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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](http://www.lalc.co.uk/contactus)



[enquiries@lalc.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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 [LALC website](#) 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](http://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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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 [enquiries@lalc.co.uk](mailto: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:

[lctownandparishnews@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:lctownandparishnews@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/>

## AI training in conjunction with Breakthrough Communications

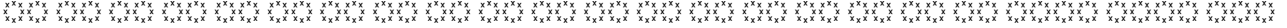
Breakthrough Communications will be delivering three 90-minute (remote) sessions specifically for LALC members. Each session costs £35 – attend all three sessions and you will only pay for two.

Part 1 - An Introduction to AI in Local Councils: 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 14:00 – 15:30

Part 2 - Using AI for Internal Council Communications: 24<sup>th</sup> June, 14:00 – 15:30

## Part 3 - Using AI to boost Community Engagement: 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 14:00 – 15:30

Places are bookable via the LALC portal (login required).



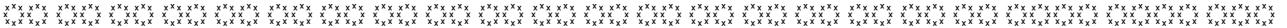
## **NEW Date: Worknest Health & Safety/Risk Assessment training**

When: 29<sup>th</sup> May, 9:30 – 15:30

Where: Great Gonerby Memorial Hall, Great Gonerby, Grantham, NG31 8NB

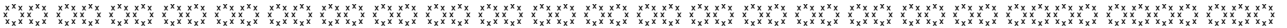
Following the successful event held last year in Kirton-in-Lindsey, our H&S partners, Worknest are back to deliver on 'Health & Safety Awareness for Councils', followed in the afternoon by practical Health & Safety Awareness workshops which will allow delegates to produce their own Risk Assessments with guidance from Worknest.

This is non-core training and costs £78 per person plus VAT (including refreshments and buffet lunch). Book via the portal in the usual way (login required).



## **Training cancelled**

Due to low numbers booked, the End of Year & Audit in-person training scheduled for North Kyme on 25<sup>th</sup> March has been cancelled. Attendees have either been moved to the Zoom session on 12<sup>th</sup> March or offered one of the sessions being run by Parkinson Partnership.



## **LALC Summer Conference - 16 July 2025**

This year's conference will take place at the Epic Centre at Lincolnshire Showground.

Come along for trade stands; Talking Tables sessions; workshops and a chance to network with other councils.

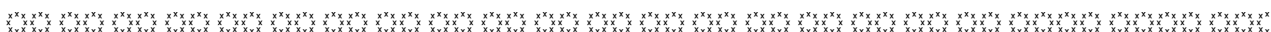
Confirmed so far (\* Indicates confirmed for Talking Tables):

- LALC Webmaster
- Clear Councils insurance \*
- Kompan
- Worknest \*
- Unity Trust \*
- Hinkley & Rugby Building Society \*
- CCLA \*
- LCC Highways

- CDS (Cemetery Design Services) Group
- Breakthrough Communications \*
- Breakthrough Communications workshop on “Managing backlash or resistance during public consultations/engagement”.

We also hope to have the new Greater Lincolnshire mayor or representative, plus representatives from the principal authorities in attendance.

The full schedule will be announced in due course. Bookings should be open soon. Cost will be £45 per head plus VAT.



## Lincolnshire Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee Report: Impacts of Storms Babet and Henk in 2023-24

At its latest meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025 the committee started its final report on this issue thanking everyone for the response to the Storms Babet and Henk and adopted the full report with the following recommendations (summarised here). The full report can be found on the Lincolnshire County Council website:

<https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s66320/05A%20Storms%20Babet%20and%20Henk%20Report.pdf>

“We would like to record our thanks to all the staff from all the flood risk organisations: Lincolnshire County Council, including Fire and Rescue, District Councils, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, and Internal Drainage Boards, who responded to Storms Babet and Henk. Whether it was working in pumping stations or co-ordinating responses, many staff from these organisations were working long hours without breaks in response to Storms Babet and Henk. People on the front line were often working in the dark, in very pressured circumstances. These people have done an extraordinary job. We also heard evidence of practical partnership working in the face of the challenges.

Similarly, we would like to thank volunteers in local communities, many of whom showed a high degree of resilience, whether they were sourcing and distributing sandbags, or caring for vulnerable residents.”

### Summary of Recommendations

1. Clearer contact points and procedures for the public to contact.
2. Every community including Town and Parish Councils should adopt an Emergency Plan supported by the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum and self-help should be encouraged to mitigate the effects of storms/flood events.
3. Funding for the Environment Agency is not sufficient, and Government should change the cost-benefit measures to take into account loss of agricultural land put more money into flood risk and water management.



What do I need to do?

Fill in the Expression of Interest to take part and you will be contacted between February and April with instructions: <https://tinyurl.com/2svkamef>

You'll be asked to register using the new system and then receive an admin task and a small number of test warnings and alerts (between 1 and 3). You then provide your feedback!

If you have any questions, please contact the team directly on [testfloodwarnings@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:testfloodwarnings@environment-agency.gov.uk)



## COUNCIL NEWS MARCH 2025

The Government's Employment Rights Bill that was published in the Autumn is now going through the Parliamentary process, and a number of changes have been made to planned legislation, which will impact on Town and Parish Councils.

### 1. Contact out of Hours

The initial plans were that Employers would be unable to contact Employees via email, phone or other means outside of working hours. For Town and Parish Councils this would have had a profound effect. Many Councilors who have jobs to attend during the week, conduct their Council administration during the evening or at weekends. Times when the Council's Employees are not working. Had this legislation remained in its initial format, those Councillors would have only been able to communicate with staff when they were at work.

This has now been amended so that Employers, including Councillors, can send emails outside of working hours, but cannot expect a response until the Employee is back at work.

### 2. Statutory Sick Pay at 80% of Normal Pay

Currently Employees are only entitled to Statutory Sick Pay if they earn £123 or more per week, and it is paid at £116 per week.

The Bill proposes that anyone earning below the £123 threshold will be entitled to sick pay based on 80% of their normal rate of pay.

This means that a number of part time Council Employees, who earn below the £123 threshold, will now be able to receive sick pay. It is also worth noting that the Council cannot claim SSP payments back off the Government and have to absorb the cost.

### 3. Miscarriage Bereavement Leave

Currently parents who suffer a miscarriage after week 24 of a pregnancy are entitled to two weeks paid bereavement leave.

This entitlement is to be extended to parents who suffer a miscarriage before week 24. However there is currently no indication of what evidence the parents need to provide of a pregnancy to be able to use this entitlement.

### 4. Zero Hours Contracts

Although somewhat unpopular in recent years, many Councils still use zero hours contracts. Councils do use them, to good effect for Casual Bar Staff/Community Centre Staff, Caretakers and Groundstaff.

Plans to scrap them as part of the Employment Rights Act have changed. Councils will still be able to employ people on a zero hours contract as long as it is “non-exploitative”. This means that shifts cannot be cancelled at short notice. If that does happen the Employee will be entitled to claim payment for the cancelled shift.

Zero hours Employees who work regular hours per week and have a reasonable expectation of working a certain number of hours, will be able to request a change to a Guaranteed Minimum Hours contract. This will ensure that they get regular pay each week, based on the guaranteed minimum, and remove the uncertainty of a zero hours contract. The Guaranteed Minimum Hours contract will require them to do additional hours if needed, which would be paid at the basic hourly rate.

## Statutory Pay Rates from April 2025

### Minimum Wage from April 2025

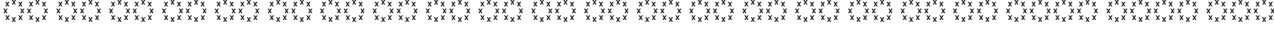
Workers aged 21 and over (National Living Wage)	£12.21
Workers aged 18 – 20	£10.00
Workers under 18, apprentices under 19, or over 19 in first year	£7.55

### 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 [p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk](mailto:p.d.solutions@zen.co.uk)



[www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk](http://www.personneladviceandsolutions.co.uk)



## Employment Allowance

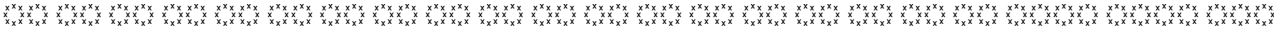
Please note that parish and town councils, as public authorities, are not entitled to claim the Employment Allowance.

Employment Allowance is a National Insurance relief that allows small businesses, charities, and community amateur sports clubs to reduce the employer's NICs that they pay.

When you set up Real Time Information (RTI) software such as basic PAYE Tools, the system asks you if you want to claim Employment Allowance. Public authorities, including parish, town, and community councils, are not entitled to claim Employment Allowance so they must answer 'No'.

We are aware of a few councils who have claimed this or been told by their external payroll provider that they are eligible to claim this and have subsequently had to pay this back to HMRC. Your internal auditor should be checking that you are not claiming Employment Allowance.

See: <https://www.gov.uk/claim-employment-allowance/eligibility>



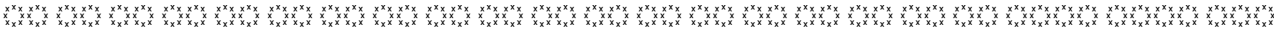
## NALC and London School of Economics emergency planning survey

Promoting the role of parish and town councils in community safety is one of our major campaigns this year, and our community safety webpage provides plenty of information about what they can do. Emergency planning is one of the key roles, and we have collaborated with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) on a joint community resilience survey about parish and town councils' role in preparing for emergencies. The survey is being conducted and administered by a team led by Professor Edward Page of the Department of Government at the LSE. The results will help us make the case for further support for parish and town councils and enhance their role in resilience forums.

Please fill out this short survey (20 questions) and pass it on to colleagues:  
<https://tinyurl.com/2jhmvpvt>

If you have any questions about this research, please email [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk) or [e.c.page@lse.ac.uk](mailto:e.c.page@lse.ac.uk).

NALC Community Safety webpage (no login required): <https://tinyurl.com/ycy3rzsx>



## Central Lincolnshire Authority Wide Design Code – Stage 2 Consultation

Find us on    
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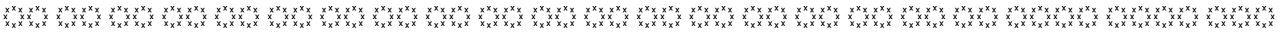
*LALC will provide links but is not responsible for the content of external websites.*

The second stage of consultation on the Central Lincolnshire Authority Wide Design Code has now commenced and will run until 9<sup>th</sup> April.

The Local Plans Team are asking residents, stakeholders and built environment professionals to help develop the Design Code by visiting the consultation webpage: <https://arcg.is/1qLiej1> and then completing the survey.

The survey can be accessed from the webpage or using the following link: <https://arcg.is/0n58C5>

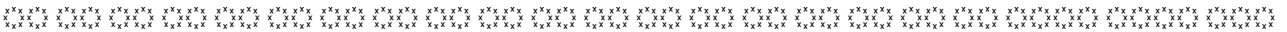
If you have any questions on the Design Code or the consultation, please contact the Local Plans Team at [talkplanning@central-lincs.org.uk](mailto:talkplanning@central-lincs.org.uk).



## NALC achieve Cyber Essentials accreditation for the third consecutive year

This milestone underscores our commitment to maintaining high cybersecurity standards and protecting data across its operations. Cyber Essentials is a government-backed certification that helps organisations guard against the most common cyber threats and demonstrate their dedication to cybersecurity.

Learn about Cyber Essentials and how it can benefit your parish and town councils:  
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberessentials/overview>



## NKDC Suicide Prevention and CALM Kit

Sadly, there is an increase in deaths by suicide and particularly in our younger generation. It is the biggest killer for under 35's – bigger than cancer, drugs or car accidents.

A colleague here at North Kesteven has been involved in the creation of a short suicide prevention campaign film featuring her daughter Evelyn, which is currently being broadcast on TV, in cinemas and across social media platforms.

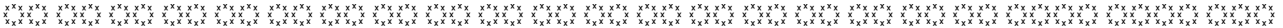
Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) is a charity aimed at suicide prevention and the purpose of the film is to draw attention to the CALM C.A.R.E kit, which is full of practical advice to equip being there for a young person—from introducing the topic of suicide, to keeping them safe in a crisis. The C.A.R.E kit helps you learn how to speak about mental health and suicide, what to do if worried, and where more information and advice can be found:

- **C:** Check In
- **A:** Ask how they are
- **R:** Remain close
- **E:** Expert help

The C.A.R.E kit is aimed at supportive adults. This could be parents or caregivers, grandparents, extended family members, teachers, coaches or professionals – anyone who cares for or who has contact with young people.

This guidance may be something you could share within your parish. Watch the campaign film 'Evelyn': [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZXN\\_PyoMgU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZXN_PyoMgU)

Visit the CALM C.A.R.E. Kit [https://care.thecalmzone.net/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://care.thecalmzone.net/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)



## Worknest Resources

### **Guide to Health, Safety and Fire Changes 2025.**

In this guide, WorkNest explore the key changes employers can expect within the world of health, safety and fire in 2025 – from regulator priorities to key reforms – to help you stay up to speed with evolving requirements and enable you to maintain a safe, compliant workplace in the year ahead.

Read it here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8mx8c4>

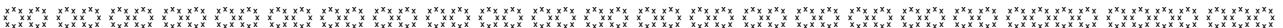
### **Tackling the growing problem of work-related stress**

The HSE's latest health and safety statistics reveal that stress, depression, and anxiety make up nearly half of all work-related ill health cases. Employers must manage mental health with the same diligence as physical health, and a key step is addressing workplace stress. The HSE's Working Minds campaign provides free tools and resources to help employers understand work-related stress, assess risks, and take effective action: <https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/>

### **Recent webinar on Contracts and Handbooks Made Simple - advice for small businesses**

In this webinar, WorkNest's Employment Law experts provided an essential overview of contracts and handbooks, including why every employer needs them, what the law requires, and how to avoid common pitfalls that could leave your business exposed.

Watch here: <https://worknest.com/apps/access-your-webinar-partner/?doc=https://worknest.com/services/contracts-and-handbooks-made-simple-advice-for-small-businesses-on-demand/?v=LALC>



## Upcoming Worknest webinars

### **Managing Sickness Absence - proven strategies to reduce disruption**

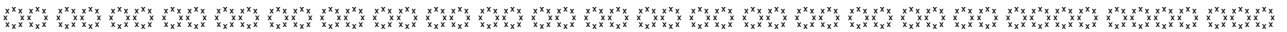
In this live one-hour webinar on the 20th March at 2pm, WorkNest's legal and HR experts will guide you through four common absence scenarios. You'll learn the correct processes to follow, when to involve Occupational Health, and how to fairly dismiss an employee if the situation doesn't improve.

Register: <https://worknest.com/training/managing-sickness-absence-proven-strategies-to-reduce-disruption-partners/?v=LALC>

### Virtual Mock Health & Safety Criminal Trial

Join WorkNest on the 27th March at 9.30am for a FREE Virtual Mock Health & Safety Criminal Trial. This unique virtual event will provide first-hand insight into what happens when a company is charged with a breach of health and safety law and will help you avoid pitfalls that could lead to the prosecution and conviction of your own organisation.

Register: <https://worknest.com/training/virtual-mock-health-and-safety-criminal-trial-partners/?v=LALC>



### National Day of Covid-19 Reflection – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025

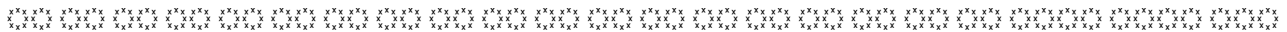
To mark the fifth anniversary of the pandemic, people across the UK are invited to come together to remember and reflect on this unique period of our history as well as their own experiences as part of a UK-wide Day of Reflection.

Sunday March 9, 2025 will enable communities across the country to come together to remember loved ones and reflect on the impact of the pandemic.

The day will be an opportunity for the public to remember and commemorate those who lost their lives during the pandemic, reflect on the sacrifices made and the impact on our daily lives, and pay tribute to the work of health and social care staff, frontline workers, researchers and all those who volunteered and showed acts of kindness during this unprecedented time.

The COVID-19 Day of Reflection is one of the ten recommendations set out by the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration. Members of the public can find more information about the day and resources to help mark the Day of Reflection:

[https://dayofreflection.campaign.gov.uk/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://dayofreflection.campaign.gov.uk/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

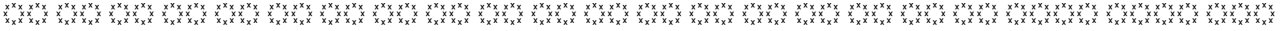


### Latest Neighbourhood Policing newsletters now out

The latest Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) newsletters are now out, to give you an insight into the work they have been doing on your behalf, and what they will be focusing on until the end of March.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) newsletters are accessible in a digital format that can be viewed on laptops, desktops, smartphones, and tablets. They can also be printed for those who don't have online access, or so that they can be shared in community spaces.

Read the latest newsletter for your area here: <https://tinyurl.com/2fd7dsha>



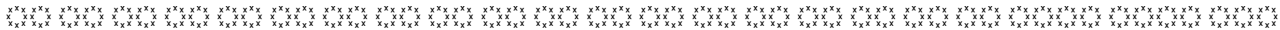
## **NKDC: Empty homes**

Do you have empty homes in your Parish? North Kesteven District Council’s Empty Homes Officer Stewart James can help.

Working with empty property owners he can offer advice and support to get their homes back into use.

If an empty home is causing concern or nuisance to the parish, such as antisocial behaviour, unsightly or overgrown gardens, poor condition or rodent problems, there are a range of actions the Council may be able to take to improve or remedy the problem.

If you would like to discuss an empty home please contact Stewart on 01529 414155 or email [Stewart\\_James@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:Stewart_James@n-kesteven.gov.uk).



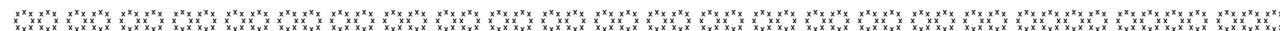
## **Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England Consultation – SLCC Response**

SLCC has submitted its response to the government’s consultation seeking views on introducing measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England and ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension.

SLCC has made it clear that a functioning standards regime, with consistently applied national standards and meaningful sanctions, is required to enforce an effective code of conduct for elected members in English local government.

Read the SLCC response (no login required):

<https://www.slcc.co.uk/site/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SLCC-Standards-Response.pdf>



## **NALC urges the government to implement robust new standards regime**

We have urged the government to implement a robust new standards regime for local government. In our response to the government's consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England, we urged the government to give co-opted members of local standards committees on principal authorities, where they exist, voting rights. Additionally, we called for an

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amendment to the Localism Act 2011 to empower local standards committees with greater authority to sanction members whose conduct falls short of criminal misconduct. We also emphasised the need for increased training for councillors and council staff on the standards framework. Furthermore, we reiterated our call for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to extend its jurisdiction to the parish and town council sector and reaffirmed our support for implementing the key recommendations from the Committee on Standards in Public Life 2019 report on Local Government Ethical Standards.

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## Parish.UK

We are aware that this company is still operating and still contacting local councils and local businesses to advertise in its online directory. Please note that the PARISH.UK Network is a Community Action Initiative and is not in any way associated with HM Government. LALC cannot make any recommendations either way and it is entirely up to local business to determine whether they feel it can provide any advertising benefit.

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## Funding available from The Alpkit Foundation

The Alpkit Foundation supports projects that encourage people to experience the benefits of getting outdoors. They welcome applications from grass roots not for profit organisations, community groups and schools for grants between £50 to £500 to help contribute to project costs for things as:

- Support proactive conservation and environmental projects, e.g. community gardens and allotments or grants to help re-wild woodland and protect our wild places.

There's no limit to the number of times you can apply for an award. They welcome multiple awards over time and each award is assessed on its own merit. You can apply anytime. The Foundation recommends groups apply at least three months before the start of their project.

Contact them on 01773 417007 or [akf@alpkit.com](mailto:akf@alpkit.com)

<https://alpkit.com/pages/foundation>

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## SLCC: Double Boost for Statutory Sick Pay

The government has announced their intention to make more than a million low paid employees better off by increasing their sick pay entitlement. Among them are many clerks who are on contracts that confer statutory sick pay only.

Currently, staff have the first three days of sickness unpaid and have to earn at least £123 per week to have an entitlement to sick pay. Under the government's proposals, this will be paid at the rate of 80% of

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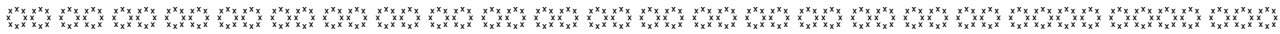
*LALC will provide links but is not responsible for the content of external websites.*

the week’s earnings or £116.75 (the current statutory sick pay rate), whichever is the lower of the two. The £116.75 rate will increase to £118.75 as of this April. The payment will apply from day one of sickness.

This will mean that 1.3 million people on low wages who are sick will now receive either 80% of their average weekly earnings or the statutory sick pay rate, whichever is the lower, from day one of sickness.

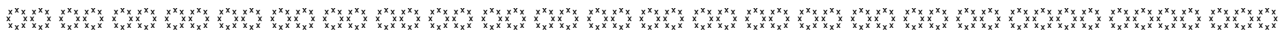
‘No one should ever have to choose between their health and earning a living, which is why we are making this landmark change,’ said Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall. The British Chamber of Commerce has also called the 80% rate a ‘fair compromise.’

There is no date for the change to take effect yet, as it will require changes to primary legislation, but this should be presented to the House of Commons soon.



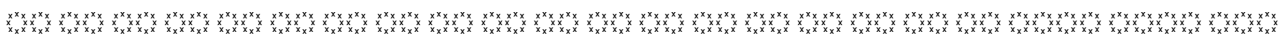
## **NALC writes to the home secretary to push Martyn's Law positions**

Last week, our chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, wrote to the home secretary, Yvette Cooper MP, about the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, commonly known as Martyn's Law. While welcoming the government's commitment to enhancing security at public events and venues, we have backed the increase in the standard tier threshold from 100 to 200 people. This crucial change will help ease the burden on smaller parish and town council-run halls and village spaces. However, in our letter, we raised our remaining concerns about insurance premiums and liability for events in places of worship, calling for greater clarity on these points. We also stressed the need for tailored advice, training, and staffing support to ensure parish and town councils can comply effectively. We have offered to meet with the home secretary to discuss these issues directly to keep the momentum going. As the bill moves to the House of Lords Report Stage on 4 March 2025, we remain committed to ensuring the voices of parish and town councils are heard loud and clear.



## **New NALC advice note on understanding and preparing to move to a .gov.uk domain**

With more council business conducted online, parish and town councils must establish a trusted digital presence. Our latest advice note, written by the Government Digital Service’s Parish Council Domains Helper Service, advises parish and town councils to use a .gov.uk domain for websites and emails, ensuring professionalism, transparency, and compliance. The advice note comprehensively guides transitioning to a .gov.uk domain, covering key steps like gaining council approval, selecting a registrar, and managing services. Our members can access this advice note and much more on our website.



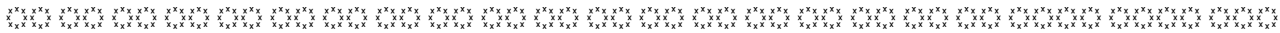
## **SLCC: New Government Guidance on Green Belt**





Have you recently changed your insurer? Or has your insurance broker recently changed the insurer it works with? If so, have you checked your new/renewal insurance documentation carefully? Even if you've been assured that the new cover provided fully meets your requirements, it is still **your** responsibility to check the policy and schedule carefully to make sure that this is the case. If something is not clear or doesn't look quite right, chase it up. It's far better to get the clarification at the start of the cover, than find out halfway through or, even worse, if you have to make a claim and then find out you're not fully covered, or not covered for something specific you were expecting. If you have land, property or assets, make sure that the value of these is periodically reviewed. (Insurers generally recommend land/building revaluations every 3 – 5 years). Again, don't wait until it is too late, such as when you need to make a claim, and then risk finding out that you are under insured.

See the Practitioner's Guide for guidance on management of risk and having appropriate levels of insurance cover in place.



## **Lincolnshire councils' commitment to working together on local government reorganisation**

The leaders of all ten greater Lincolnshire councils met on Monday 24 February 2025 and agreed to work together on proposals for what local government reorganisation could look like for our county.

The Government has made clear its intention to change all remaining two-tier local authority areas in England and replace county and district councils with new unitary authorities.

On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon, wrote to all council leaders in two-tier areas and small neighbouring unitary authorities to invite them to develop these unitary proposals.

The invitation gave guidance for developing these proposals, including the expected population of each new authority area and that consideration should be given to existing district boundaries and reducing disruption to vital care services. It also set out the timeline; interim plans should be submitted by 21 March, and more detailed proposals are expected by 28 November.

Greater Lincolnshire's ten council leaders have committed to work together to explore all options, and form plans that are in the best interest of the people of Lincolnshire.

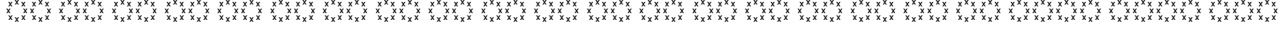
This statement is on behalf of:

- Cllr Anne Dorrian, Boston Borough Council
- Cllr Craig Leyland, East Lindsey District Council
- Cllr Philip Jackson, North East Lincolnshire Council

- Cllr Naomi Tweddle, City of Lincoln Council
- Cllr Martin Hill, Lincolnshire County Council
- Cllr Richard Wright, North Kesteven District Council

Cllr Rob Waltham, North Lincolnshire Council  
Cllr Ashley Baxter, South Kesteven District Council

Cllr Nick Worth, South Holland District Council  
Cllr Trevor Young, West Lindsey District Council



## **New Chapter – Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority first meeting**

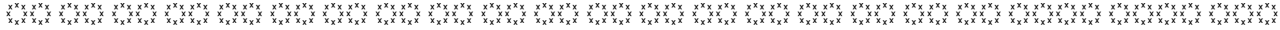
The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority held its first meeting on March 6th at Lincoln Cathedral, marking a major step forward in local governance. This new authority, which will be led by a mayor following the May 1st election, has been created after years of negotiations, aiming to bring more powers and decision-making authority closer to the local level. The devolution deal, formally approved by the government in September, will bring £24 million annually for the next 30 years, alongside increased local control over key areas like transport and public services. Cllr Martin Hill was elected Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire Combine Authority until the election of the new Mayor.

After the first council meeting ended Chris Callan Chair of the LALC Management Committee and Andrew Everard, Deputy Chief Executive attended the Evensong service led by the Dean of Lincoln Cathedral, Dr Simon Jones and the Bishop of Lincoln, Stephen Conway, followed by a reception at the Cathedral meeting key leaders and representatives of various organisations from across Greater Lincolnshire.



While the formation of the Combined Authority offers significant opportunities for local growth and development, it also raises the need for the voice of smaller local councils, especially parish and town councils to be heard. The Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) is seeking to work closely with the politicians and leaders involved in the Combined Authority, advocating for the interests of local communities in decisions that will affect them.

During the forthcoming election campaign for the Mayor on May 1st please ask the candidates how they are going to keep in touch with local parish and town councils because the new combined authority covers a large area with over 500 parishes.



## **Strength in Unity: Working Closer with your Neighbouring Councils**

As devolution continues to shift responsibilities to local government, it is more important than ever for parish and town councils to collaborate effectively. By working together, councils can present a stronger voice on common issues, improve governance, and ensure sustainability in the face of challenges such as councillor recruitment and financial constraints.

### **Building Connections Informally**

The first step towards greater collaboration is fostering relationships with neighbouring councils through informal meetings – get to know your neighbouring Chairs, Vice Chairs and Clerks. These gatherings provide an opportunity to share ideas, discuss common concerns, and explore potential joint initiatives without the pressures of formal decision-making. Regular informal discussions help build trust and set the stage for deeper cooperation. They don't have to be formal meetings just catching up with each other a few times a year will help keep you in touch with each other and you may be surprised how much overlap there is between neighbouring communities.

### **Establishing Cluster Groups**

For councils looking to strengthen ties, forming a cluster group can be an effective next step. Cluster groups bring multiple councils together on a structured but non-statutory basis to coordinate activities, share resources, and develop joint projects. This can lead to efficiencies in service delivery and create a platform for tackling wider community issues collectively. Topics that cluster groups could work together on include:

- Traffic speeds and road safety initiatives, such as Community Speed Watch schemes and purchasing Speed Indicator Devices.
- Planning issues for larger cross-border projects, ensuring cohesive development strategies and identifying common issues.
- Engaging with principal councils and other organisations on common problems.
- Addressing anti-social behaviour and working on community safety initiatives.
- Improving access to healthcare services and advocating for better local provision.
- Tackling poor broadband and digital connectivity issues affecting rural areas.
- Collaborating on larger spending projects to spread financial responsibility and maximise resources or identifying ways to maximise grants and S.106 and CIL moneys from any planning gains.

### **Moving Towards Formal Collaboration**

Where collaboration proves successful, councils may consider moving to the statutory process of forming a formal group, such as a joint committee or shared service agreement. Under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 101 allows councils to delegate functions to another council or joint committee, enabling more efficient service delivery. Additionally, the Localism Act 2011 provides mechanisms for councils to work together on local initiatives through Community Rights and Neighbourhood Planning provisions.

## **Becoming a Grouped Council**

An alternative to merging parishes is for two or more councils to become a grouped parish council under the Local Government Act 1972. This allows multiple parishes to retain their individual identities while operating under a single council structure. This approach can be beneficial in maintaining local representation while improving administrative efficiency, pooling resources, and ensuring long-term sustainability. The process requires consultation with affected communities through a Parish Meeting in each parish. However, while a grouped council can provide many of the benefits of a merger, it allows for a greater degree of local autonomy for each parish involved. Additionally, it is possible to bring in parishes that do not currently have a parish council, allowing them to benefit from improved governance and representation without the need to establish a standalone council. A Grouping Order, issued under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, enables a principal council to formally create a grouped council.

## **Exploring Parish Mergers**

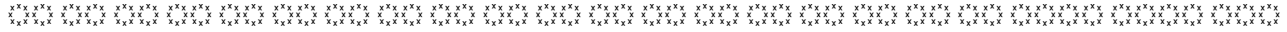
In some cases, merging parishes may be the most effective way to ensure continued representation and service provision. The process for altering parish boundaries or merging parishes is governed by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. A Community Governance Review, as outlined in this Act, must be conducted to assess the need for change and ensure that it reflects the identities and interests of the community. However, it is important to note that Community Governance Reviews can be time-consuming and costly for District or Borough Councils to conduct, which may impact the feasibility of such changes. Amalgamating councils can help maintain quorum levels, improve administrative efficiency, and distribute financial responsibilities across a larger area. While a merger is a significant step requiring consultation and legal processes, it can lead to a stronger, more resilient local council able to meet the needs of its community more effectively.

## **The Importance of Collaboration in a Devolved Landscape**

As devolution increases the responsibilities placed on local councils, working together is not just beneficial—it is essential. Through informal cooperation, structured partnerships, becoming a grouped council, or full mergers, councils can enhance their ability to serve their communities, influence policy at higher levels, and ensure sustainable governance. By embracing collaboration, parish and town councils can secure their future and deliver better outcomes for residents while staying compliant with statutory and legislative frameworks.

## **Taking the next step**

Parishes that want to take these ideas forward may wish to contact the LALC Office to discuss their ideas and their local situation and explore how their ideas could work in practice. There may be working examples that we can put you in touch with to learn from their experience.



## **SLCC: Senior council figures say rushed reorganisation adding to cash pressures**

A new report from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) has revealed concerns about the impact of the government's reorganisation plans with fewer than 1 in 4 saying they think it will improve council finances. Only 1 in 10 believe they have been adequately involved in the reorganisation process and just 1 in 5 officials think the timescales for reorganisation are deliverable. Fewer than 1 in 5 believe that there has been sufficient clarity thus far.

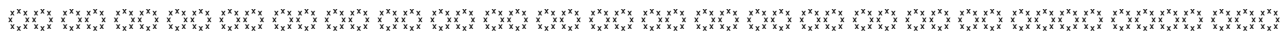
The 2025 State of Local Government Finance report found that fewer than 1 in 10 senior council figures are confident in the sustainability of local government finance with surging service demand being the greatest pressure on local government finance (a major problem for over 90% of councils). Local government reorganisation and National Insurance Contribution rises also represented significant new pressures on councils' already overextended finances.

Published annually since 2012 – the survey found 6% of councils could face effective bankruptcies this financial year unless the government makes more urgent and radical reforms. That figure jumps to 35% of councils that could issue section 114 notices by 2030 without further changes.

This anonymous survey of council leaders, chief executives, chief finance officers and cabinet members for finance, shows that councils will take an array of income-raising measures in the next financial year just to make ends meet. These include increasing council tax (94%), fees and charges (88%), and borrowing (22%). Nearly two-thirds of councils will also reduce spending on services (63%), although many will make savings through the restructuring of services (47%). Alarming, most councils will draw from their reserves this year (56%) – the second successive year for nearly half of our respondents (49%).

Read more (no login required):

<https://www.slcc.co.uk/senior-council-figures-say-rushed-reorganisation-adding-to-cash-pressures/>



## **NALC welcomes government clarification over parish and town council involvement in reorganisation proposals**

We have welcomed the government's clarification on parish and town councils' involvement in the development of proposals for unitary local government by local authorities.

Our chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, made representations directly to the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon MP, expressing our concern that recent guidance to local authorities failed to include parish and town councils in a list of local partners, stakeholders and public bodies that they should engage with.

In response, the minister said, "This government absolutely values the crucial role played by parish and town councils in local government". The letter clarifies that "in working up their proposals, I expect local leaders to seek views from their Members of Parliament, as well as ensuring wider engagement with other local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses. This should include parish and town councils in the spirit of that guidance".

The English Devolution White Paper sets out the government's expectation that all two-tier local authority areas develop proposals for reorganisation, rewire their relationship with parish and town councils, and strengthen expectations on engagement and community voice.

Read the MHLG letter (no login required): <https://tinyurl.com/9zju6fnz>

## Rural Services Network Rural funding digest

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/rural-funding-digest-march-2025>

## Stay cyber secure with the Our News March edition

<https://tinyurl.com/2ideyxja>

## Clear Councils Newsletter

Read it here: <https://tinyurl.com/3watz39p>

## Latest LCC Highways News

Read it here:

<https://mailchi.mp/8162a0945312/green-light-for-walking-and-cycling-plans-14927636?e=75ab902b81>

## NALC: Updated anti-bullying and harassment template

We've worked with our employment law, HR, and health and safety services partner, WorkNest, to update our anti-bullying and harassment policy template. The updates are based on the latest advice and legislation relating to these policies. Parish and town councils should review their existing policies and

update them to ensure they include the most up-to-date advice, similar to when they were advised about significant changes to sexual harassment legislation last year.

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**NALC Blog: International Women's Day: How can we support and empower women?**

Former NALC communications officer Nadoya Reid explored the steps we have taken to support women in local government and the work still needed to achieve true gender equality. From flexible working policies to leadership representation, she highlights the importance of fostering an inclusive workplace. The blog also shares valuable advice for women aspiring to lead and practical steps men can take to be better allies.

Read the blog (login not required): <https://tinyurl.com/3wmch6wa>

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**NALC announces the winners of its Star Council Awards**

- Council of the Year — Great Linford Parish Council, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes
- Councillor of the Year — Cllr Richard Collins, Great Braxted Parish Council, Essex
- Young Councillor of the Year — Cllr Nathan Dunbar, Polegate Town Council, East Sussex
- County Association of the Year — Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- Clerk of the Year — James Hardy, Penzance Town Council, Cornwall
- Climate Response of the Year — Exmouth Town Council, Devon

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**Former Parish Councillor (not Lincolnshire) Ordered to Pay £20,000 in Libel Case**

Andrew Peake, a former parish councillor in Fleggburgh, has been ordered to pay £20,000 in damages after losing a libel case against village clerk Dr. James Miller. The case arose after Peake accused Dr. Miller on social media of making rude gestures during a parish council meeting. However, the High Court ruled that Peake's allegations were unproven and defamatory.

The court found that Peake’s claims damaged Dr. Miller’s reputation, with no credible evidence to support them. As a result, the judge ruled in favour of Dr. Miller, awarding him £20,000 in damages to compensate for the harm caused. The ruling serves as a stark reminder of the risks of making public allegations without evidence, particularly on social media. Defamation cases like this highlight the legal consequences of spreading false claims, even at a local government level.

Following the decision, Peake has not commented publicly on the ruling or whether he intends to appeal. The case has drawn attention within the Fleggburgh community, emphasizing the importance of responsible communication and the potential legal ramifications of defamatory statements.

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