13th December 2024



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### **Contact us**



# Please contact the office on 01673 866596

- For general enquiries including internal audit and advice, contact either Katrina Line 1 (or mobile 07422 963475) or Andrew - Line 3 (or mobile 07549 019842). Flexible Monday - Friday
- For general enquiries including website management service, invoices, training booking enquiries, contact Lindsey - Line 2 on Monday, Tuesday, Friday

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For general enquiries including website/portal updates, e-news items, vacancies, contact Elaine –
 Line 4 on Fridays

Please note that there may be times when the LALC office is not manned, particularly if staff are out training or attending meetings. If you can't get hold of us by phone, please contact us via one of the methods below.



www.lalc.co.uk/contactus



enquiries@lalc.co.uk



Raise a new Enquiry on the portal (login required)

If any Clerks want to join the Clerks' eGroup, or any councillors want to join the Councillor eGroup, contact enquiries@lalc.co.uk.

This fortnightly newsletter is provided to member councils through the clerk and chair and should be circulated to all councillors. This eNews can also be found on the <u>LALC website</u> under News (LALC News). Other important information which comes up in between eNews publication dates is also shared on the website under News (Our Blog).

### Training courses are available to book via the portal (login required)

The Training Bulletin is issued monthly, and courses are available to book via the portal. If there is any specific training which you feel would be valuable, and we don't currently offer it, please let us know and we will investigate. The Training Bulletin can be found on the LALC website <a href="https://www.lalc.co.uk/training-2-1">www.lalc.co.uk/training-2-1</a>.

Clerks – when booking training for your councillors, **please ensure that their email address is correct**. If not, they will not receive the booking confirmation or any joining instructions. If you have set up your councillors on the LALC portal, you will be able to select their correct email address from a drop-down list when booking the training.

If you update your council email and are **already** booked on training, please let us know so that we can update your booking to ensure you receive the automatic reminders.

If one of your councillors resigns, and they were booked on LALC training, **please cancel their place**, so that others can book on. Failure to do so may not only deprive other councils from attending but could result in a non-attendance charge (see below).

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#### Please note our training cancellation policy:

- For part day courses please ensure we receive cancellations at least 48 hours in advance
- For full day events please ensure we receive cancellations at least 5 working days in advance, as we need to pre-order and pay for lunches

Due to persistent non-attendance at booked events, it is unfortunate that LALC have had to amend the way we impose our cancellation fees. All members are charged 50% of the training cost when insufficient notice is received (as above) for non-attendance at training events. No shows will be charged at 100% of the course fee. All charges are regardless of whether the council is a member of the ATS or not.

<u>Current vacancies</u>	Position	Closing date
Toft Newton Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	No closing date
Metheringham Parish Council	Clerk	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Westborough and Dry Doddington	Clerk/RFO	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<u>Hundleby Parish Council</u>	Clerk/RFO	No closing date
Potterhanworth Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<u>Caistor Town Council</u>	Estates Maintenance Operative	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Allington Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2024
Fenton and Torksey Lock Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	5 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
North Thoresby, Grainsby & Waithe Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Coningsby Parish Council	Admin Assistant	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Great and Little Carlton Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	No closing date
Fiskerton Parish Council	RFO	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
Great Gonerby Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2024
Carlton Scroop and Normanton on Cliffe Parish	Clerk/RFO	No closing date
Council		
<u>Leadenham Parish Council</u>	Clerk/RFO	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Elm Parish Council (Cambridgeshire)	Clerk/RFO	3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2025

### Vacancy advertising

LALC can advertise your vacancy on our website and in the fortnightly eNews. This is a **free** service. If you do not have a pre-prepared advert to send us, please complete our **Vacancy Template**, which can be found in the Members Portal under Document Templates.

We also offer a **paid** advertising service, which ensures that your advert also appears on Lincolnshire County Council's website, Facebook, and LinkedIn (in addition to the LALC website and eNews). The current fee for this is £75. Please complete the Vacancy Template (as above), ensuring that all requested information is completed, and then contact us at <a href="mailto:enquiries@lalc.co.uk">enquiries@lalc.co.uk</a>. You will be invoiced for this service.

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Please note that Lincolnshire County Council require a closing date on their advert, as well as salary information (these are mandatory fields). LCC will remove your advert once the closing date has passed, so please consider the date carefully as you will have to pay again to re-advertise if your vacancy hasn't been filled by then.

We recommend all councils advertise their vacancy, job details, method of application and up to date contact details **on their own website** too.

Please let us know when the vacancy has been filled, so that we can remove it from our website/eNews. If your vacancy has not yet been filled and you are continuing to advertise, please let us know of any revised closing date. If you no longer specify a closing date, please let us know so that we can update the vacancy adverts.

The NALC Recruitment Manual (developed as part of the Civility & Respect project) is now available via the portal. Go into Knowledgebase and click on 'Recruitment Manual' in the 'Employment' menu area.

#### Sign up to the LCC Town and Parishes newsletter - email:

lcctownandparishnews@lincolnshire.gov.uk

#### **Latest News**

To see the latest NALC news (NALC login required): <a href="https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news">https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news</a>
To see the latest SLCC news (No SLCC login required): <a href="https://www.slcc.co.uk/news-publications/">https://www.slcc.co.uk/news-publications/</a>

#### LCC School Admissions consultations

The following schools are consulting on their 2026/27 Admission Policy:

Kirkby-on-Bain Church of England Primary School: <a href="https://www.kobps.lincs.sch.uk/">https://www.kobps.lincs.sch.uk/</a>

The consultation period runs from 22 November 2024 to 03 January 2025.

Louth King Edward VI Grammar School: <a href="https://www.kevigs.org/welcome-1">https://www.kevigs.org/welcome-1</a>

The consultation period runs from 03 December 24 to 14 January 2025.

Caistor Yarborough Academy: <a href="https://caistoryarboroughacademy.co.uk/">https://caistoryarboroughacademy.co.uk/</a>

The consultation period runs from 06 December 24 to 17 January 25.

North Hykeham Manor Farm Academy: <a href="https://manor-farm-academy.co.uk/key-information/admissions/">https://manor-farm-academy.co.uk/key-information/admissions/</a>

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Witham St Hughs Academy: <a href="https://withamsthughsacademy.co.uk/key-information/policies-documents/">https://withamsthughsacademy.co.uk/key-information/policies-documents/</a> Waddington All Saints Academy: <a href="https://www.all-saints.lincs.sch.uk/key-information/admissions/">https://www.all-saints.lincs.sch.uk/key-information/admissions/</a> The consultation period runs from 09 December 2024 to 20 January 2025.

Rauceby Primary Church of England School: <a href="https://www.raucebyschool.co.uk/admissions/">https://www.raucebyschool.co.uk/admissions/</a> The consultation period runs from 11 December 2024 to 22 January 2025.

Holbeach William Stukeley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School - <a href="https://www.williamstukeley.lincs.sch.uk/information/admissions.html">https://www.williamstukeley.lincs.sch.uk/information/admissions.html</a>

The consultation period runs from 12 December 24 to 23 January 25

Horbling - Brown's Church of England Primary School – https://www.brownscofeprimaryschool.uk/admissions/

The consultation period runs from 13 December 2024 to 24 January 2025

**Stamford The Bluecoat School:** <a href="https://bluecoatprimary.org/information/school-admissions/">https://bluecoatprimary.org/information/school-admissions/</a> The consultation period runs from 17 December 2024 to 27th January 2025.

### **Groundwater Flooding Issues in Cemeteries**

At the LALC conference in July a couple of parish and town councils raised an issue about groundwater flooding from springs and high water tables in parish cemeteries. Lincolnshire County Council undertook to investigate this. We put details into August LALC eNews and three cemeteries have been identified so far. Lincolnshire County Council will undertake investigations in January 2025. Details are provided below. If any council has similar issues, please contact Lincolnshire County Council – contact details provided below:

#### Dear LALC

Just a quick update on Parish Graveyards. Our Hydrologists have made a start on looking at the cause and effects of groundwater and are aiming to get the initial report over to us towards the end of Jan 25.

They will initially concentrate on the flowing 3 locations

- Mablethorpe
- North Hykeham
- Claypole

#### The report will consider :-

- 1. Observed groundwater levels in the above areas of reported groundwater flooding
- 2. Incorporate DEFRA's Hydrology Data Explorer
- 3. Modelled Recent Actual drawdown to understand the influence of abstraction on groundwater levels in the affected areas

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4. Climate change forecasts undertaken using the Lincolnshire Chalk and Spilsby Sandstone regional groundwater model for Mablethorpe to understand potential changes in groundwater levels in the future.

All will then be summarised in a short technical note and to include recommendations as appropriate.

Kind regards,

#### **Brett Rycroft-Jones**

Flood Resilience Program Co-Ordinator Lincolnshire County Council County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL

Mobile: 07387 530 652

Email: brett.rycroft-jones@lincolnshire.gov.uk and vicky.jones@lincolnshire.gov.uk

### Setting of Precepts for the 2025/26 Financial Year

Councils should by now have received information from their district/borough council to calculate and submit their precepts for 2025/26 by a specific deadline, as set by the respective district/borough council. If any councils believe that they have not received this information, please chase it up with your district/borough council.

#### **External Auditors and Public Interest Reports**

Every council must complete an annual AGAR (Annual Governance and Accounting Return) by the end of June after the end of the financial year (31st March).

So far the external auditors have issued 17 Public Interest Reports (PIR) for councils that did not submit their AGAR for 2023-24 financial year by the statutory deadline or after reminder during July. Only one of those is in Lincolnshire. The list is issued by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Authorities organisation on its website <a href="https://www.saaa.co.uk/public-interest-reports/">https://www.saaa.co.uk/public-interest-reports/</a>

Failure to submit your AGAR on time will mean that there are additional fees to pay, and it creates the statutory requirement to hold a public meeting to discuss the External Auditor's Public Interest Report. It also means that for smaller councils they cannot submit that they are exempt in the next financial year so will incur further external audit fees.

The responsibility to submit the AGAR on time rests with every council. The Council cannot delegate certain statutory responsibilities to an officer or committee, such as setting the budget and precept and approving the AGAR.

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Only the full council can approve the budget and precept and ensure they have enough general and earmarked reserves to meet exceptional and planned needs. The amounts agreed must be clearly minuted and published. It is not sufficient to record just the percentage increase – real amounts should be minuted, for example, 'It was resolved to approve the budgeted expenditure of £36,751, revenue of £4,768 and the precept of £31,983'.

Public Interest Reports are brought to the public's attention. In the case of Staveley Town Council, near Chesterfield, their circumstances were raised in Parliament in January 2023 and the External Auditor issued a Public Interest Report on 28th May 2024 and published on the SAAA website mentioned earlier. The Public Interest Report records the dire financial circumstances that the council got into from 2019 and only with the appointment of a competent Town Clerk in 2022 and assistance of Chesterfield Borough Council have they been bringing the situation under control, but it can take a very long time to turn this kind of situation around.

We hope that any parish or town council in Lincolnshire needing assistance and advice approaches LALC as soon as a potential situation arises to prevent a financial and governance situation spiralling out of control.

## Confirming your email address and contact details to the External Auditor

The following email has been sent to every Town/Parish Council Clerk to confirm the contact details for the council. If any Clerk/RFO has NOT received such an email then it is vital that the Clerk/RFO contacts them directly to ensure that current contact details are in place now. Every council must have a council-owned email address.

For the attention of the Parish Clerk:

We are the external auditors appointed to XXXXXXXXXXX Town / Parish Council by the smaller authorities audit appointments (SAAA). Ahead of the 2024/25 Limited Assurance Review season we would be grateful if we could be informed of the most up to date contact details for the Clerk to the Council to ensure our instructions in the Spring are sent to the correct person. As communication is electronic, confirmation of the name of the clerk and the Council's correct email address would be fine.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

SBA Team PKF sba@pkf-l.com



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For and on behalf of PKF Littlejohn LLP 15 Westferry Circus London E14 4HD

#### **NKDC: Free trees**

NKDC currently have two schemes available offering free trees to communities. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of North Kesteven District Council being established we are offering 50 single specimen trees to communities around the district. Additionally, we are offering free fruit trees to establish community orchards in North Kesteven as part of the Coronation Living Heritage Fund.

Sites should be accessible to the public to some extent (e.g. amenity land, parks, village greens) and there should be plans for community engagement (such as tree planting or fruit picking).

You can find information on the schemes and links to the application forms here: https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/climate-change/natural-environment/trees-communities

Please note there are separate application forms for each scheme. The deadline for applications is 12 noon on Friday 20th December, although please note that applications will close sooner if capacity is reached.

Any queries contact: <a href="mailto:partnershipsteam@n-kesteven.gov.uk">partnershipsteam@n-kesteven.gov.uk</a>

### Have your say on policing and council tax in Lincolnshire

Police and Crime Commissioner Marc Jones is calling for residents of Lincolnshire to share their views on how Lincolnshire is policed. The annual Crime and Policing Survey gives residents the opportunity to voice their opinion on how police services in Lincolnshire are prioritised and delivered.

#### Take the survey:

https://habit5research.questionpro.eu/lincs-crime-and-policing-survey-2024?custom2=LincolnshireAlert

#### Reminder – Government consultation on holding remote meetings

The government has announced a commitment to allowing councils to hold remote meetings, and a consultation is now open to gather feedback.

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More details: https://tinyurl.com/yhbb9ezp

The consultation closes on 19 December 2024.

#### **Local Government Finance Policy Statement 2025 – 2026**

The government has issued their local government finance policy statement, which sets out government proposals for 2025 to 2026, alongside longer-term plans for funding reform.

It has been confirmed within the statement that, 'There are no council tax referendum principles for mayoral combined authorities or town and parish councils' for the upcoming financial year. This means that there is, again, no centrally imposed cap on the amount by which local council precepts in England may rise.

Read the full finance policy statement: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/mrxxbv7b">https://tinyurl.com/mrxxbv7b</a>

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## NALC anti-terror checklist and Martyn's Law

NALC have published an anti-terror checklist developed by the Martyn's Law Steering Group. The checklist outlines actions that parish and town councils of all sizes can take to enhance their preparedness for local terrorism risks.

NALC login required: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/ye22vx32">https://tinyurl.com/ye22vx32</a>

#### **BRAMM Autumn Newsletter**

The British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) has issued its autumn newsletter. In the newsletter you can read about the winners of the Cemetery of the Year Awards 2024; benefits of joining the BRAMM scheme; and more.

Read it here: https://tinyurl.com/2hm4mz7b

### **NALC National Network: Young councillors**

NALC national network for young councillors met on 3 December 2024 to consider ways to enhance political participation among young people and share experiences as councillors.

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The toolkit development section of the meeting focused on equipping new young councillors with resources to navigate challenges, understand council finances, and handle issues like online abuse. In the open forum, members brainstormed themes for 2025, including broadband projects, expanding network membership, and promoting young councillor participation through blogs, newsletters, and county associations.

Find out more: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/4d22vhds">https://tinyurl.com/4d22vhds</a>

#### **Procurement Act 2023 Commencement Date**

The Cabinet Office has announced that the Procurement Act 2023 will now commence on 24 February 2025 – a delay of four months from the original go-live date of 28 October 2024 to allow time for a new National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) to be produced.

Publication of guidance will continue as planned and all currently published guidance remains valid.

You can access the official Procurement Act 2023 Guidance documents here: https://tinyurl.com/576sfsa5

### **NALC** meets with the Unity Trust Bank

NALC head of policy and communications, Justin Griggs, and policy manager, Chris Borg, met with specialist relationship manager Sarah Johnson and deposits director Leanna McEwan of the Unity Trust Bank (a sponsor of our Star Council Awards) on 4 December 2024. We discussed and reviewed how we've worked together this year since the establishment of the Unity Trust Bank specialist parish and town council banking team and exploring working more closely in the future. The Unity Trust Bank is developing a tailored banking solution for parish and town councils, crafted by people with direct knowledge of parish, town and community councils. It presents a huge step towards resolving some of the sector's more intractable banking issues. And don't forget we also have a dedicated webpage on banking on our new website: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/584ssweu">https://tinyurl.com/584ssweu</a>



COUNCIL NEWS DECEMBER 2024

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### Is Working from Home to become an Automatic Entitlement?

Home working and hybrid working (office and home) are possibly more common within the Town and Parish Council sector than any other area of employment in the U.K. Consequently, the proposal in the Government's manifesto that home working would become an automatic entitlement was seen as having a significant impact on how Council's manage their workforce.

This isn't new, since April all Employees have been able to make two home working requests per annum, along with changes to their working hours, but there was no automatic entitlement. Employees have to make a request to change their working arrangements. Following a period of consultation the Council could reject the request for one or more of eight statutory reasons. This includes any additional costs, inability to meet the needs of the Council, or problems reorganizing work or recruiting replacement staff. The expectation of the new Employment Rights Bill was that it would remove these reasons and make home working an automatic entitlement.

However, the Bill appears to have watered this down. Councils will still be able to reject a request for one or more of the current statutory reasons but will need to explain in detail why they have rejected it. For example, refusal due to additional cost will require a detailed explanation of the finances and costs involved and demonstrate that these would have been unreasonable and damaging to the Council.

# Dismissal for Misconduct must always be conducted following a formal disciplinary hearing – Correct? Well not always.

When an employment relationship is so fundamentally damaged, dismissal without any form of disciplinary action can happen, but it is rare and not straight forward. In Alexis v Westminster Drug Project, the Claimant's role was restructured, resulting in three posts being replaced by two new ones. All three post-holders were to apply for the two new jobs and had to undergo a competitive interview process. The Claimant was unsuccessful in her interview. She had dyslexia and she raised a grievance about the interview process saying that she should have been provided with the questions 24 hours in advance. Both her grievance and appeal failed.

In response she wrote numerous emails to the decision maker and the chairman of the Project. She was called to a meeting to discuss whether her continued employment was tenable. The decision maker decided that the relationship had irretrievably broken down. He dismissed her with notice for 'some other substantial reason'. The Claimant brought a claim of unfair dismissal.

The Employment Tribunal dismissed her claim. The Claimant appealed, contending that the Tribunal had not given sufficient consideration to her length of service or alternatives to dismissal. However this also failed. The Employment Appeal Tribunal held that the Respondent had reasonable grounds for concluding that the relationship between the Claimant and the Respondent had irretrievably broken down. Once trust and confidence had irretrievably broken down, the only option was dismissal and the Respondent was not required to consider alternatives.

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A similar result occurred in Gallacher v Abellio Scotrail. The Claimant was a senior manager in the Respondent's business. Her relationship with her line manager deteriorated and her manager decided to dismiss her at an appraisal meeting with no procedure, forewarning or right of appeal.

The tribunal found the dismissal to be fair. The decision to dismiss without any procedure being within the bank of reasonable responses in these particular circumstances, even holding that a procedure would have made the situation worse.

The Employment Appeal Court declined to overturn the tribunal's decision. There may be cases, albeit rare, where procedures may be dispensed with because they are reasonably considered by the Employer to be futile in the circumstances. The Tribunal found that on both sides the working relationship had broken down. There is no rule of law that the absence of any procedure renders a dismissal unfair, all the circumstances of the case have to be taken into account. But the EAT noted that:

Dismissals without following any procedures will always be subject to extra caution on the part of the Tribunal before being considered to fall within the bank of reasonable responses."

It has to be noted that these cases are rare, and Councils should always attempt to follow a procedure, such as the ACAS Guidelines when considering dismissal. In addition Councils need to take legal advice before taking action of this nature. Fortunately many have access to free legal support through their Employer's Liability Insurance legal advice line, details of which are in the policy documents.

#### **Statutory Pay Rates from April 2025**

Minimum Wage from April 2025

Workers aged 21 and over (National Living Wage)	£12.21
Workers aged 18 – 20	£10.00
Workers under 18, Apprentices under 19, or over 19 in first year	£7.55

#### **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 <a href="mailto:p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk">p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk</a>

www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk

#### On the blog: Nip in the Bud

The latest NALC blog by Beth Kerr, educator, consultant, and coach specialising in wellbeing and digital agency for Nip in the Bud, explores practical strategies to help young people navigate the challenges of the digital age.

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Beth highlights the importance of prioritising wellbeing through sleep, hobbies, exercise, and relationships, encouraging young people to reflect on how these elements affect their mood and performance, while simple measures like keeping phones out of bedrooms can enhance sleep quality. She explains how social media exploits adolescents' natural impulsiveness, peer-driven behaviour, and neural flexibility, recommending activities like analysing favourite apps to build self-awareness. Acknowledging the powerful influence of tech companies, the blog advises setting realistic boundaries, such as storing phones in another room at night, and modelling healthy habits to steer young people toward wellbeing goals.

Read the blog (NALC login required): <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yt2v8trr">https://tinyurl.com/yt2v8trr</a>

### Government Pledges to Unleash Biggest Building Boom in England in Half a Century

The government has promised a series of changes to the planning system in England as part of its five new 'milestones' announced on 5 December 2024. These include:

- Reform the planning system so that it is pro-growth and pro-infrastructure
- Publish a new National Planning Policy Framework by the end of 2024 and update all relevant National Policy Statements by next summer
- Modernise local authority planning committees
- Build at least 1.5 million homes in England over the lifetime of parliament
- The government will directly make and 'turbocharge' planning decisions on at least 150 major infrastructure projects
- Strategically join up decisions on housing, business growth and infrastructure at both a national and local level
- New ten-year strategies for housing and infrastructure will be published next spring
- Breaking down barriers and accelerating progress on clean energy projects

More information about the government's 'Plan for Change', including the document itself, can be found here: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/2be3z2rm">https://tinyurl.com/2be3z2rm</a>

## **Government Publishes Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The government has published the revised NPPF. In a press statement published to accompany the document the government said:

Under new planning rules, updated via the National Planning Policy Framework:

Councils will be told to play their part to meet housing need, with new immediate mandatory
housing targets for councils to ramp up housebuilding and deliver growth across the country putting
more money in working people's pockets.

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- Areas with the highest unaffordability for housing and greatest potential for growth will see
  housebuilding targets increase, while stronger action will ensure councils adopt up-to-date local
  plans or develop new plans that work for their communities.
- A new common-sense approach will be introduced to the greenbelt. While remaining committed to a brownfield first approach, the updated NPPF will require councils to review their greenbelt boundaries to meet targets, identifying and prioritising lower quality 'grey belt' land.
- Any development on greenbelt must meet strict requirements, via the new 'golden rules', which require developers to provide the necessary infrastructure for local communities, such as nurseries, GP surgeries and transport, as well as a premium level of social and affordable housing.
- To further tackle the housing crisis, councils and developers will also need to give greater consideration to social rent when building new homes and local leaders have greater powers to build genuinely affordable homes for those who need them most.
- The government has been clear that it supports builders not blockers, as it makes the necessary decisions to deliver for working people across the country.'

The government consulted on the revised NPPF over the summer, receiving 10,000 responses, including from SLCC and many local councils.

The NPPF is the key planning document in England as its sets out the government's planning policies for the country and how these are expected to be applied.

More information, including a copy of the NPPF, can be found here: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework</a>

SLCC intends to produce a more detailed briefing on the new NPPF and its implications for local councils shortly.

## **NALC blog: Parish Domain Helper Service**

This week's blog by Sandra Lowe, engagement lead for the Parish Council Domains Helper Service, highlights the Cabinet Office's efforts to support councils transitioning to .gov.uk domains. With 85% of available funding already allocated, this initiative offers a £100 + VAT discount for domain registration through Approved Registrars, covering up to 1,000 councils on a first-come, first-served basis. Sandra emphasises the importance of budgeting for associated costs, such as email, website services, and subscriptions, which the funding does not fully cover. Councils are encouraged to act promptly, as funding is available only until March 2025! The blog also reflects on the joint webinar we hosted with Parish Domains Helper Service on 9 December. Presented by Sandra and Tim Willott, the webinar provided an overview of what a domain name is, the benefits of moving to a .gov.uk domain and the risks of using an alternative, how to get a domain name, and how to make the most of it. If you missed it a recording of the webinar is available. Read the blog to learn more about this funding opportunity and how to get involved (NALC login required): <a href="https://tinyurl.com/3p8vwved">https://tinyurl.com/3p8vwved</a>



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# Parish news from the rest of the country: Easton Parish Council (Norfolk) considers 230pc tax hike for villagers

Villagers are facing a 230pc tax hike after their local council squandered its funds on an ill-fated community centre project. Easton Parish Council is considering the eye-watering increase to keep services ticking over as it struggles to make ends meet.

The authority has found itself in financial peril due to spiralling costs related to a new village hall which remains thousands of pounds short of its required budget.

Councillors are now turning to the taxpayer for a lifeline and have revealed a hike of roughly 230pc would be necessary to enable it to balance the books.

#### Read the full story (Eastern Daily Press):

https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/24771996.easton-parish-council-considers-230pc-tax-hike-villagers/

### Mablethorpe & Sutton Town Council raise money for the White Ribbon Campaign

At the meeting of the Town Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> December, standing orders were suspended to allow a change to adopted dress code.

Elected Members and members of staff attended the meeting in Christmas attire to raise awareness and funds for the White Ribbon Campaign (<a href="https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/white-ribbon-day">https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/white-ribbon-day</a>).

£170 was raised by way of Cllr and staff donations which included an additional £20 contribution by the Mayor - a 'prize' awarded to Cllr J Rastall for the best Christmas outfit, judged by members of the public. The Mayor has given an additional £30 to make the donation up to £200.





13th December 2024



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## A touch of Christmas around our parishes

