



# WHITE ROSE UPDATE

## Newsletter of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations

May 2017

### YLCA Governance Review

At the February/March round of Branch meetings, member councils and parish meetings were given an opportunity to discuss recommendations from the Joint Executive Board concerning changes to the governance structure of YLCA. There was some useful and supportive debate at Branches and it was good to see the interest that members have in how our Associations are governed. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this process.

A report which incorporated the observations of all of the twelve Branches was considered by the Joint Executive Board at its meeting on 22 April and from that meeting the following recommendations for constitutional change are being made to the Joint Annual Meeting which is being held on 15 July 2017 (venue to be confirmed):

- *That the composition of the Joint Executive Board is changed to a total of 22 Branch representative members consisting of ten representatives from North Yorkshire, five representatives from South Yorkshire and seven representatives from West Yorkshire.*
- *That the revised arrangements are implemented for a period of three years without change from the implementation date and that a review is carried out in the third year of implementation.*
- *That the President (in voting capacity) and Vice Presidents (in non-voting capacity) continue as members of the Joint Executive Board.*
- *That the policy of appointment of Branch deputy representatives to the Board is retained.*

Member councils and parish meetings should be aware that any constitutional change will not be implemented until the Branch meetings in May/June 2018.

In addition to these constitutional recommendations, the Board also sets policy to improve the process for appointing members to the Joint Executive Board and some of these will take effect this year

- *A letter will be sent to all members with the annual Branch meeting papers explaining the need for their representatives to be formally appointed by their authority and for members to consider the skills and knowledge that their representatives have if their representatives wish to join the Board. A paper explaining the duties, role, responsibility and expectations of a Board member will be circulated to all member councils and parish meetings with the annual Branch meeting papers.*
- *There will be a voluntary nomination form for membership of the Joint Executive Board. This will be a common nomination paper that will accompany the paper which explains the role and responsibility of a Board member and will be sent out with the annual Branch meeting papers. The nomination paper will be an opportunity for those wishing to join the Board to explain their relevant skills and knowledge to the Branch. Persons not completing the form will not be penalised in the appointment process.*
- *Members of the Board will make an undertaking to serve the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations to the best of their ability and that this be achieved by way of a declaration of acceptance of office.*

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## YLCA NEWS

### YLCA Joint Annual Meeting 2017

The Joint Annual Meeting brings together the three separately constituted local councils associations in the Yorkshire area; North, South and West Yorkshire Associations.

As well as the constitutional business of appointing a President, Vice-Presidents, the Associations' Independent Examiner and approving the Annual Review and Accounts, it is an opportunity to debate resolutions that are put forward by the YLCA Branches and also individual councils.

It is traditional that the Joint Annual Meeting debates resolutions which propose changes to legislation or affect councils across the whole of the Yorkshire area or the whole country. Branch specific resolutions are not usually debated at the Annual Meetings as such issues can normally be dealt with at Branch level. Resolutions usually come from the YLCA Branch meetings, but can also come from individual councils. If your council has an issue that it would like to address, please contact YLCA to discuss this with a view to submitting it for debate on 15 July.

The 2017 Joint Annual Meeting will be held at  
**The Ron Cooke Hub, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5GE**  
**on Saturday, 15 July at 2.00pm.**

Member councils and parish meetings can send as many delegates as they wish; however only two representatives from each council or parish meeting have voting rights. An agenda, minutes and supporting papers will be sent to the clerks of councils and parish meetings in June.

### YLCA Branches – your council representatives: A Reminder

It is important to both the YLCA and member councils that clerks include an item on the agenda of their council's Annual Meeting to appoint up to two representatives to attend the YLCA Branch meeting in their area and to represent the council as voting representatives at those meetings. Only councillors and clerks who have been formally appointed by their council will be permitted to vote at Branch meetings and be able stand for appointment to the YLCA Joint Executive Board.

Please let us know who your representatives are by e-mailing Joy Morgan at:

[admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk](mailto:admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk) If you can include the e-mail addresses of your reps we will ensure to send the Branch papers to them direct, in addition to sending them to the Clerk and Chairman.

### Revised Branch Terms of Reference

At its meeting on 22 April the Joint Executive Board of YLCA agreed slight changes to the adopted terms of reference for its Branches. A copy can be found in the Branch Meetings section of the YLCA website.

### A reminder about membership subscription fees 2017/2018

Memberships are coming in thick and fast which is really pleasing. However, do remember that the cut-off date for membership renewal for the current financial year is 31 May.

# YLCA NEWS

## YLCA Branch meetings, Spring/Summer 2017

This round of meetings will be the Annual Meetings of the Branches where the chairman and other representatives are appointed. This includes the Branch representatives to the YLCA Joint Executive Board. Meeting dates can be found below and papers with details of the venues will be circulated at least two weeks in advance of the meetings.

Another important aspect of the Annual Meetings of Branches is for them to consider any issues that are affecting a range of parishes or perhaps all parishes and to agree a resolution for consideration at the YLCA Joint Annual Meeting (15 July 2017). If supported by the Branch the resolution will be sent to the National Association of Local Councils for its support and NALC will then liaise with or lobby Government for the required changes or implementation of new legislation. Whilst this is often a protracted route it has been used with success in the past in a number of issues, not least the proposal to have business rates removed from public toilets that are operated by local councils and having the minimum age to be able to be a local councillor reduced from 21 to 18.

Branch	Date and Time	Venue
Craven	21 June at 7pm	Anderton Memorial Institute, Linton
Hambleton	21 June at 7pm	Northallerton Town Council Offices
Harrogate	12 June at 7pm	Jubilee Room, St James Square, Boroughbridge
Leeds	13 June at 7.30pm	Horsforth Parish Hall
Richmondshire	5 June at 7pm	Leyburn Town Council Offices
Ryedale	6 June at 7pm	The Pavilion, Helmsley Recreation Sports Field
Scarborough	1 June at 7pm	Whitby Town Council, Pannett Park
Selby	14 June at 7pm	Selby Town Hall
South Pennine	14 June at 7.30pm	Blackshaw Head Methodist Church
South Yorkshire	21 June at 7pm	William Layne Reading Room, Aughton
Wakefield	8 June at 7pm	Havercroft & Ryhill Community Centre
York	1 June at 7pm	Folk Hall, New Earswick, York

### NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE OF THE HARROGATE AND RICHMONDSHIRE BRANCHES

## Local Council Award Scheme – Achievements

Congratulations to Hemsworth Town Council in the Wakefield district and Thorner Parish Council in the Leeds district which have both achieved the Foundation Level of the Local Council Award Scheme. The Scheme is for all councils, particularly the Foundation Level as the expectations are no greater than those that a council should be doing in its day to day administration. Further details are available on the YLCA and NALC websites.

## A new parish council for Stainland

Following a successful campaign by local people which was supported by grant funding from the National Association of Local Councils, the newly created parish of Stainland in the Calderdale district of Yorkshire came into being on 1 April 2017. Unfortunately, elections for the new council won't take place until 2018 but in the interim a number of temporary councillors will be appointed by Calderdale Council to establish the new authority and to be consulted in local issues.

## YLCA NEWS

### Transparency Fund 2017/2018 – Open for Applications

Over the last two years many member councils of Yorkshire with a turnover\* not exceeding £25,000 have successfully applied for grants from the Transparency Fund set up by the Government to help smaller local councils comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. Further to this the Associations are pleased to report that the Fund is continuing into 2017/2018 and applications can now be made. The next deadline for applications is 5.00pm on 19 June.

Councils that have received grant funding in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 are still eligible to apply to the fund in 2017/2018 to cover certain costs and we would encourage all eligible councils to make an application. Whilst the Government has made £1.1million available for the current financial year, once that has gone then there will be no more money provided and we would therefore encourage councils to apply early for grants so that they are not disappointed.

We are delighted to introduce Sarita Presland to you. Sarita is being contracted jointly by YLCA and the East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils to promote the fund and encourage applications. The Department for Communities and Local Government has provided funding to county associations throughout the country to carry out this promotional work. Sarita was previously Chief Officer of the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils and now lives in North Yorkshire. She is contracted for a one year period until 31 March 2018.



Sarita is starting the promotion project by arranging a number of **FREE** seminars for councils that have to comply with the code. These sessions will give information about the requirements of the code and how to apply to the fund and how to complete the application form.

- **21 June - Studio Room, Selby Town Council, Town Hall, York Street, Selby, YO8 4AJ. 2.00pm to 4.00pm.**
- **4 July - Meeting Room 1, Ryedale District Council Offices, Malton, YO17 7HH. 7.00pm to 9.00pm.**
- **5 July - Falsgrave Community Resource Centre, Seamer Road, Scarborough, YO12 4DJ. 2.00pm to 4.00pm.**
- **17 July - Council Chamber, Harrogate Borough Council, Crescent Gardens, Harrogate, HG1 2SG. 6.30pm to 8.30pm.**
- **19 July - Upper Hall, Northallerton Town Council, High Street, Northallerton, DL7 8QR. 6.30pm to 8.30pm.**
- **9 August - Cass Hall, King Street, Driffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 6QW. 2.00pm to 4.00pm.**
- **9 August, - Meeting Room, Bilton Village Hall, Main Road, Bilton, near Hull, HU11 4AA. 6.30pm to 8.30pm.**

**COUNCILS WITH A TURNOVER LESS THAN £25,000 ARE ONCE AGAIN REMINDED THAT THEY *MUST* COMPLY WITH THE TRANSPARENCY CODE**

\* The definition of 'turnover' is the greater of either income or expenditure.

Clerks and councillors are welcome to attend **any session** (although numbers are limited due to sizes of the venues). If you wish to attend please complete the booking form which has been circulated separately to relevant councils and return to Sarita Presland at [sarita.presland@yorkshirelca.gov.uk](mailto:sarita.presland@yorkshirelca.gov.uk).

Further details about the Transparency Fund and the application form for 2017/18 can be found on the YLCA website at: [www.yorkshirelca.gov.uk](http://www.yorkshirelca.gov.uk).

# PUBLICATIONS

## The Good Councillor's Guide 2017

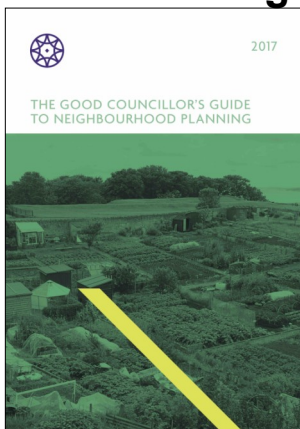
The parish sector National Training Strategy Group has revised the 2016 Guide to bring the publication bang up to date. The Guide introduces the work of local councils and the part that councillors play in the tier of local government closest to the people. It is a useful reference book, divided into five sections:

1. *Where are you heading?* - Introduces what you can do as a councillor and what your council can achieve. It points you in the right direction so that you can serve your community well.
2. *Due care and attention* – Sets out the rules for the council, councillor, employer and financial manager.
3. *Getting under way* – Focuses on council meetings, decision making, actions of the council and remaining within the law.
4. *Delivering the goods* – Is about action for local people including the delivery of services and community rights, the council's role in the planning system and the Local Council Award Scheme.
5. *The Toolbox* – Useful ideas for your councillor's toolbox including danger areas, useful publications, links, documents and contacts for advice.



The revised Guide is available to download from the YLCA website or hard copies can be ordered from YLCA, costs below. Please e-mail [admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk](mailto:admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk) to place an order.

## ...STOP PRESS... Published 19 May 2017: The Good Councillor's Guide to Neighbourhood Planning



This guide is designed specifically to help parish and town councillors support their communities and council in deciding whether or not to produce a neighbourhood plan for their area and, if they decide to go ahead, to guide them through the process of producing the plan and thinking about how it will be delivered. Whilst other guides are predominantly concerned with the legislation and process, the partnership of Locality and NALC have attempted, wherever possible, to include guidance on good practice for carrying out each part of the plan. The booklet draws upon the experience of Locality and its partners who are working with community groups preparing neighbourhood plans through the national support programme. Locality has worked with a wide range of organisations, parish councils in particular and neighbourhood forums in urban and rural areas.

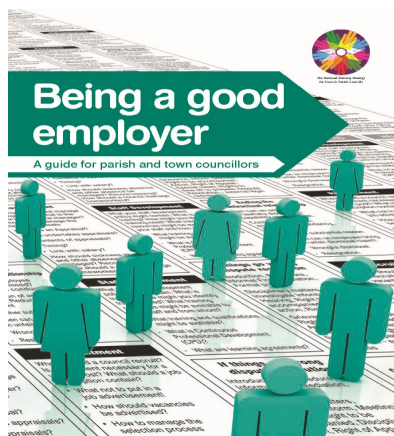
A copy of the Guide has been posted on the YLCA website (in the Publications section) and it can also be downloaded from the NALC website. YLCA has ordered paper copies as we know many councillors like to have this as well as or rather than an electronic copy. The cost for a single publication is £3.49 plus postage and packing (as this publication is only very recently released we have not seen a paper copy but anticipate that p&p costs will be similar to the Good Councillors Guide. Order the new publication from: [admin@yorkshire.lca.gov.uk](mailto:admin@yorkshire.lca.gov.uk)



# YLCA NEWS

## Being a Good Employer 2016 – A Guide for Town and Parish Councillors

This very popular booklet was updated in 2016 and YLCA strongly recommends that all councillors should have a copy of this publication to ensure that they understand their role as part of the employing body.



The revised booklet deals with:

- Recruitment - advertising, short listing, interviewing and appointing;
- Employee rights and obligations - defining an employee, contract of employment and varying the terms and conditions of a contract;
- Management of staff, staff development - appraisals, employee records and home working;
- Staff development - identifying training needs, where to access training;
- Dispute resolution - mediation, grievance and disciplinary proceedings, the right of appeal for employees;
- The end of the contractual relationship - fair dismissal, capability, conduct and redundancy and notice to end the employment;

- The booklet also provides a list of the desirable policies that councils will like to have in place.

The publication is £2.20 per copy plus postage and package £1.90. Total cost £4.10. Please e-mail: [admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk](mailto:admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk) to place your order and find out costs for larger orders. A downloadable copy is available from the YLCA website.

## Information Dividers for Councillors

In collaboration with a number of other County Associations YLCA has produced information dividers for councillors. These can be used by them to help organise documents relevant to their work as elected members. Each set of dividers costs £1.70 plus post & packing and they can be ordered by contacting Joy Morgan at YLCA—[admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk](mailto:admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk) The topics covered by the dividers are:

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| * Financial Regulations | * Agendas              |
| * Standing Orders       | * Minutes              |
| * Code of Conduct       | * Briefing/Topic Notes |
| * Council Policies      | * Useful Contacts      |
| * Council Services      | * Other Information    |

1 copy £3.49 plus p&p at £1.90.  
 2 copies £6.98 plus p&p at £2.24  
 3 copies £10.47 plus p&p at £2.79  
 4 copies £13.96 plus p&p at £2.79  
 5 copies £17.45 plus p&p at £3.55

6 copies £20.94 plus p&p at £3.55  
 7 copies £24.43 plus p&p at £5.65  
 8 copies £27.92 plus p&p at £5.65  
 9 copies £31.41 plus p&p at £5.65  
 10 copies £34.90 plus p&p at £5.65

## YLCA Training

We started the current financial year by continuing to provide training in the planning process kindly and expertly provided by Andrew Towlerton, a planner with much experience at principal authority level, a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and also a parish clerk in South Yorkshire. Andrew also provided us with a session on Neighbourhood Planning. On 6 May we had a lively and enthusiastic group of new clerks who came to the Fairfield Manor Hotel just outside York for an induction day.

Having completed the sessions above, we are set to provide courses from June through to December. We are just in the process of booking the various venues and speakers but our programme will be coming out to all members very shortly.

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

## Launch of the Star Councils Awards 2017

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has announced that it will once again be running an awards programme this year, as part of its work to recognise the achievements of the local (parish and town) council sector.

The NALC Star Councils awards will celebrate the individual achievements of local councillors, council officers and council workers as well as of local councils and County Associations. Specific projects will also be recognised with separate award categories.

NALC's Star Councils awards have some prizes up for grabs for the lucky winners. All winners will have the honour of collecting their prizes at an awards ceremony later this year.

It is widely recognised that the vast majority of local councils are delivering great services and acting as a voice for their local communities on a day-to-day basis. It is in honour of this, that the NALC Star Councils awards are being held this year. NALC is looking for good practice from the local council sector regardless of size or location. It is looking for individuals and organisations that are making a real difference in their community.

Nominations for this year's awards are now being called for with entries due in by 28 July 2017 and the awards event taking place in 1st November 2017.

Cllr Sue Baxter, chairman of NALC said: "These Star Councils awards are set to be the biggest event in the local council calendar in 2017. They will recognise the very best in local councils, councillors, officers and workers with these bodies recognised for their achievements in representing and delivering for communities. Challenging financial times demand innovative approaches to protect community service delivery and representation. These awards reward those councils, councillors, officer and workers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty good to deliver excellence."

The six award categories are Young Councillor (Aged 18-30), Clerk, Councillor, County Association outstanding project, Local Council project and Council of the Year.

[Read more about the awards](#)

[View the nomination guide](#)

[View sponsorship guide](#)

[Help promote Star Councils 2017](#)

## National Council's biggest ever Lobby Day!

NALC's National Council held its third parliamentary Lobby Day on Tuesday, 28 March where council members, including representatives from YLCA met with MPs. Collectively, county association representatives engaged with nearly 80 members of the Houses of Parliament including northern powerhouse minister (and former parish councillor) Andrew Percy MP, sports minister Tracey Crouch MP, shadow ministers John Healey MP and Kate Hollern MP, chairman of the Local Government Association Lord Porter and chairman of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee Neil Parish MP. There is more about Lobby Day in the [news story](#) on the NALC website.

## NALC Annual Conference 2017

NALC has announced that its 2017 annual conference will be held in Milton Keynes at the Double Tree by Hilton on 30/31 October. This year is NALC's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and it is also 50 years of Milton Keynes – a wholly parished urban area, progressing with double devolution and with lessons for other cities in the country. As well as a programme of speakers and workshops the conference will see the announcement of NALC's Star Councils 2017 including Council of the Year. Further details will be available on both the YLCA and NALC websites shortly, but please put the date in your diary if you are interested in attending.

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

## NALC business rates

NALC urges 5% share of business rates for local services. The government has been urged to be more local and more radical in its approach to localising business rates in order to help communities fund the growing range of local services provided by local councils.

In their response to a consultation on business rates, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has told the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) its current approach should extend beyond principal councils in scope to provide local councils with a 5% share of business rates generated in their area to enable them to invest in neighbourhood level services for residents and businesses and alleviate the current pressure on the parish precept, their primary source of income.

Research conducted by Local Government Chronicle (LGC) last year as part of a **special report** on parish and town councils showed almost 80% of local councils in favour of retaining some of the business rates raised in their areas, with over 1,200 councils stating they were already involved in economic growth. The survey also included economic growth as being among the top ten services councils wanted to add to their remit, with others including youth services, highways, housing, health and well-being and tourism.

NALC's response to the consultation also calls on the government to:

- recognise the pressure on funding local and neighbourhood level services through the parish precept through a package of supportive measures;
- include piloting the retention of business rates with some parish and town councils in the existing pilot scheme from April 2018;
- support tourism, economic development and public health by legislating for mandatory rate relief on public conveniences owned or managed by local councils;
- build on the approach taken to charities by legislating to provide local councils with mandatory rate relief on community facilities they own or manage including cemeteries.

## Sign the new Tree Charter – 10 principles announced

March 27 March saw the launch of the ten principles of the Tree Charter, each principle deals with a different aspect of the relationship between people and trees in modern society. On November 6 2017 guiding articles will be added to these principles, offering expert advice on how each principle may be achieved. These guiding articles will be sourced from the more than 70 organisations involved in the development of the Tree Charter.

This year NALC has partnered with more than 70 organisations, including the Woodland Trust, to help develop and launch a new Charter for Trees, Woods and People on November 6 2017. The new Tree Charter will set out how our local communities and trees can best benefit one another. It will serve as a resource which local councils can use in support of their efforts to look after the trees in their area.

Further details can be found at: <https://treecharter.uk/tree-charter-faqs/>

NALC is now collecting signatures of support for the Charter. You can sign the Charter by clicking [here](#)

## NALC Digital Councils Event, London, 25 May 2017

This event is a chance to hear about why digital working increasingly matters, the importance of doing it and how to do it. It will provide an opportunity to look at some best practice and hear some new ideas. The cost is £75 plus VAT (total £90) per delegate for councils/parish meetings who are affiliated to NALC via their county association.

Councils that hold any level of the Local Council Award Scheme can get a reduction in the fee - £60 plus VAT (total £72.00) per delegate. Full information and a booking form are available on the NALC website, under 'Events'. All YLCA members have been issued with log-in details for the NALC website and please note that as part of our training programme, YLCA will be holding some sessions on social media.



# LAW AND GOVERNANCE

## Annual Return (for the financial year ended 31 March 2017)

### Changes:

- Remember that the Annual Governance Statement is Section 1 of the Annual Return and **must** be signed **before** section 2 (it can be done at the same meeting but it is important to get the order correct and it is sensible if the order is set out on the agenda). YLCA expects that a chairman will take some time to go through the statements (1 to 9) so that the council/parish meeting can decide whether it has complied with the requirements. If there is some doubt, a 'yes' response should not be given. Give a 'no' answer and then provide an explanation as to why this response is being given. This might be that although the Council realises that it should have done a particular action, it has/is taking advice from YLCA to make improvements to its accounting practices.
- The Accounting Statements (figures) are now Section 2

### Deadlines and targets:

- It is a statutory requirement for a council or parish meeting to approve the accounts by 30 June following the year end.
- It is also a requirement that the audited accounts must be published by 30 September following the year end.

### Exercise of Public Rights and notice periods:

- These changes were introduced by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- Appointed auditors, ie PKF Littlejohn and BDO are no longer required to set an appointed audit date.
- The inspection period for members of the public must be a single period of 30 working days and must include the first 10 working days of July.
- A statement must be published which sets out the dates that have been selected for the exercise of public rights and it must include details of the manner in which notice should be given to the council or parish meeting of an intention to inspect the accounting records and other documents.
- This statement must include the name and address of the external auditor.

### Publication of the accounts:

It is a legal obligation for the audited body to publish the following documents (which must include publication on the authority's website) prior to the external audit of the Annual Return:

- The Statement of Accounts – accompanied by a declaration that the accounts are unaudited;
- The Annual Governance Statement – whether or not it has been approved by the Authority;
- A statement with details about the exercise of public rights.

Your audit cannot be completed until the end of the public inspection period.

The Responsible Financial Officer must by law inform the external auditor of the Date of Commencement for the Exercise of Public Rights by sending the auditor a copy of the Notice or contacting them by e-mail.

### Has your Council or Parish Meeting changed its clerk in the last year?

If so, please remember to write to the external auditor to inform them of the new contact details. Failure to do so may result in the Council not receiving its Annual Return forms and accompanying documentation on time.

**If you have any questions about completion of the Annual Return or any accompanying documentation please do not hesitate to contact YLCA.**

**All matters relating to the financial year 2016-17, including the Annual Return for the year 2016-17, should still be sent to your current external auditor.**

## LAW AND GOVERNANCE

### **2016/17 Audit arrangements - No changes to existing audit arrangements**

As a reminder (because we have seen some confusion), it is important to note that for the financial year 2016/17 there are **no changes** to the existing audit arrangements for local councils and parish meetings and you should continue to work with your existing auditors on limited assurance reviews for accounts for the financial year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The new appointments only become effective for the five-year period in relation to accounts for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2017.

### **NALC Revised Legal Topic notes and new briefing paper**

#### **LTN 11 Celebrations and similar events**

This has been updated to include references to LTN 88 on event licensing and section 138B of the 1972 Act in respect of events and celebrations with a religious context.

#### **LTN 13 Policing your area**

This LTN has been updated to include the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 and other developments in respect of the use of CCTV.

#### **LTN 18 Local Councils' Powers to Provide Parking Spaces**

This has been recast to provide a more logical structure and to clarify the differences between England and Wales.

#### **LTN 20 Markets and Other Events**

This has been amended to remove some internet links that are no longer valid.

#### **LTN 28 Basic Charity Law**

This has been updated to include references to the procurement regulations (the Public Contracts Regulations 2015) and to situations where there are insufficient managing trustees for a charity to operate.

All 87 Legal Topic Notes are available from the YLCA website in the NALC section.

### **Purdah guidance LO2-17**

NALC has reissued its legal briefing LO2-17 Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (England) (March 2017) which includes guidance on Purdah. Please find this in the NALC section of the YLCA website.

### **The inclusion of leased land and buildings in the asset register**

We have recently received advice from Derek Beavers, the NALC Accounts and Audit Adviser regarding the inclusion of leased land and buildings in the asset register. Derek has said that leased land and buildings should certainly appear in the council's asset register and normally these should appear at a value equal to any lease premium paid on acquisition, however if a lease premium is not payable it is recommended that the asset be included at a nominal value of £1.

# LAW AND GOVERNANCE

## 2017 Governance and Accountability financial guide published

The Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG) has published a new version of Governance and Accountability which can be downloaded from this link: [new Governance and Accountability Guide](#). At its February meeting JPAG approved some modest amendments to the wording of the guide and while the content is not greatly changed, a minor error affecting parish meetings has been corrected and some of the explanations in Part 5 have been made clearer.

This new 2017 edition of the guide applies to the statutory reporting of the financial year 2017/18, however JPAG has authorised the early adoption of the guide for 2016/17 on a voluntary basis, with the decision whether to do so resting with individual councils.

Please note that all sections of the guide have now been combined into a single document (the 2016 guide comprised two documents).

Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the guide represent the proper accounting and governance practices (*'proper practices'*) referred to in statute. They set out for responsible finance officers the appropriate standard of financial and governance reporting for smaller authorities and are **mandatory**.

Section 4 of the guide sets out the non-statutory guidance relating to internal audit which authorities are required to 'take into account'.

Section 5 of the guide provides supporting information and practical examples to assist smaller authorities to manage their governance and financial affairs and is not mandatory.

The guide is intended as a working tool for smaller authorities, providing not only the common 'rules' for completing an annual return for use by responsible finance officers, but also as a reference work for auditors, both internal and external, members, other officers and the public to aid understanding of the annual return and the reporting on the smaller authority's governance and finances within it.

A copy of the Guide can also be found on the YLCA and NALC websites and we strongly recommend all councils and parish meetings to download a copy to retain in their filing system.

## Employing your clerk (and other workers): Can you say 'yes'?

Some time ago in this newsletter we ran the article that appears below and were able to help councils who had not quite got their house in order with regard to employment issues. We are aware however that there are member councils who still need to do some work in this area. Try the following questions and if you find that you have a 'no' answer, please do get in touch so that we can give some advice and guidance.

- Can you definitely say that your clerk (and other workers) have a contract of employment? (preferably in writing and signed by both parties)
- Do you know where a copy of the contract is?
- Do your clerk (and other workers) have a job description and if so has this ever been reviewed to ensure that it truly reflects the duties and responsibilities undertaken by the worker?
- Has your council adopted grievance and disciplinary policies?
- Does your clerk have a line manager or a designated point of contact who liaises regularly with him/her?
- Does the council conduct appraisals with the clerk (and other workers)?
- Does your council have a staffing committee (not so important for smaller councils eg those with the minimums five members who can deal with staffing items at full council meetings)?
- Has your council established a Pay as You Earn scheme with HMRC?
- Has your council checked and responded to its duties to establish a workplace pension scheme (auto enrolment)?

# NEWS AND ISSUES OF GENERAL INTEREST

## Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan: Proposed Main Modifications

Following public hearings in January 2017 a Planning Inspector has identified that there is a need for modifications to the action plan prepared by Leeds City Council to ensure that the document is legally compliant and sound. Those modifications are now out to consultation and comments on them can be made until Thursday 8 June. Further information about the consultation can be found at <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Aire-Valley-Area-Action-Plan-Examination.aspx>.

## Notes on Neighbourhood Planning

Edition 19 of this bulletin from the government's neighbourhood planning team about the latest news and policy developments is [now available](#).

## Open Spaces Society fears loss of public paths in North Yorkshire

The Open Spaces Society, Britain's oldest national conservation body, opposes North Yorkshire County Council's plan to categorise the county's public paths so that some will receive little or no attention. The county council has consulted about its proposal to put paths into categories to determine the level of their maintenance, with a complicated system of assigning the priority to be given to each route.

The general secretary of the Open Spaces Society: "We are deeply concerned at the proposed categorisation of public paths. It appears that those which are afforded low priority will be neglected and consequently

less used, and they could in effect be lost even if they are not closed legally. Public footpaths and bridleways are highways in law, just like any road. The county council has a statutory duty to maintain all the highways in its area. It cannot, in law neglect them".

The Open Spaces Society believes that the proposed categorisation will lead to a distortion of the path network, with urban paths being better maintained than rural ones, and little attention given to paths between communities; stating that "There is no recognition in the consultation document of the economic benefit which can be reaped from public paths.

The Society is also concerned that the county council proposes to give lower priority to some of the issues which are reported to it on public paths; considering that, contrary to the council's proposals, high priority should be given to reports of ploughing and cropping of paths, otherwise by the time the path is inspected the problem may be different. The Society has urged the county council to abandon its proposal to categorise routes and instead ensure that landowners obey the law and play their part in maintaining the network.

Further information is available from the Open Spaces Society website: [www.oss.org.uk](http://www.oss.org.uk)

## Litter Strategy for England

On 10 April the Government published a Litter Strategy for England whose recommendations include making offenders on community sentences, including people caught fly-tipping, help councils clear up litter and fly-tipped waste. In addition litter louts could be hit with £150 fines as the government seeks to curb littering with proposals for new enforcement, education and community engagement. The strategy can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/litter-strategy-for-england>.

## Drinking in the Street

The House of Commons Library has published a briefing paper looking at what the law says on drinking alcohol in the street. Member councils interested in reading the paper can download it from <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05117#fullreport>.

## Libraries – Alternative Delivery Models Toolkit

The Government has published a toolkit designed to help community groups and others considering the desirability, viability and feasibility of different models of library service provision in their communities. The toolkit can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-alternative-delivery-models-toolkit/introduction-to-alternative-delivery-models-toolkit>.

# CONSULTATIONS

## The use of free public parks

The Department for Communities and Local Government has published a consultation on Conserving the use of free public parks and are proposing to introduce legislation which would put it beyond doubt that local authorities, including local councils, cannot charge Park run or junior Park run for the use of public parks. The deadline for responses is 28 June and full details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/running-free-consultation-on-preserving-the-free-use-of-public-parks>

# EVENTS

## Selby Food and Drink Festival

Selby is a small Yorkshire Market town, 12 miles south of York with one of the most superb Abbey churches to be found anywhere in England. Selby Abbey is often called the hidden Gem of Yorkshire as no other church has the size, the age or the beauty that makes this building so unique. The Abbey is not just a building but a living and vibrant part of the local community.

Every year the Town Council holds a Food and Drink Festival on the Market Place in front of the Abbey, the festival is enjoyed by local residents and visitors to Selby, with entertainment and fabulous stalls from 9.30am – 5.00pm. This year's event takes place on Saturday 29 July 2017.



*Selby Abbey and the Market Place*

(Thank you to Selby Town Council for this article).

# FUNDING

## Community Asset Fund – Sport England

Sports clubs and community organisations can now apply for investment from the Community Asset Fund; Sport England's new capital fund dedicated to enhancing the spaces in local communities that give people the opportunity to be active. This fund will have a value of £15 million per annum with the anticipated size of bids between £1000 and £150,000.

Further information can be found [here](#).

## Community-led Buildings Grants – Locality

Any local council, neighbourhood forum or qualifying community group can apply for Pre-Feasibility grants (£1,000 to £10,000) and Project Support grants (£5,000 to £40,000) to help move a community-led building or community-led housing project to the point at which a Community Right to Build Order, or (in the case of community led housing projects only) a traditional planning permission application, can be submitted. These are revenue grants, which means that they do not cover the capital costs of land acquisition or constructing a building. Further information can be found [here](#).



## FUNDING

### Neighbourhood Planning Grants – Locality

All groups writing a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order are eligible to apply for between £1,000 and £9,000 in grant. Groups facing a range of complex issues can apply for further support from the programme.

This support can come in two forms:

- Technical support – there are a range of technical support packages that groups can apply for as and when they become needed.
- Groups are also eligible to apply for a further grant of up to £6,000 giving a total grant ceiling of £15,000 in the period 2015-18.

If your group has already received £8,000 in funding and are still working on your plan, you may apply for further funding up to the maximum of £9,000 (or £15,000 for complex groups).

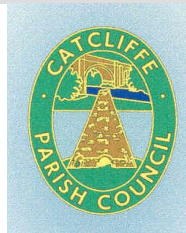
Applications for grant for 2017-18 can be submitted from 1 February 2017 until 1 October 2017.

Expenditure through a grant must be completed by 31 December 2017; further information can be found at: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/funding-options/neighbourhood-planning/>

## LATEST VACANCIES

### Catcliffe Parish Council (Rotherham District)

#### Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer



Catcliffe Parish Council are recruiting for a highly motivated experienced Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The hours per week are 18 and the remuneration is Local Government NJC SCP 30-34 (£26,822 to £30,153) pro rata. The post is responsible to the Council for the management of its properties, employees and to ensure that the legal provisions affecting the Council's activities are observed.

The ideal candidate must have a comprehensive understanding of financial accounting procedures and have good time management and organisational skills. The role offers a flexible approach with the option of working from the parish office or a combination of home and office.

The duties briefly include:

- Preparing the Council agendas and writing the minutes of the meetings
- Advising the Council on matters Legal and Financial
- Implementing the decisions of the Council
- Managing the Councils employees
- Management of the Parish Community Buildings
- Preparing the accounts and maintaining financial records
- Managing communications of the Council
- Editing the Parish News-letter

To request an application pack which includes a job specification and description please e-mail [catcliffepcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:catcliffepcouncil@gmail.com) or telephone 01709 837550.

The closing date for applications is Friday 9 June with interviews to take place within two to three weeks.

# LATEST VACANCIES

## **Brinsworth Parish Council (Rotherham District)** **Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

Brinsworth Parish Council is seeking a highly motivated, enthusiastic person for the post of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The hours of work are circa 28 per week and the salary is in accordance with Local Government NJC SCP 30-34 (£26,822 - £30,153) pro rata. The successful applicant will be accountable to the Council for the management of its resources and ensure that the legal, statutory and regulatory provisions affecting the Council's activities are observed.

A recently successful funding application to The Big Lottery has resulted in a project to demolish the existing Community Hall and build a new Resource Centre on the same site. This is due for completion early in 2018 and is an exciting development for the post holder to be involved with.

The ideal candidate will be someone with good organisational and communication skills who can work efficiently and effectively under pressure and on his/her initiative. The person will have financial, legal and administrative skills and be computer literate. Local government experience is desirable but not essential provided the applicant possesses the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) or is able to commit to undertaking the necessary training to obtain it.

The post holder will be required to attend three meetings per month (Thursdays) and work on occasional weekends. The duties include:-

- preparing agendas and writing minutes for each meeting
- advising the Council on legal and financial matters, ensuring that it is acting within its legal powers and responsibilities implementing the decisions of the Council
- managing the Council's 12 staff
- organising events
- liaising with the Council's partners and other agencies
- managing all posted/electronic communications
- managing all aspects of finance relating to the Council
- promoting the Council via its newsletter, website, social media and notice boards.

For a full application pack, including the job description, person specification and application form please contact the current post holder, Peter Wilkinson, by e-mail to: [brinsworthpc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:brinsworthpc@hotmail.co.uk) or telephone 01709 364199.

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Friday 9 June 2017 and interviews will be held within the following 2 to 3 weeks.

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