Elections
- Coronation

The discussion revolved around the forthcoming **elections**, including the downloading of nomination forms from district council websites and the format, was a .pdf better than Word; also some confusion about who could nominate and what/if anything to put in the box used for political party. Reports of some nomination forms being rejected even after being accepted. Desire for an online submission methodology (would require new legislation).

Still plenty of vacancies in contrast to the towns which tend to be political and have plenty of candidates. Botley and North Hinksey (new name) an outlier - 26 candidates for 14 seats! Some Chairs mentioned the possibility of not being re-elected due to determined single issue cliques/councillors standing for election and the potential of very new councillors not understanding the council was a team and not understanding the limits on their personal powers. Chairs were encouraged to ensure new councillors undertake training asap.

Chairs reported on the various plans for celebrating the Coronation in their communities which included informal picnic's on the recreation ground, celebrations being held at Kingston Bagpuize

House, street parties, bookmarks for school children in Faringdon together with screening of the coronation on big screens. Mention was made of the success of the Queens Green Canopy, which closed at the end of March 2023. John Harwood reported that approx. 225,000 trees had been planted in Oxfordshire which includes whips and hedgerow. More celebratory trees would be planted (in the forthcoming planting season) to mark the Coronation.

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

- **May Tuesday 23rd 2.30pm**
- June Tuesday 6th 6.30pm

LOCAL NEWS



OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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. Closure of Oxford's Botley Road and rail bridge between Didcot and Oxford



Oxford's Botley Road has been closed to through traffic from 11th April and will remain closed for 7 months, until the end of October to allow Network Rail to work on its redevelopment of Oxford Station and rail upgrade. It will open again over the winter then close from March to October 2024. The City Council website has information and you can sign up via their page to Network Rail updates.

[Latest information on impact of Botley Road roadworks on Oxford](#) | [Latest information on impact of Botley Road roadworks on Oxford](#) | [Oxford City Council](#)

Needless to say this is causing a lot of disruption when combined with the Culham Rail bridge closure <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-65169011> this is disrupting rail (passenger and freight) traffic on the line between Didcot and Oxford. It is anticipated this will remain closed until June.

2. Broad Street consultation

The [Broad Street project](#) has transformed Broad Street into a public space in the heart of the city. It is delivered under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and will provisionally be in place until spring 2024. This means that it can be enjoyed all year round, with regular activities/events to visit and take part in. Seasonal planting and an integrated irrigation system keep it vibrant and attractive throughout.

This wider pedestrian area with seating and planting creates an environment where people can meet, take a break and enjoy the area between working, sightseeing, shopping, dining, or seeing shows or concerts.

Depending on the success of the scheme during the 18-month trial period, there is scope to consider extending the project, potentially making further improvements or repeating it in future (subject to funding). This would involve opening it out to further public consultation to help decide and shape any future proposals.

The County Council is seeking your views on the Broad Street Project here -

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/broad-street-consultation>

The consultation closes on 31st July 2023.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CAR CLUB PILOT

A pilot of shared electric car club vehicles across the county available to use on a pay-per-use basis.

The Innovation Hub is working with City and District Councils and several commercial car club operators to run a pilot of shared electric vehicles across the county. These fully battery electric vehicles (with a range of 150-250 miles) are available for residents to use on a pay-per-use basis for as little as an hour and up to a few days. Costs can start from just £5 per hour plus a per-mile charge.

The electric vehicles in the scheme have been provided by three car club operators:

- [Enterprise CarClub](#)
- [Co Wheels](#)
- [Thame EV Hire Club](#)

They are trialling car club vehicles for a one-year trial from **April 2023**. Oxfordshire residents are encouraged to try them out. If the scheme is a success, these could be considered as long-term locations for car club electric vehicles, and a wider roll-out could also follow in other locations.

[Electric vehicle \(EV\) car club pilot | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

CAN YOU HELP STEVEN BOWEN, CLERK TO BOURTONS PC, ON GIS PACKAGES

He is looking into the various digital mapping tools and would like to hear your experiences, what have your council got – Pear or Parish Online or something else? Please could you drop him an email to let him know your experiences good or bad – what would you recommend?

clerk@bourtons-cherwell-pc.gov.uk

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



Hedge laying in Blewbury, funded by TOE

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.

The grant applications currently being considered by our Grant Panel include these from Parish Councils

- a grant to replace three old stiles with gates on two public footpaths near Towersey village centre
- funding to restore the pond at the eponymously named Cray's Pond to increase the diversity of fauna and flora
- funding for tree and hedge planting in the centre of Garsington next autumn
- a contribution towards the cost of creating a new community garden in South Stoke

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 including application deadlines 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 or ring 01865 407003.

ELECTIONS

You will now know if your council is going to have a contested or uncontested election. Or if your council has had so few nominations it would fall below the quorum, then you know when in June another election will be called by Democratic Services at your district council.

The Electoral Commission website is extremely useful – *Guidance for candidates* [P and C - Overview - NDS \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/Pages/Guidance-for-candidates.aspx), the timetable for all elections (inc. district council) [LGE election timetable 4 May 2023 \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/Pages/Election-timetable.aspx)

Pre-election advice – what you can and can't do in the run up to the election

I am reproducing the pre-election advice which SODC/Vale has issued to its own district councillors.. 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.

“ 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 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.”

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 district council for display in your parish	Not later than 25 days	Not later than Monday 27th March SODC and Vale published 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 (either 20 th or 27 th March) up to 4pm on the nineteenth working day before the election	From the date stated on the notice of election (either 20 th or 27 th March) 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
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

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is the bane of many people's lives nowadays. The negative effects have more lasting impact than the positive ones. Most councils will have been on the receiving end of snide, ill-informed comments from key board warriors. Your council needs to have a discussion on how it will deal with these sorts of comments. There needs to be a policy/ methodology agreed and in place. The Clerk, as Proper Officer, of the council will be the person who posts and monitors responses. They need the support of knowing they are not on their own when responding to ill-informed people.

In last month's Update there were ten top tips from Breakthrough Communications [Top 10 tips for effective community engagement in 2023 - Breakthrough Communications \(breakthroughcomms.co.uk\)](https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/top-10-tips-for-effective-community-engagement-in-2023/)

Planning is one topic which is guaranteed to raise blood pressure; however, planners are human beings too worthy of respect and civilized behaviour, just like Clerks and Councillors. The Planner magazine carries out a careers survey each year and this year an overwhelming 87 per cent of respondents said they felt that social media regularly (54%) or occasionally (33%) contributed to misinformation about planning issues locally. This was more pronounced among planners working for public authorities. The article goes on to say

"in 2022 the Institute for Customer Service found that more than half of customer facing staff had been abused, verbally or physically; and the Local Government Association (LGA) revealed that 70 per cent of councillors reported experiencing abuse or intimidation in the previous year. "

The Planner report is here -

https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2023/03/17/misinformation-hubs-how-social-media-fuelling-misrepresentation-planning?utm_term=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Adestra

- So, pause before posting.
- Think long and hard about what you are posting, is it factually correct?
- Would you say this in a face to face situation? Would you be prepared to say this in a court of law? If the answer is no, don't press send
- Does your posting add to the sum of human happiness?
- It is time to improve the level and tone of public discourse; be respectful, be positive, consider other people's views and opinions as you want yours to be respected..

BANKING CAMPAIGN

NALC's policy manager, Chris Borg, and other colleagues from the sector met with the Barclays Bank Know Your Customer team, earlier this month to highlight the ongoing poor banking services local councils are experiencing especially in rural areas. The generic issues of mandates, signatories, transition to online banking, rurality, business continuity and lack of a single telephone banking contact point were highlighted.

This meeting followed engagement by NALC's chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, with the trade body for banks, UK Finance, and ongoing dialogue with other representative bodies in the voluntary sector.

NALC was also pleased to see this important issue raised in Parliament where the [Economic Secretary to the Treasury](#) highlighted that UK Finance was working with "sector representatives to identify any changes banks can make to simplify processes like changing signatories on accounts, and to produce guidance aimed at helping charities and community groups access and understand banking".

THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHES COUNCIL TAX LEVELS FOR 2023/24

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has published information on council tax levels set by councils in England for the financial year 2023/24.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-tax-levels-set-by-local-authorities-in-england-2023-to-2024>

The average Band D precept charged by local precepting bodies (including local councils) for 2023/24 will be £78.79, an increase of £3.98, or 5.3% on 2022/23.

Parish precepts in 2023/24 will total £708 million which is £53 million higher than in 2022/23 and 1.8% of overall council tax.

The average Band D council tax set by local authorities in England for 2023/24 is £2,065, which is an increase of £99 or 5.1% on the 2022/23 figure of £1,966. And the overall council tax requirement is £38.7 billion, £2.4 billion higher than 2022/23.

BUSINESS PROVIDING ITEMS AND SKILLS TO COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS



Business in the Community (BITC), supported by AXA, has reactivated its National Business Response Network (NBRN) to enable businesses to provide vital items and skills support to community organisations in need across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The NBRN was launched at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to connect businesses with people and community organisations in need. We have reactivated this important network to provide much-needed assistance during the cost-of-living crisis.

Through business support, we will focus on providing five much-needed items and five vital skills:

FIVE ITEMS	FIVE TIME/SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Laptops and smartphones○ Warm clothing and bedding○ Food packaging○ Energy-efficient products○ Kitchen equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Job coaching● Wellbeing mentorship● Marketing advice● Sales/fundraising advice● Operational/scale-up advice

How the national Business Response Network works –

Community Organisations: Let us know what support you are looking for by completing the Request Support form. Our team will then be in touch to discuss your needs and make your request live on our 'view requests' page which is accessed by our pool of business volunteers looking to offer support.

Businesses: View the full list of live requests for support and when you find one you feel you can support, simply click the 'We Can Help' button and we'll connect you to the community organisation and you can begin offering support. Alternatively, you can register your interest with BITC and we'll be in touch to discuss how you can help.

More information here <https://nbrn.org.uk/>

FOR ELECTIONS MAY 2023 – DEADLINE TODAY



For the first time, voters will need to show photo ID to vote at local elections in England on 4 May,

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, but with the added requirement to present photo ID. Polling staff 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 assist.

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.

NALC LEGAL QUERIES...

Councillor attending a demonstration – disqualification?

NALC solicitors were recently asked about a councillor's enquiry to his council as to whether his planned attendance at an organised and lawful climate demonstration would disqualify him as a councillor. The answer is no. Attendance at a demonstration is not one of the limited and specified reasons for disqualification (see LTN 8). One factor that might arise is that the councillor would have to be satisfied he would not have a predetermined view when it comes to council discussions and decisions on relevant climate issues.

Rent increases in allotment tenancies

NALC have had some questions about rent increases in allotment tenancies and whether that necessitates a new tenancy being issued. If a tenancy contains a term allowing the council to increase rents, then it can do so. If there is no such term, the council will need to terminate the current agreement and should issue a new agreement that can have such a term in it.

If terms need to be added, the council can ask the allotment holders to agree the amendments. If they do, then the changes come into effect on a date agreed with the holders. If the allotment holders do not agree, the changes, then a notice to quit must be given to each allotment holder giving 12 months'

notice. The notice must be given before 6 April or after 29 September in any given year. The notice cannot be backdated.

**NALC IS LAUNCHING THIS YEAR'S STAR COUNCIL AWARD -DON'T BE SHY
NOMINATE**



OALC will be supporting the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Star Council Awards this year to celebrate the hard work and dedication of the parish and town council sector.

We really hope that all Oxfordshire councils will think long and hard about this opportunity. We have had runners up in several categories over the years perhaps this year there will be a winner.

Is there a councillor that has gone above and beyond, they have got a much needed project off the ground and through to completion? Your Clerk is a hard working star and has shown exceptional professionalism? This is the opportunity to shine a national spotlight on outstanding work and individuals. Don't be modest, all too often councillors get brickbats, this is a rare to identify and praise the good positive work done at community level.

The Star Council Awards are the only awards programme in England specifically designed to recognise the contribution of local councils to their communities. The awards are open to all local councils, councillors, young councillors, clerks, and county associations across England.

This year, there are five award categories for which entrants can apply:

- Clerk of the Year,
- County Association of the Year,
- Young Councillor of the Year,
- Councillor of the Year, and
- Council of the Year.

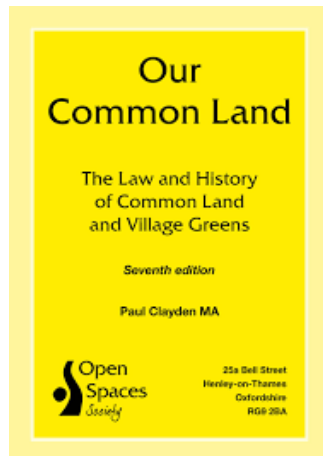
The award categories have been carefully selected to recognise excellence in different areas of local council operations and highlight the varied contributions made by councils across the country.

The nomination period ends on 28 July 2023, and the winners will be announced and given their awards at a ceremony in the House of Lords on 29 November 2023.

Visit www.nalc.gov.uk/starcouncilawards for more information on the Star Council Awards 2023 and how to submit.

THIS MONTH'S INTERESTING NUMBERS

Common land There are 600,000 hectares or 1.5million acres of common land in England and Wales. Each county has common land although vast areas of the Lakelands stand in contrast to the more genteel lowland commons that we have in Oxfordshire..



All common land has an owner. Commoners hold certain rights to use the product of the soil. There are generally six recognised rights of common – pasture, pannage, estovers, turbary, piscary and common in the soil.

- Pasture is the right to turn stock onto the common to graze
- Pannage is the right granted to an owner of pigs to go into the woods and allow them to eat acorns or beech mast on the ground
- Estovers is the right to take underwood and small branches for fuel or repairing fences or building, or bracken
- Turbary is the right to dig turf or peat for use as fuel
- Piscary is the right to fish in another person's lakes, ponds or streams
- Common in the soil is the right to take sand, gravel, stone or minerals for use in the commoners holding.

For more information on common land see *Our Common Land, The Law and History of Common Land and Village Greens*, 7th edition Paul Clayden, published by Open Spaces Society <https://www.oss.org.uk/our-common-land/>

Alternatively Oxfordshire County Council is the Commons Registration Authority responsible for maintaining the registers of common land and town or village greens in Oxfordshire. This includes registering 'new' town or village greens, in some instances rectifying incorrectly registered commons or greens, and updating the registers when necessary.

The registers are available for public inspection, or the County Council can provide scanned copies of entries if you contact them. -<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/countryside/countryside-access/common-land-and-village-greens/commons-registration-authority>

Allotments There are about approx. 250,000 plot holders. The demand post covid for an allotment plot has risen, 87% of local authorities reported an increase in demand.

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) report on the state of the allotment market, August 2022 has some revealing statistics.:

- Cost per annum to rent an allotment; over 30% of local authorities (district and county councils) charge >£70 pa, 20% charge between £41- £50 and 8% charge less than £20
- There has been an increase in the number of smaller plots being offered, perhaps reflecting local authorities attempts to satisfy increasing demand. The most common sizes are 150-199 sqm and 250-299 sqm.
- Most allotment sites provide water, fencing, clearly defined access roads and composting. Some allotment sites have other services such as livestock plots, community rooms, lock up / store sheds, washing facilities and toilet facilities.

The report is here - <https://www.apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/members-area/briefings/2022/22-33-state-of-the-market-allotments/>

CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III



Members of the public and community organisations are invited to share how they will celebrate the Coronation on a digital map which can be found on the Coronation website here -

<https://coronation.gov.uk/> or
<https://coronation.gov.uk/events/>

More locally you can see what is happening in Oxfordshire on the County Council website -

[Celebrations for the King's Coronation | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

The general timetable is Coronation on Saturday 6th May, Big Lunch 7th May and Big Help Out Monday 8th May but each community will by now have its own plans in place.

Cherwell District Council has Coronation grants available.

Forty parishes have so far applied for a Coronation Celebration Grant.

Parishes that have not yet applied are reminded that grants cannot be awarded retrospectively, so it is essential to make an application before the event takes place. If a Parish authority does not wish to apply, then it can nominate a constituted community group to apply for a grant towards a celebration in that parish. Detailed information can be found at

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/925/king-charles-iii-coronation-fund>

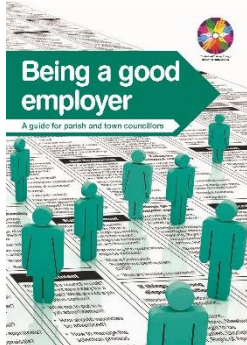
Here's hoping for good weather for the bank holiday weekend.

OALC MAY TRAINING – PROPERTY LAW AND ESSENTIALS OF EMPLOYMENT - BOOK NOW

1. Property Law 8th May 10am online **FULLY BOOKED**

2. Essentials of employment 23rd May 10 – 11.30am online

The session run by Chris Moses, OALC Employment Consultant, is aimed at Councillors and Clerks who want to avoid the numerous legal and practical pitfalls associated with being an Employer. It will provide an overview of the essentials of getting it right when employing a Clerk or other members of staff. **It is essential that at least one councillor on every council knows what the councils obligations are as an employer.** don't leave it to the Clerk who is often the only employee. Failure to get this right can lead to serious and potentially expensive consequences if things go pear shaped.



The course starts with recruitment and interviews, moves to induction and the legal requirements of taking on new staff, issuing contracts, and then managing sickness and disciplinary issues.

It will also ensure that attendees are brought fully up to date with the latest legal changes.

Book here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000172>

Also *Being a Good Employer* is being reviewed, publication date tba soon.

3. Training for new councillors and clerks too.

- Roles & Responsibilities, Didcot Great Western Park, Face to face, 9am -1pm **5th June**
- Councillor Fundamentals, online, evening **6th June**
- Councillor Fundamentals, online 10am-12.30pm **13th July**
- Roles & Responsibilities, Didcot Great Western Park, Face to face, 9am -1pm, **18th July**
- Roles & Responsibilities, online, 9am -1pm, **3rd October**
- Councillor Fundamentals, online 6.30-9pm, **20th November**

- Chairing Skills, face to face Didcot, Great Western Park, 9.30am – 4pm, **22nd June**

All courses can be booked via the Training and Events page of our website here

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

CLIMATE ACTION

THE PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR NATURE

The *People's Plan for Nature*, was launched last month by WWF, the RSPB, and the National Trust to tie in with the recent BBC Wild Isles programmes. The People's Plan results from a 'Citizens Assembly' organised last year to look at how we tackle the nature and biodiversity crisis. There is background and a summary of the plan here: <https://peoplesplanfornature.org/>

The plan covers eight important areas including Food, Water and rivers, nature-friendly Farming and Access to Nature, and has actions for all sectors. There are also policy asks – one is that at least 12% of the land area of all new build and major retrofit be given over to nature. Another is that ‘Access to nature should be recognised as a human right’.

USEFUL LINKS ON SODC’S CLIMATE PAGE...

- [What Town & Parish Councils can do](#)
- [Where to get funding for your community climate project](#) (South Oxfordshire DC)
- [Where to get funding for your community Climate project](#) (Vale of White Horse DC)
- [What you can do as a community](#)
- [Improving the energy efficiency of community buildings](#)

GREAT WESTERN COMMUNITY FOREST



England’s Community Forests are being created in and around the largest towns and cities. The nearest one to Oxfordshire is the [Great Western Community Forest](#) (GWCF) centred on Swindon. It stretches into parts of West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts, and covers over 168 square miles, stretching from the North Wessex Downs to the River Thames.

[View an interactive map](#) of the Great Western Community Forest area.

The Great Western Community Forest project is offering 100% grants for tree planting and 15 years’ worth of maintenance payments for projects in parts of Vale and West Oxfordshire .

The primary aim is to increase tree cover to an average of 30% across the project area. Since the start of the project in 1994, tree cover has more than doubled across the area, but there is much more to do to create the Forest. Success will be dependent on local authorities, landowners, organisations, communities and businesses working together.

TREES FOR CLIMATE PROJECT

Working as part of England’s Community Forests (ECF) the Great Western Community Forest (GWCF) has recently secured funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) through the Trees for Climate grant.

This is for tree planting and woodland creation across [the whole of the GWCF area](#). There are grants available through the GWCF to support all of these planting projects:

- community woodlands creation
- woodland creation on private farm land
- community orchards
- hedgerows and shrub belts

- agroforestry
- standard trees within urban green spaces
- street tree planting
- small scale planting
- planting within school grounds

The Trees for Climate Grant covers all agreed costs, subject to quotes and tenders. Establishment and maintenance costs can also be claimed.

The [Community Forest map](#) shows the extent of our coverage. The Trees for Climate area extends 10 miles approx. outside the Forest boundary and includes Carterton, Witney, Wantage, almost to the A34.

If you are an interested landowner who lives outside the GWCF boundary, who wants to apply for a grant, contact us using the details below as we may be able to help.

Further information

- The [England Trees Action Plan 2021 to 2024](#) sets out the government's long term vision for the treescape it wants to see in England
- The priority of the [ECF programme](#) is to help the UK's efforts to reach net zero but also to reduce flood risk, increase sustainable UK grown timber, provide more places to help nature recover and increase people's access to and enjoyment of woodland

If you would like further information about the Trees for Climate project in Swindon, and details on how to get involved, email CommunityForest@swindon.gov.uk.

NO MOW MAY

[No Mow May | Climate Action Oxfordshire](#) Can your council join in with No Mow May?

No Mow May is the charity [Plantlife's](#) annual campaign to encourage you to put away your lawnmowers and not mow green spaces during May - to let long grass and wild plants grow naturally. This provides a boost for wild plants and wildlife throughout summer.

Are there any areas that your council traditionally mows that could being left alone? Corners of the rec? Verges that don't obscure sight lines etc.?

Go to the Climate Action Oxfordshire webpage [No Mow May | Climate Action Oxfordshire](#) for answers to the questions –

- How does it help?
- How can we take part?
- And a link to the poster below, for you to print out and explain why there are unmown areas. Questions are bound to be asked!



SHARED INGREDIENTS FOR A WELL-BEING ECONOMY

This report makes interesting reading if you have five minutes in your already busy life.

https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/pex_carnegie2021/2023/02/09095904/Shared-Ingredients-for-a-Wellbeing-Economy-Paper_Publication.pdf

Growing a fairer, greener and truly thriving economy is possible. This joint discussion paper prepared by the Centre for Thriving Places and supported by Carnegie UK, outlines an approach on how it is possible to rewire the economy to address many of the current social and environmental crises.



For over 50 years there have been calls for the global economy to move 'beyond GDP'. When Robert Kennedy made his famous speech in 1968 he described the phrase 'measured everything except that which makes life worthwhile' and he implored leaders and governments to address this.

There is a growing movement to make that a reality and for GDP to be replaced by something more holistic. It is a difficult job to turn the tanker that is a consumption

based economy around and to move from the simple 'growth is all' mantra to a more nuanced approach that supports people, places and the planet to thrive.

The report cites several different frameworks currently being used in various situations:

- The thriving places index <https://www.thrivingplacesindex.org/>
- The SEED (social, economic, environmental and democratic well being) model <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/blog-posts/the-place-of-place/>
- The doughnut economics model [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doughnut_\(economic_model\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doughnut_(economic_model))

And these as well:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act
- The National Performance Framework (Scotland)
- The ONS Wellbeing Dashboard (UK)
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals (International)
- The OECD Better Life Index (International)

This is high level stuff, but a village is a microcosm, a community on a small scale. And happiness is vital to everyone; it doesn't pay the bills but it contributes to a more understanding and accepting society. Food for thought.

CONSULTATION

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

1. **A 10 week consultation 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.

2. Community Benefits for Electricity Transmission network Infrastructure

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) launched on 30th March a consultation on a recommended approach to community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure.

The consultation is proposing to create voluntary guidance for industry and communities when developing individual community benefit packages. This guidance will cover how to deliver direct benefits payments to eligible individuals. DESNZ also recommend establishing a recommended level of funding for community benefits in agreement with the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem).

In this consultation DESNZ are seeking to gain the perspectives of different stakeholders.

This includes stakeholders who could be involved in:

- developing and delivering community benefits
- communities who could receive community benefits

The consultation will close at 11.45pm on 25 May 2023.

More information here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-benefits-for-electricity-transmission-network-infrastructure>

Two consultations associated with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill -

3. Infrastructure Levy technical consultation

The government has [published a technical consultation on the design of the Infrastructure Levy](#) The Levy aims to be more effective and transparent than the current system of developer contributions and deliver at least as much affordable housing, if not more.

The consultation closes on 9th June.

4. A new system of environmental assessment known as **Environmental Outcomes Reports** is proposed by the Bill.

This will replace the EU-derived Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment processes with a streamlined system that places greater focus on delivering the Government's environmental ambitions. The introduction of an outcomes-based approach to assessment is a central feature of the legislation and allows the Government to reflect its environmental priorities directly into the plan-making and decision-making process on developments.

The consultation page can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/environmental-outcomes-reports-a-new-approach-to-environmental-assessment> . **The consultation will last for 12 weeks and closes on 9th June 2023.**

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.

Look at the Size of That Procedure!

Being an HR professional my business life is full of procedures. Everything from Sickness Management, Holidays, Grievance and Discipline, Redundancy, there's a procedure for it.

Twenty years ago, when I started working with town and parish councils it was not unusual to find some who had no policies and procedures at all, including an employment contract.

Thankfully, the situation has now changed. However, for some councils there is a danger that the pendulum has swung too far the other way.

Clerks and councils now recognise that they have a legal obligation to have certain employment procedures. The problem is then one of where do they get these procedures from? Most Clerks and councillors are too busy to write procedures, and often look elsewhere for help. There is a danger when adopting someone else's procedure that it isn't appropriate. Every council is different, and so are the requirements of its HR procedures. Rather than taking this into consideration, a lot of councils get their hands on something that another council has used and assume it will work for them.

This can be particularly problematic if the other Council is a larger Principal Authority. Larger Councils have more HR resources, and often draft their policies and procedures based around these resources and in consultation with Unions as part of their Collective Bargaining procedures. This creates something that is right for them, but not always right for a parish council.

For example, Grievance and Discipline Procedures can include:

- ❖ The right for an Employee to have a Union Representative with them at an informal disciplinary investigation.
- ❖ The need for an Independent Note Taker.
- ❖ Providing the Employee with 15 days prior notice of a Formal Hearing.
- ❖ For all parties involved in managing the process to have no prior knowledge of the alleged indiscipline, or Employee's grievance.

None of these are legal requirements, and such processes can be difficult, if not impossible, for a town or parish council to follow. They create unnecessary hurdles which the council hasn't got the resources to follow and can result in it failing to follow or missing parts of the process.

At the same time, Grievance procedures from larger councils probably don't include a mechanism for addressing Code of Conduct complaints, which is a serious omission for a town or parish council.

Town and Parish Councils are generally small organisations. Many rarely employ 20 or more people, and 80% only have one. ACAS procedures recognise the specific needs of small organisations. Their policies and procedures often include a stand alone process for small organisations. Their statutory Disciplinary Guidelines for small organisations are 3 pages long. Their Grievance Process is one page and their Absence Management guidelines are a 6 page document. Size isn't everything!

This doesn't automatically mean that ACAS procedures are necessarily right for Town / Parish Councils. However, what they do provide for Clerks, Councils and HR Committees is an insight into the level of simplicity that can be used when drafting their own procedures.

Focusing on the formal steps and not giving enough consideration to informal stages can be another mistake when drafting procedures. One important point that ACAS make in their procedures is the essential value of an informal mechanism, prior to getting into the formal stages.

Councils who have a culture of adherence to formal procedures can find that disciplinary issues and staff complaints are fed into the formal process too quickly. This can result in an opportunity being lost. Worse still, the focus is shifted onto how the procedure is followed, rather than tackling the Employee's problem and supporting them towards improving the situation.

Informal meetings that are conducted at the outset of any HR issue can provide a valuable opportunity for managers to have an open and factual conversation with their Employee. Most people are rational and have a modicum of intelligence. Give them the opportunity to have a confidential meeting, with adequate time put aside for the process, and an opportunity to examine factual evidence, and they will usually reach a level of understanding. This can apply to both parties.

As a consequence, problems can be addressed quickly, at little cost to the Council, and to the benefit of all concerned. Alternatively, once the employment issue is fed into a formal procedure, the end result is usually that someone has to win and someone has to lose, which simply exacerbates problems in the workplace.

PROFILE

Chris Moses LL.M 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

www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk

TRAINING

NALC EVENTS

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH LOCAL COUNCIL ACTION

24 May 2023 — 12.00 – 13:15

For many years, organisations such as Friends of the Earth encouraged communities to act globally and think locally to save the planet. Councils do not get any more local than local (parish and town) councils. But despite the warnings of extreme weather phenomena being a regular occurrence unless net zero is reached within a generation – to what extent are local councils heeding this call?

This event will unveil the latest environmental projects local councils across England have been involved in to increase biodiversity and make an impact in reducing climate change.

Join us to discover how a national stakeholder interested in rural sustainability works with communities to save the planet. Hear excellent local council case studies and get incredible tips to learn how your local council can think globally and act locally in the fight against climate change.

Speaker: Culvin Milmer (Swanage Town Council) and Cllr Richard Neale (Draughton Parish Council)

Booking here - https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fighting-climate-change-with-local-council-action-tickets-565086728617?aff=mailchimp&mc_cid=70b0fce1df&mc_eid=2593660dc7https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/

[e/fighting-climate-change-with-local-council-action-tickets-565086728617?aff=mailchimp&mc_cid=70b0fce1df&mc_eid=2593660dc7uy](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fighting-climate-change-with-local-council-action-tickets-565086728617?aff=mailchimp&mc_cid=70b0fce1df&mc_eid=2593660dc7uy) tickets

STUDY TOUR 2023: NEWPORT PAGNELL TOWN COUNCIL

27 and 28 June 2023

NALC's annual study tour is back! This year we will be going to Newport Pagnell Town Council in Buckinghamshire. On this study tour, you will learn more about the council's devolved leisure services, how it manages its broader portfolio, and the challenges it faces.

This unique opportunity will give insight into why Newport Pagnell is one of England's most innovative towns. Newport Pagnell boasts the oldest working iron bridge in the country, and several of the town's hotels and public houses have been founded as coaching inns in past centuries. Today's Newport Pagnell offers visitors and residents all the amenities of a modern town.

The study tour has limited availability (12 places), so tickets will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. We recommend booking early to avoid disappointment.

Book here https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/study-tour-2023-newport-pagnell-town-council-tickets-435573119927?aff=mailchimp&mc_cid=70b0fce1df&mc_eid=2593660dc7

CILCA



The current series of mentoring sessions has finished. We are assessing the level of demand and possible timing for the next set of sessions which will probably be in September. If you are interested in completing the Certificate in Local Council Administration, the recognised qualification for council clerks then please get in touch with Lucy Dalby info@oalc.org.uk

OALC TRAINING PROGRAMME

Our training schedule is on our website here <https://www.oalc.org.uk/events>

- **Property Law**, online, 18th May <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000171>
- **Essentials of employing people**, online, 23rd May <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000172>
- **Roles & Responsibilities**, 5th June, face to face, morning, Great Western Park, Didcot for newly elected councillors (and Clerks too!) <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000173>
- **Councillor Fundamentals**, 6th June 6.30pm online
- **Please note the Play Inspection training scheduled for 27th May has been rescheduled to 15th June, Bicester** <https://www.oalc.org.uk/event-detail/00000000170>

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)

Upton Parish Council

Deputy Parish Council Clerk

This role would suit someone who is interested in part time flexible work, mostly home based. Applicants should have small or large business or local authority administrative experience but the latter, whilst an advantage, is not essential.

Upton Parish Council has robust financial processes and systems in place, together with a suite of policies & guidelines for the running of a Parish Council and the Parish councillors are active in their support to the Clerk. These policies & guidelines will serve as a framework for the new appointee, who will maintain and improve these as part of the role.

The Parish Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer for the Council. Where required, training leading to a recognised qualification will be given in the responsibilities and functions of a Clerk, including the serving, or issuing of all the notifications required by law and other essential legal and local authority requirements. Depending on the experience of the applicant, training may additionally include administering budgets, finances, setting agendas & minute writing.

The appointee will report directly to Upton Parish Council and work alongside the Parish Clerk, producing information required by the Council to make effective decisions and learning how to advise and assist the Council with the formulation of Council policies. The appointee will also learn how to ensure that there is open and effective communication between the Council and village residents.

It is envisaged that the appointee would take over as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer in due course.

Starting Salary: Depending on qualifications & experience. A trainee Clerk would start on £12.97 - £13.95 per hour & a qualified Clerk would start on £14.21 - £15.67 per hour. (All salaries based on the NALC pay scale).

Contract: Permanent, part time.

Hours of work: Initially, up to 5 hours per week (plus training time).

Location: Work from Home / Upton Village Hall.

Initial enquiries should be made to the Upton Parish Council Clerk on parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk

Drayton (Abingdon) Parish Council
Vacancy for a Part-time Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

www.DraytonPC.org

Home-based, other than attendance at monthly evening council meetings, the Finance & Personnel Committee meetings, and other occasional visits to Drayton when required.

Hours: 20 hours per week, flexible worked over 4 or 5 days per week

NJC Scale LC2 (24-28) currently £31,099 - £34,723 pro rata. The Council offers the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Drayton (Abingdon) Parish Council is seeking to appoint an innovative, forward thinking, and proactive Parish Clerk to lead a staff team and to support Councillors in achieving their aims and aspirations for the Council.

Drayton is a village of some 1,100 dwellings and approx. 3,450 residents. The Parish Council operates an allotment site and a cemetery, and has various green spaces and two play areas. There are plans to build additional play and recreation facilities in the near future. The Parish Council has up to 11 Councillors and a precept of £119,628. There are currently two standing committees and four working groups. The Parish Council meets 12 times a year.

The Parish Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day management of the councils' administration and finances, and advises the council on legal, personnel, planning and regulatory matters related to Council business. The Clerk is the line manager for the Deputy Clerk, and the Programme Manager and also manages a variety of contractors.

The successful candidate must be computer literate, competent in maintaining accurate accounts, and have relevant administrative experience. They must be willing to work flexibly. The Council uses the Alpha accounting package and training will be provided if required.

This is a busy parish so the new Clerk should have previous experience in Local Government, e.g. as an experienced Clerk, a Deputy Clerk for a larger parish or town council, or an administrator in a local authority.

They must be able to work successfully with Councillors, staff, residents, Local Authority departments and contractors. Ideally the postholder will be CiLCA qualified, or must be willing to commit to obtaining the qualification.

For further information about the role and an application form please email the clerk at clerk@draytonpc.org

The deadline for receipt of applications is 3rd May 2023 5PM



Wantage Town Council

Wantage Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Location: Hybrid working home/office. Office is located at The Beacon, Wantage

Hours: This is a part-time role involving up to 25 hours per week. There is the possibility of undertaking the role on a job share basis with the duties of the Responsible Financial Officer (5 hours per week) being separated from those of the Town Clerk (20 hours per week). Working hours are flexible.

Pay rate £22.62/ hour (LC scale 37)

The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Town Council. They manage the administration of the Council and arrange for its policies and decisions to be implemented. The Clerk manages the work of the office and operational staff.

The Responsible Financial Officer has responsibility for all the Council's accounting matters and compliance with statutory obligations, the Practitioner's Guide and Council financial policies.

The successful candidate will have extensive experience as a Parish Clerk or Deputy Clerk, or in a clerk's role in a committee led organisation.

How to apply – email clerk@wantagetowncouncil.gov.uk for an application pack or to arrange an informal discussion about the post

Deadline for applications – 12 May 2023

Interview date – week commencing 22 May 2023

Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe

VACANCY – CLERK TO PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe has a vacancy for the position of clerk. The clerk is responsible for

- preparing agenda and minutes and secretarial support for council meeting
- maintaining the Parish financial records and accounts
- circulating information and briefing councillors between meetings
- management of the planning application process.
- responsible for updating the council's website.

This is a paid position (commensurate with experience) and requires the successful candidate to have excellent organisational skills, be computer literate and as the first point of contact, must be open and approachable. 20 hours per month.

The PC meets monthly on the third Wednesday of each month except for August (no meeting) and December when the Council meet on the second Wednesday. Very occasionally, additional meetings are called to consider planning applications.

The successful candidate will work closely with the Chair to the PC and other councillors.

For any further information (job and person specification) please contact Jane Imbush (chair) on 07739 644064 jimbushpc@gmail.com or Sarah Brown (current clerk) on astons.parishclerk@gmail.com.

Applications and expressions of interest should be submitted to the Clerk by June 1 2023