10th January 2025



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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
- 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 www.lalc.co.uk/training-2-1.

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

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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).

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
Hundleby Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	No closing date
<u>Caistor Town Council</u>	Grounds	No closing date
	Maintenance/Handyperson	
Allington Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	23 rd December 2024
Fenton and Torksey Lock Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	5 th January 2025
North Thoresby, Grainsby & Waithe Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	28 th February 2025
Coningsby Parish Council	Admin Assistant	10 th January 2025
Great and Little Carlton Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	No closing date
Carlton Scroop and Normanton on Cliffe Parish	Clerk/RFO	No closing date
Council		
<u>Leadenham Parish Council</u>	Clerk/RFO	28 th February 2025
Fiskerton Parish Council	Clerk/RFO	14 th February 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.

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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 enquiries@lalc.co.uk. You will be invoiced for this service.

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): https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news
To see the latest SLCC news (No SLCC login required): https://www.slcc.co.uk/news-publications/

New LALC training: National Planning Policy Framework update

The government published the new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024. This is at the heart of the government's 'blitz' of planning reforms, especially as the NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Andrew Towlerton of Andrew Towlerton Associates, will be delivering a webinar (via Zoom) outlining the key aspects of the government reforms contained in the NPPF and more generally that will have implications for local councils and explore how they are likely to work in practice.

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The first session, arranged for 4^{th} February, 18:00 - 19:00 has sold out but due to demand, a second session has now been arranged for 24^{th} February, 18:00 - 19:00.

Cost: Free of charge for ATS members. £15 plus VAT for non-ATS members. *Note that LALC can offer this training free of charge to non-ATS members who commit to join the ATS in April.

New Worknest webinars

Employment Rights Bill: your questions answered

The Employment Rights Bill, described as "the biggest upgrade to workers' rights in a generation", contains a total of 28 employment law reforms. Most of these changes will be introduced through secondary legislation, with several undergoing a consultation process first.

On the **16th January** at 2pm WorkNest will be hosting a free webinar, 'Employment Rights Bill: your questions answered', where they'll answer employers' common queries and help you prepare for change, ensuring your business stays compliant in 2025 and beyond.

Register here: https://tinyurl.com/34fu8d4z

What's in Store for Health and Safety in 2025?

Are you prepared for several key trends and legal shifts that could reshape the health and safety landscape in 2025?

Join WorkNest on the **30th January** at 11am as they explore the key changes and trends that employers and OHS professionals should watch out for in 2025. Plus, they'll update you on the HSE's priorities and review several significant prosecution cases from 2024 to help keep your workplace safe and compliant in the year ahead.

Register here: https://tinyurl.com/56nb4mtk

Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs

Dear Town and Parish Clerks

Firstly, may I wish you all a Happy and prosperous 2025.

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As part of our work across Lincolnshire to enhance the support for our Armed Forces Communities, we are working in collaboration with SSAFA Lincolnshire to map the many armed forces and veterans breakfast clubs here in Lincolnshire.

We know that there are many here, some are stand alone, some in conjunction with military charities and others are connected to the National Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs.

I would like to ask if you are aware of any clubs in your area, I am looking for the following information:

- Name of club
- Venue and address
- Meeting times (if known)
- Contact details
- Phone number
- Email address
- Webpage

Thank you for your assistance in undertaking this work, and if possible please can I have your response by the end of January 2025

Kind Regards Paul





Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Officer

Tel: +441529404464 | Mob: +447356175328 Email: Paul_Drury@n-kesteven.gov.uk www.n-kesteven.gov.uk Kesteven Street, Sleaford, NG34 7EF







Local Audit Reform: a Strategy for Overhauling the Local Audit System in England

As part of its devolution plan, the government is looking to transform the local audit system, 'to give greater clarity on the purpose of audit and accounts, and ensure they take centre stage in local scrutiny'. In-line with Sir Tony Redmond's recommendations, the government will legislate to radically simplify the system, bringing as many audit functions as possible into one body (a new Local Audit Office), and is now engaging with the sector on how to do this, subject to legislation.

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You can access the consultation here: https://tinyurl.com/4xfewdtd

The Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon OBE MP, has written a letter to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Association of Drainage Authorities, setting out the government's strategy for overhauling local audit in England, including arrangements which affect local councils and others within the scope of Limited Assurance Review for Smaller Authorities. As a reminder, for the purposes of audit, a smaller authority is defined in the 2014 Local Audit and Accountability Act as an authority in which both gross annual income and gross expenditure is below a statutory threshold of £6.5 million over a 3-year period.

Read the letter: https://tinyurl.com/yc8ea9a2

The consultation focuses predominantly on principal authorities, but draft proposals for changes to the parish, i.e. smaller authorities' regime are made. We hope that our member councils and parish meetings will be able to respond to this consultation. To assist you to do so, please see below a resume of the aspects that specifically concern parishes (but do check all questions as there may be some other questions that your council/parish meeting wishes to respond to):

- Q1 the creation of a new Local Audit Office (LAO)
- Q3 should responsibility for the appointment of an external auditor for parishes be transferred from the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments to the new LAO?
- Q28 Do you agree that the smaller authorities' thresholds should be increased, ie £25,000 and £200,000?
- Q29 Do you agree that the local audit threshold of £25,000 should be increased, broadly in line with inflation?
- Q30 Are there other changes that would improve the accounting and limited assurance regime for smaller authorities?

At point 121 it is stated that in a review of other aspects of the audit regime for smaller bodies, there will be consideration of whether to simplify the exemptions regime for parish meetings, to require electronic submission of AGARs. Also, whether to require internal audit reports to be considered by the full council of a smaller body. There will also be consideration of the effective operation of the legal right of local electors to inspect and object to accounts and the coverage of the Transparency Code. Councils are encouraged to add their views on these aspects to their consultation response.

The consultation will last for six weeks from **Wednesday 18 December 2024**, to **Wednesday 29 January 2025**. LALC and NALC will also be responding.

LCC School Admissions consultations

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

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Lincoln Castle Academy:

https://lincolncastle.org.uk/news/lincoln-castle-academy-admissions-consultation-now-live/

Lincoln Westgate Academy: https://www.westgateacademy.co.uk/page/?title=Admission+Consultation&pid=87

Gainsborough Parish Church of England Primary School:

https://www.parishchurch.lincs.sch.uk/admissions/

Great Gonerby St Sebastian's Church of England Primary School:

https://www.st-sebastianscofeprimaryschool.co.uk/admissions/

The consultation period runs from 20 December 2024 to 31 January 2025.



East Midlands Britain In Bloom Competition

The Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom campaign is one of the largest horticultural campaigns in Europe, involving over three thousand communities across the United Kingdom each year.

"East Midlands in Bloom" is one of 15 regions/nations that are part of the national RHS "Britain in Bloom" campaign. Participating communities are asked to focus their initiatives around RHS Britain in Bloom's three core pillars of:

- A Horticultural Achievement
- **B** Environmental Responsibility
- C Community Participation.

Participants are encouraged to promote these aspects throughout the year, culminating in the regional judging period which is always the first 2 weeks in July. The Judging is undertaken using Standard Marking Sheets except for Urban communities and BIDS who have slightly modified marking sheets.

This ensures consistency between entrants. The latest copies are available to download from our website. This should encourage Communities to create lasting improvements to the local environment for the benefit of those that live, work and visit there – today and in the future.

Communities can be involved for as long as they like.

Some of the benefits of Bloom Communities include:

- Cleaner and greener surroundings
- Creating a sense of community through improvement of public spaces and positive interaction between community members
- An increase in civic pride and sense of community empowerment by engaging people in the improvement of their own community

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- Safer environments for the enjoyment of locals
- Long term improvement for the environment by addressing issues such as sustainability, resource management, conservation, litter, graffiti, dog fouling etc.
- Reduction of anti-social behaviour
- Positive effect on the local economy such as increased commercial enterprise and tourism
- Regeneration of run down and/or disadvantaged areas.

For more information visit our website https://emib.org.uk/ contact: secretary@emib.org.uk/

Consultation on Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation Reforms

The government is seeking views on a range of proposals aimed at implementing technical reforms to make the compulsory purchase process quicker, reduce process costs, and ensure compensation rules are fairer.

The government wants to 'maximise the opportunities for provision of vital development facilitating much-needed benefits in the public interest through delivery of housing, infrastructure, amenity, and transport improvements where the use of compulsory purchase powers is facilitating land assembly for those purposes.' As part of this it proposes to make better use of underutilised land across the country by expanding the list of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers, and 'the associated acquiring authorities, in Schedule 2A to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 where directions to remove hope value may be sought to include the CPO power under section 125 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

Section 125 allows CPOs to be made on behalf of town, parish and community councils by local authorities and the government has stated that it is aware that there is an appetite amongst some of these councils for a more proactive approach on using CPOs on their behalf. The government is therefore proposing that 'CPOs made under section 125 of the Local Government Act 1972 on behalf of town and community councils should have the ability for directions to be included to remove hope value where the underlying schemes are facilitating affordable or social housing.'

Read the background information: https://tinyurl.com/4r4ktse4

Respond to the consultation: https://tinyurl.com/zwprj3pz

Read Matthew Pennycook's, Minister of State for Housing and Planning Labour, written statement on

compulsory purchase reforms: https://tinyurl.com/2vz8hssj

The consultation closes on 13 February 2025.

NALC calls for stronger neighbourhood governance in response to English Devolution White Paper

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NALC welcomed the government's English Devolution White Paper published on 16 December 2024, and our immediate response emphasised the importance of nurturing neighbourhood governance to ensure its success. Parish and town councils have already demonstrated their ability to deliver on government priorities at the local level. With the devolution framework and local government reorganisation, there is an opportunity for them to achieve even more. During ongoing discussions about the white paper and its implications, we will advocate for several critical measures to enhance neighbourhood governance, including investment in neighbourhood governance, simplifying processes to set up parish and town councils, promoting civility and respect, allowing hybrid council meetings where local communities see fit, fairer access to funding and a tailored audit framework. It was good to see the role of parish and town councils in devolution featured in the debate in parliament following the statement by the minister for local government and English devolution, Jim McMahon MP. Responding to questions from MPs, he said, "At a neighbourhood level, we see parish and town councils playing a critical role in devolution, and we look forward to further discussions with the sector". Yesterday, we received the government's consultation on strengthening the standards regime as set out in the white paper and will brief more fully in the new year.

Rural Funding Digest – Current funding opportunities

A comprehensive list of **over 60** grant funding opportunities which may be relevant to your council or to community organisations in your parish, can be viewed here: https://rsnonline.org.uk/rural-funding-digest-january-2025

Check out the complete list, as there may be something that is relevant to you.

NALC supports the government's move to exempt parish and town councils from council tax referendum principles

We're pleased with the government's decision to exempt parish and town councils from council tax referendum principles for 2025/26.

This positive step follows the publication of the government's provisional local government finance settlement, which outlines its proposals for the upcoming financial year. We will submit a formal response to the consultation in the new year.

The government's statement on the provisional settlement confirms its intention that "there are no council tax referendum principles for mayoral combined authorities or parish and town councils" for 2025/26. We are optimistic and expect the government to uphold this commitment in the final settlement.

We are dedicated to supporting parish and town councils in their efforts to continue delivering essential services and improving communities without unnecessary financial constraints.



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NALC backs the government's remote meeting proposals

NALC supported the government's recent proposals to reintroduce remote meetings for parish and town councils, one of the policy objectives we have lobbied for. Responding to a consultation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), we emphasised that parish and town councils should be free to decide how and when to hold their meetings. This flexibility will empower parish and town councils to respond quicker and effectively to their communities' needs through in-person, remote, or hybrid formats. However, we strongly opposed the government's proposal to introduce proxy voting at council meetings. Echoing concerns raised by other stakeholders, we warned proxy voting could undermine democratic accountability, weaken deliberative decision making and create procedural and ethical challenges, particularly for larger councils with party-political dynamics.

Boston Borough Council joins WhatsApp Channels

Community news at your fingertips! Our new WhatsApp Channel is live. Follow us for updates on events, services, and more. Stay informed, stay connected! https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Vb0VH3xFnSzIEsOdGr3X

Don't miss The Big Lunch webinar for councils

Join the Eden Project, the organisation behind The Big Lunch campaign, for a lunchtime webinar on Thursday 30 January at 12pm to explore how The Big Lunch can help councils of all levels support safer, healthier and more cohesive communities.

Over 10 million people participated in 2024, with 95% reporting a positive impact on their community, and 71% saying it helped reduce loneliness (7.1m people).

The Big Lunch 2025 will take place on 7 – 8 May and can also complement VE Day 80 activities in May. As always, the key is communities coming together and local councils are being asked to promote or organise events to suit your annual programme.

Hosted by Tracey Robbins, Head of Communities, and including examples of best practice from guest speakers, the webinar will share impact insights, practical tips, and free resources to support your town or parish to get involved.

Sign up now: https://events.more-human.co.uk/event/the-big-lunch-building-stronger-communities-together-with-eden-project-communities-events

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Find us on **(7)** X @LincsALC & www.lalc.co.uk

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SLCC Welcomes English Devolution White Paper but Calls for More Clarity for Local Councils

SLCC has welcomed the publication of the English Devolution White Paper – Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth, which was presented to Parliament on Monday 16 December 2024. This White Paper is designed to embed devolution into the country's constitution. It will, in the government's own words, achieve 'growth, more joined-up delivery of public services, and politics being done with communities, not to them.'

SLCC will be consulting with its partners in the sector and responding to government.

Read the full article (no login required): https://tinyurl.com/5n6wn4pt

Find out more about the white paper: https://tinyurl.com/ytzxne5s and https://tinyurl.com/fu6cvdck

Clearing Out After Christmas - Waste Disposal

Having a clear out this Christmas?

Make sure you know who is collecting and disposing of waste, or you could receive a fine or face prosecution.

Check that a waste carrier is registered on the Environment Agency's website: https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register



@LincsALC & www.lalc.co.uk

e-news update

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VE Day 80th Anniversary – 8th May 2025

The Guide To Taking Part in VE Day 80, along with all the other aspects we are encouraging Town and Parish Councils to take part in, can be viewed and downloaded from the official VE Day website - www.VEday80.org.uk. We do hope therefore that your Council will take part in one or more of the activities planned, using the occasion to pay tribute to those that gave so much from within your local community, to ensure the freedom we all enjoy today.

Participating Councils and organisations are being asked to register their involvement as soon as possible by completing the Registration Form on the VE Day 80 website. However, if your Council has already received this information and you have confirmed your involvement, please ignore this email.



Bruno Peek

Bruno Peek CVO OBE OPR Pageantmaster VE Day 80 8th May 2025 Telephone: + 44 (0) 7737 262 913

Email: brunopeek@mac.com

www.VEday80.org.uk



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NALC blog: RECOUP

RECOUP, highlights the importance of managing natural resources to ensure a sustainable future. Overconsumption depletes these resources and drives climate change and habitat loss, impacting biodiversity and humanity's well-being. The blog emphasises that adopting a "buy less" mindset and extending the life of our purchases can make a significant difference in combating these challenges. For instance, reusing, repairing, and sharing items like clothing can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve resources. RECOUP, a charity specialising in plastic resource efficiency and recycling, supports communities with actionable environmental projects. One such initiative is their coat exchange with East Hunsbury Parish Council, which promotes sustainable clothing practices. They invite town and parish councils to collaborate on projects like community orchards, toy libraries, and clothing exchanges, offering toolkits and funding support to make these initiatives a reality.

Read the blog (NALC login required): https://tinyurl.com/3b5hm7th

SLCC response to 'Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority Meetings' Consultation

SLCC agree with the broad principle of granting local authorities powers to allow remote attendance at formal meetings

SLCC do not think it would be helpful to introduce proxy voting. This would reduce openness and transparency in decision-making.

Read the full response (no login required): https://tinyurl.com/5du52n9s

Closure of Community Ownership Fund

The government has announced that it has taken the difficult decision to close the Community Ownership Fund (COF) and that there will be no further application windows on this programme.

Whereas the government has closed this fund, it 'remains committed to the communities' sector and community empowerment' and 'will deliver on its manifesto commitment to replace the community "Right to Bid" with a strengthened "Right to Buy" Assets of Community Value, creating a more robust pathway to community asset ownership.' It will also 'seek to support high streets by strengthening Business Improvement Districts which have helped to improve town and city centres across the United Kingdom for 20 years, while ensuring they operate to high standards and are accountable to their communities.'

Read the full announcement: https://tinyurl.com/2xtxe3h4

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SLCC is Launching a New Learning Management System (LMS)

During 2025, SLCC will be introducing a brand-new LMS! This upgraded system will offer anyone completing an introductory course or qualification through SLCC a range of added benefits, including:

- A more user-friendly and intuitive interface with all the introductory/entry level courses and qualifications hosted on the same platform
- Enhanced features to track your progress and achievements
- Access to new learning resources and tools to support your development

What Does This Mean for Introductory/Entry Level Courses?

If you're planning to register for the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA), Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration (FILCA), Principles of Internal Auditing Local Councils (PIALC) or Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) you can still do this but you will need to complete your induction/entry level course by 31 December 2025.

We're excited to bring you this improved learning experience and will share more details about the new LMS soon. If you have any questions or need further clarification, feel free to contact us: https://www.slcc.co.uk/contact

Asda Foundation Funding – Outdoor Community Spaces Fund

Asda Boston has announced news of its first grant round of 2025 from Asda Foundation — it will be called Outdoor Community Spaces Fund. Asda Foundation recognises the importance of having safe and accessible outdoor spaces in communities across the UK, so this year it will be providing up to £500,000 of grant funding to help grassroots groups improve or transform their local outdoor community spaces. Whether it's cleaning up a green space, delivering collaborative growing projects or transforming an unused area for local people to use, the Outdoor Community Spaces Fund can be used to create or enhance an outdoor space near you.

This grant is for projects which meet at least one of the following aims:

- Transform an outdoor area, creating greener and more engaging community spaces.
- Create or enhance community growing projects.
- Enable community clean ups (grants for community clean ups only will be capped at £500).

As an independent charitable foundation funded by Asda, the Asda Foundation supports small, grassroots groups at the heart of communities. Their aim is to empower local groups with the funding they need, exactly where and when they need it. They are encouraging applications that increase access to outdoor spaces, bring communities together, make a lasting and demonstrable difference to an outdoor space, and enable groups to undertake a project that will truly enhance a local space.

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The grant window opens at noon on Tuesday 14th January 2025 and applications will be applied for via the Asda Foundation website, https://asdafoundation.org/our-grants/ of £500, £1,000, £1,500, £2,000, £2,500 or £3,000 can be applied for. Groups must submit their application through the website's grant management system by no later than **Tuesday 11th February 2025**. However, interest in Asda Foundation funding is always high and the grant round will close early if applications exceed the total funding allocated for this grant round. To assist groups with the process, supporting documents will be available from the Asda Foundation website from noon on Thursday 9th January. Any interested not-for-profit groups will be able to access the full Outdoor Community Spaces Fund criteria, a 'How To Apply' guide and eligibility checker. For further information email Stephen Bromby on community_boston@asda.uk.

Are you a doorbell detective?

A brand-new BBC TV show, presented by Matt Allwright, wants to hear from Neighbourhood Watch members...

- Have you used your Smart Video Doorbell to investigate a real-life mystery on your doorstep or in your neighbourhood?
- Or are you part of a community committed to cracking crime by sharing your doorbell camera footage with neighbours or the police to solve wrongdoing?
- Have your home surveillance cameras captured shocking or mysterious footage that is worth revealing to the nation?

If you answered YES to any of the above, then the programme makers at Purple Productions would like your clips and your stories. Whether it's doorstep scammers, pet thieves, fly tipping, car theft, burglars or vandals - get in touch!

Matt also wants to recruit his own team of Doorbell Detectives to take part in tips and tricks to help us all make our neighbourhoods safer. If that sounds like you, please also get in touch.

Please email: <u>doorbelldetectives@purpleproductions.co.uk</u>.

NALC calls on parish and town councils to support COVID-19 Day of Reflection 2025

The secretary of state for culture, media and sport, Lisa Nandy MP, has announced a UK-wide COVID-19 Day of Reflection on 9 March 2025. This event will commemorate the fifth anniversary of the pandemic, providing a solemn opportunity for communities to reflect on the lives lost and the impact of the global crisis.

In a letter addressed to our chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, Lisa Nandy MP encouraged parish and town councils to participate actively in the observance. She highlighted the pivotal role of local government in fostering

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community engagement, urging councils to promote the event, support community-led initiatives, and consider hosting their public events.

Read the full blog: https://tinyurl.com/rhtdnuk8

https://dayofreflection.campaign.gov.uk/

NALC warns of unintended consequences for smaller authorities of the proposed new national audit body

The English Devolution White Paper set out the government's vision for radically simplifying the local audit system, including their intention to set up a new body for local audit. It indicated the government would engage with key stakeholders on a draft strategy, on which we'll give feedback. That strategy has now been published for consultation until 29 January 2025.

Whilst the proposals mainly cover audits for principal authorities, they may have implications for the hugely different limited assurance regime for smaller authorities, currently overseen by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA), which we helped set up in 2025 along with the Association of Drainage Authorities and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

We have been calling for an increase in the £25,000 and £6.5 million threshold, which the government is considering. We are less sure of the extension over time of any new national audit body to cover around 8,000 smaller authorities as it might not be able to focus on their unique needs. There may be a case for the body that oversees limited assurance, SAAA, to have a relationship with the new body. Still, we would support the SAAA's continuation of its ambitious plans to further support transparency and governance in the sector.

Read the full blog: https://tinyurl.com/msdhajm9

NALC welcomes the Law Commission's burial and cremation proposals

We welcome the Law Commission's proposals to provide modern, certain and consistent regulation across different funerary methods.

Responding to the Law Commission's burial and cremation consultation, we stated that seventy-five years must elapse between the last burial in a grave, the burial rights in that grave being extinguished, and the grave being reused.

10th January 2025



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We also called for regulation of any land where the primary purpose has been burial, strongly agreed that every burial ground owner should be required to maintain their burial ground in good order and called for a consistent system of burial registration.

However, we disagreed with the proposals to remove the restriction on constructing a crematorium on the consecrated part of a local authority burial ground, as we believe that burial grounds should be left alone in this instance.

NALC consultation response (login required): https://tinyurl.com/yc7p78mi

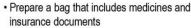
Flood warnings - know what to do?





FLOOD ALERT





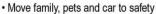




FLOOD WARNING



- Turn off gas, water and electricity
- · Move things upstairs or to safety





SEVERE FLOOD SURVIVE WARNING

- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- · Follow advice from emergency services
- · Keep yourself and your family safe



floodsdestroy.campaign.gov.uk

Floodline on 0345 988 1188

#PrepareActSurvive

NALC blog: National Youth Agency

This week's blog, by Leigh Middleton OBE, chief executive of the National Youth Agency, explores how parish and town councils can play a vital role in supporting young people's wellbeing. Young people face numerous challenges, including mental health issues, online harm, and a lack of adequate services. Many have expressed a desire for youth activities that provide fun and a sense of belonging. With local authority budgets facing cuts of £1.1 billion since 2010, the youth sector has struggled to meet these needs, leaving the voluntary sector to fill the gap. The blog highlights the importance of parish and town councils, which are well-positioned to address these challenges by engaging with local youth services.

Read the blog (NALC login required): https://tinyurl.com/4hvahcev

10th January 2025



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Changes to the Presentation of the Adult Social Care Precept on Bills and Other Updates on Council Tax

The government has published a letter providing an update on regulations changing how the adult social care precept is presented on bills. The Council Tax (Demand Notices and Prescribed Classes of Dwellings)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2025 'remove the requirement for billing authorities to include bespoke information on adult social care precept on council tax demand notices from 2025 to 2026'. They also include an amendment that clarifies 'the administrative operations of the exceptions to the empty and second homes council tax premiums which may apply to dwellings marketed for sale or let.'

The letter also reminds councils of their discretionary powers within the Homes for Ukraine scheme and provides an update on the Enforcement Conduct Board's accreditation scheme.

Read the full letter: https://tinyurl.com/ycky3b9w

NALC's strategic objective to raise the sector's profile

One of NALC's strategic objectives is to raise the sector's profile and our views on national policy in print, broadcast and social media. The Guardian covered a piece from Professor Vernon Bognador calling for parish and town councils to "be strengthened and established in areas that don't have them so that local people do not feel disfranchised." The national and local government trade press also covered our call for hybrid meetings to be allowed, our concerns that the recent increases in employers national insurance contributions will place a burden on parish and town councils and their communities, and that the audit consultation, part of the devolution whitepaper package could have unforeseen consequences for our sector's very different external assurance regime. We will continue to push for more coverage of our sector in the media and would encourage you to engage with your local press about your work, too.

Lincs Police Parish Engagement sessions in January CANCELLED

Lincolnshire Police have confirmed that they are currently focussing on a number of key priorities that require significant attention. They want to ensure that when they do meet, they can provide a clear and comprehensive update on the matters that are most relevant.

Therefore, all of the parish council meetings for January have been cancelled.