

Newsletter – September 2023

Derbyshire ALC



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1 - May 4th feedback survey needs you!

With the dust (mostly!) settled on May's local elections, a new survey aims to analyse feedback from across Derbyshire and the rest of the country – on topics ranging from co-option processes to the age-old issue of how to encourage more potential candidates. The survey is a joint effort between NALC and De Montfort University's Local Governance Research Centre. One response per council is sought, ideally from the chair or clerk, and [the survey can be found here](#).

2 - DALC needs you! Board vacancy...

We've a director vacancy on DALC's 9-strong board, and would especially welcome interest from councillors in the Bolsover area, and/or those with experience of strategy development, climate change or communication skills.

3 - Does your community need a new defibrillator?

A thousand new defibrillators are being made available through the Community Automated External Defibrillators Fund, with the aim of “an even spread” of units throughout communities, says the DHSC (Dept of Health and Social Care). At this stage, expressions of interest are sought from councils for placements in areas such as community centres, local shops, post offices and local parks – [details can be found here](#).

4 - Want to grow a ‘micro woodland’?

A new Coronation fund has been launched by DEFRA to support local tree-planting projects – giving councils the chance to bid for grants of up to £50,000. There are two options available – firstly a Coronation Micro Wood, enabling councils to plant small areas of fast-growing woodland in urban areas, and secondly a Coronation Community Orchard, aimed at establishing orchards for local communities. Parish and town councils, as well as community groups, can apply for the new grants through their district, borough or county council’s tree officers or environmental team. Applications close on September 26th.

5 - DALC’s internal audit service is open for business!

Our team of experienced clerks and RFOs is now available to provide a full internal audit service to our members councils. Aimed at relieving the audit stress from clerks, the service is available at year-end, or as a two-part process in Spring and Autumn. We’ve just added a Q&A section to our audit service webpage, which [can be found here](#). We look forward to hearing from you!

6 - Financial Regulations update – what changes would you like to see?

NALC and the Parkinson Partnership are consulting on an update of the 2019 Financial Regulations and want input from councils. Whether it’s the way a section is worded, or how best to protect online payments, they want the views of those who use the regulations. The consultation [document can be found here](#) – closing date for input is November 5th.

7 - Improving the Local Plan process

With the joint aims of retaining a significant role for local councils in the planning system, and making Local Plans simpler to prepare, understand and use, NALC is encouraging local councils to contribute to the DLUHC consultation process which ends on October 18th. NALC will be responding on behalf of the sector and have set out their [focus and questions for response](#). The [main consultation document can be viewed here](#).

8 - “Small gesture” plea ahead of Remembrance Day events

A joint letter from NALC, the Local Government Association and Royal British Legion has called on local authorities to help mitigate the cost of Remembrance Day events by providing signage and waiving street closure fees. The letter adds: “Whilst we recognise that council budgets are facing pressures, these important civic occasions are a cost-effective way of bringing the whole community together. Small gestures such as the waiving of fees for closing roads, providing street signage and co-ordinating routes can make a real difference to whether these events can or cannot take place.” Hopefully this will make it easier for those parish and town councils who are organising these events. The full [letter can be read here](#).

9 - Have your say on a national stage – NALC seeks committee members

NALC’s governance election process has been launched, giving councillors and clerks from across the country the chance to be elected to their Larger Councils and Smaller Councils committees. Aimed at encouraging participation from all backgrounds and regions, individuals will be elected online via UK Engage, ensuring, says NALC, an efficient and accessible voting procedure. A [dedicated NALC webpage](#) has been created which outlines timelines, election seats and committee information.

10 - Helping local people buy local power

Local councils have been backing a campaign aimed at giving community energy schemes the right to sell power directly to their local communities. Endorsed by NALC, the Power for People campaign is urging the Government to encourage the growth of community schemes by giving them full access to local markets, rather than being restricted to supplying the National Grid. The campaign recently welcomed the launch of a £10million Community Energy Fund, which Power for People spokesman Steve Shaw said “will certainly see many more renewable energy generation schemes get off the ground – we hope it’s just the start and a sign of things to come.”

11 - Freedom for ‘freepersons’? Councils can choose...

NALC’s response to a query on non-gendered honorary titles is that it’s a matter for individual councils to decide. Asked whether they could confer a “freeperson” title instead of “freeman”, the council was advised that it was their choice, despite section 249 of the Local Government Act using the masculine to denote the feminine. A NALC spokesperson added: “We suspect law written today would use non-gendered terms.”

12 - Keeping up the good work – on civility & respect

Over 1,300 councils nationwide have now signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge, the joint venture between NALC, SLCC and numerous county associations. Aimed firmly at improving standards of behaviour in our sector, the initiative is backed by large resource of information and materials for councils who commit to promoting good conduct. Information can be found on the NALC website [at this link](#), where you'll also find the pledge document.

13 – Training update

We have a number of training courses over the course of the next month or two so why not take the opportunity to book onto one of them. Courses are online unless a venue is listed.

Chair Skills – Tuesday 5th Sept 6.00pm

Councillor Essentials:

- Wednesday 6th Sept (Arkwright Centre, S44 5BS)
- Thursday 14th Sept 6.00pm
- Monday 2nd Oct 6.00pm
- Wednesday 4th October, 6.00pm (Chapel-en-le-Frith Town Hall)
- Tuesday 17th Oct 6.00pm

Cemetery Management – Wednesday 13th Sept 10.00am

Understanding Planning – Wednesday 13th Sept 6.00pm

Code of Conduct – Monday 18th Sept 10.00am

Employment Essentials – Wednesday 20th Sept 10.00am

CiLCA Introduction – Friday 22nd Sept, 10.00am

Clerk Essentials 1&2 – 25th and 28th Sept, 10.00am

Emergency First Aid at work – Tuesday 26th Sept (Church in the Peak, DE4 3EJ) 9.00am

Data Protection (GDPR) – Tuesday 3rd Oct, 10.00am

Freedom of Information – Tuesday 10th Oct 10.00am

Kind Regards
Wendy Amis