

Notts ALC Newsletter

February 2024

sent to Chairs and Clerks - please kindly forward to all councillors
This is a bit of a bumper issue – so much going on!

Notts ALC: New MEMBERS' AREA of the Website | Training | Jobs | BEST KEPT VILLAGE | Contributions Sought | Subs and Survey | 2 Commune Websites | National ALC (inc. S137) | HR | Notts CC | D-Day 80 | Internal Audit Forum | Gov updates | Notts ALC Service Directory |

Notts ALC – Members' Area of the website

You may remember that this was a 'coming soon' element when we launched the new website in the autumn. We investigated a members' login system, but this would have been difficult to manage because due to the turnover of clerks and councillors, the site member list would have had to be continually reviewed. We have therefore opted for a 'password protected' section of the website.

If you go to nottsalc.com and click on the **Members' Area**, either from the homepage or using the menu at the top of the page, you will be asked to give a password for the 'Guest Area'.

The password is **notts2024**

Every few months we will change this password via this newsletter.

This means that, at most, someone who leaves the sector will have a short time of access to member pages. It also means that all of you don't have to become 'members' of yet another website!

From the password-protected page you can **click on the links** to access:

- **job advert request form**
- **locum advert request form**
- **newsletters**
- **HR updates**

and there will soon be more in this area. Each link opens in a new window, so you can just click your browser tab at the top to return to the Members' Area window and click another link. (If you click the 'members' area' menu link from the new page you will find you are asked for the password again.)

Notts ALC – Training

All training currently arranged for 2024 (including Procurement, Planning, and both zoom and face-to-face sessions for New Councillor and Code of Conduct) is listed [HERE](#) and is bookable now. Coming up:



NEW COUNCILLOR 20/2 at Lowdham from 7pm. Aimed at new councillors but an excellent refresher for anyone who wants it. Face-to-face sessions are so beneficial for new or recent councillors as they get to meet and chat with others in the same position. If you have been a councillor for less than a year and haven't yet taken the training, or indeed if you'd like a refresher on the nuts and bolts and the opportunity to ask some questions, do join us on the 20th Feb. Book [HERE](#).



PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT WRITING 12/2 at 2pm via Zoom. It's not too late to book a place on this course! It's aimed at both clerks and councillors and covers procurement, tendering, writing simple contracts and using Contract Finder/Find a Tender. Cost is £45pp. More info and book: [HERE](#).



CODE OF CONDUCT 5/3 at East Markham from 7pm. Need to know more about the Code of Conduct and which interests you need to declare in a meeting? We have the perfect course for you! Cost is £45 pp. More info and book: [HERE](#).

Other courses of interest from partner organisations:

Emotional Intelligence & Resilience. This workshop from **Breakthrough Communications** (via Zoom) is for both officers and councillors and will enable you to better understand where behaviour comes from and what impacts the way we think and what we feel in response to everyday situations and challenges. You'll explore how to build personal resilience to help you be even more effective in your roles and consider different scenarios and how to respond to them. There are two dates available: Thursday 15th Feb 1-3pm or Monday 25th Mar 6:30-8:30 pm. Cost is £30 pp. Please book directly with Breakthrough [HERE](#) and Notts ALC will issue the invoice.

Memorial Testing Training. **Derbyshire ALC** have kindly offered our members the opportunity to book places on this workshop on Wednesday 3rd April from 10 am at the Whitworth Centre, Darley Dale. Cost is £150pp. Burial Ground operators have a duty of care to anyone working in, or visiting, their cemeteries, with responsibilities set out in various legislation including Local Authorities' Cemetery Order 1977 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This is a full day training course. Morning session – classroom based – will cover scope of risk and legal responsibilities including Health and Safety. Afternoon – practical session in a cemetery – Inspection of Cemeteries and Memorials. Who should attend: Anyone working in a cemetery and/or responsible for the safety and testing of memorials. To book a place please email Yvonne Culverson at Derbyshire ALC: training@derbyshirealc.gov.uk

Finance Training: At this time of year, **finance** is at the front of our minds! Click [here](#) to see and book on to any of the courses coming up from the **Parkinson Partnership**, and can we in particular draw your attention to:

- **20/2 at 10 am Year end and audit for councils over £25K**
- **22/2 at 10 am Finance for Councillors**
- **7/3 at 10 am Year end and audit for councils under £25K**

Notts ALC – job listings



When jobs are sent to us for (free) advertising we put them on our website ([Jobs](#)) and on our Facebook page. We do have a national shortage of clerks so if you see any jobs local to you that someone in your area might apply for, please do advertise them.

At the moment, **Farnsfield PC, Eganton PM and West Stockwith PC** are looking for a Clerk/RFO.

To ask us to advertise a job or locum position please use the online forms on the members' area [HERE](#) (password: notts2024).

Notts ALC with CPRE and RCAN: BEST KEPT VILLAGE 2024

We are delighted to be working with the CPRE, who have run the Best Kept Village Competition across the country for many decades, and RCAN Notts to deliver **BKV 2024**.

Entry is FREE for all villages and towns with a population of under 10,000 and we hope all eligible councils will enter!

Encouragement is coming in from diverse sources, including:

Robert Jenrick MP (Newark):

“The Best Kept Village Competition is a great opportunity to celebrate our rural communities and the dedication of residents in preserving and enhancing their local environment. I encourage all parish councils in the constituency to enter and am confident that we will be well represented on the category awards list!”

Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, Sir John Peace:

“I am delighted that CPRE will once again be running the Best Kept Village Competition in Nottinghamshire, this time with the support of Notts ALC. We are fortunate to live in a county rich in communities that take pride in their surroundings and I’m sure the judges will find their task very difficult. I look forward to seeing the competition showcase our wonderful villages over the coming months and encourage all parish councils to enter.”

All the information you need is available on our website page [HERE](#), with documents including full rules and conditions and an **online entry form**. Please note you need to upload a MAP of your village to enter, even if it’s a sketch on paper, to show the organisers where your village boundaries are.

We would prefer you to use the online form if at all possible for ease of data management - but if you are not able to, please email ceo@nottsalc.com with your registration info and map.



Notts ALC – call for newsletter contributions!

An attendee at a recent training session, who is new to being a councillor, made a great point – that it would be helpful to draw some ideas and inspiration from other councils.

Our new look AGM in the autumn, for which planning has begun, will celebrate great things happening across the county, but we can start now by spreading the word via this newsletter/website.

So if there is a project or something happening at your council that you would like to share, do send up to 300 words about it, and perhaps a photo, to Kaffy (ceo@nottsalc.com) and we will get the news out!

Notts ALC – subscriptions due

Please could clerks look out for **2024 subs invoices** in the coming days (and keep an eye on junk mail!). We are proud to support the parish and town council sector and look forward to continuing to serve you over the coming year.

A list of key benefits of membership can be found [HERE](#).

We would be very grateful if you would fill in this [RENEWAL SURVEY](#) to help us continue improving our service to you.

The infographic features the Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils logo at the top. Below it, the word 'MEMBERSHIP' is written in large white letters. A vertical list of five benefits is shown, each in a white rounded rectangle with a yellow circle containing a number. The word 'benefits' is written in a yellow cursive font across the list. At the bottom, contact information and a cursive slogan are provided.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
ASSOCIATION OF
LOCAL COUNCILS

MEMBERSHIP

- 1 Comprehensive expertise
- 2 Training and Development
- 3 National Support, Local Impact
- 4 Stay in the Loop
- 5 A connected community

www.nottsalc.com
queries@nottsalc.com
Facebook: @nottsalc

Your first port of call

2Commune Websites

I have sent this information previously by email but include it again here in case anyone has a 2Commune website and has missed it.

If you have a 2Commune website you will have been notified that they are no longer to operate website hosting, though they can continue to host the domain name and emails. Cuttlefish, the provider of the websites that 2Commune was reselling, have offered a seamless transition to councils for their website provision. We are confident that Cuttlefish are able to supply websites that comply with legislation etc. for parish councils. There is therefore no hurry to change to a brand new provider as your website can continue – you will just be paying Cuttlefish rather than 2Commune.

This of course remains an opportunity for the council to consider its website and whether it wants to think about a new provider or new domain name or moving to council (as opposed to private) emails for councillors. Please do consider this article from NALC: [The importance of secure email systems and GOV.UK domains for local councils - News \(nalc.gov.uk\)](#). You may like to get info and quotes from the different providers so that the council can make an informed choice:

- [Cuttlefish](#)
- [Parish Online](#) (running an info session for 2Commune councils on Monday 5/2 at 12 noon – link to register is [HERE](#))
- [Hugo Fox](#)

Whether you choose to stay with Cuttlefish or move to a new provider, our suggestion would be that you look to transfer the domain name and email service at the same time (even though 2Commune say they can continue these) for ease of use and access.

Our neighbouring county association in Leicestershire & Rutland (LRALC) have been liaising with 2Commune and Cuttlefish, which are both Leicestershire-based companies. They are putting up **weekly updates** [HERE](#).

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

1. Civility and Respect Pledge

This is a brilliant initiative and we are delighted that over 35 Notts councils have already signed up. Please have a look at all the information and materials [HERE](#) and also read the NALC President's open letter [HERE](#) for a wider view of the need for civility, respect and good practice in our councils. And if you aren't signed up yet, perhaps you could encourage your council to think about it!

2. Section 137 expenditure

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has notified NALC that the appropriate sum for section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for local (parish and town) councils in England for 2024/25 is **£10.81**. The amount is a result of increasing the amount of £9.93 for 2023/24 by the percentage increase in the retail index between September 2022 and September 2023 under Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act.

Cllr Keith Stevens, NALC chair, responded, "I welcome this notification from the government on the increase to section 137 expenditure for England's 10,000 local councils. This enables the first tier of local government to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory power, helping them continue to invest their small share of council tax to support and improve their communities."

3. Local Council Award Scheme Consultation

LCAS celebrates the successes of the best local councils and provides a framework to support all local councils in improving and developing to their full potential. As part of continued improvements to the scheme and a commitment to raising standards in local councils, NALC is seeking views on how the scheme's criteria and guidance can be improved. Please fill in the form [HERE](#).

4. Green Book first year discount

NALC recommends local councils align terms and conditions of the new model contracts with the best practices outlined in the rest of the local government sector, as defined by the Green Book. All local councils can sign up to the [LGA's Employer Link service](#), which includes access to the Green Book and other employment advice and guidance. NALC has agreed with the LGA a 15% discount on the first year (usual price £468) using the code NALC15.

5. NALC National Network: Women councillors

NALC is currently running a [survey](#) for the network designed to provide insight into the experiences of women within the sector and how they would like to shape the delivery of the network and its work over the next two years. You can find out how to join the network [HERE](#).

6. BBC story on harassment of councillors by the public

Look out for a concerning story across BBC news channels on Monday 5/2 that NALC is contributing to – about a recent rise in the harassment and abuse of councillors by members of the public.

HR Updates

Please see [HERE](#) for an update from Worknest on changes to Employment Law for 2024.

Nottinghamshire County Council

(From information sent to us:)

1. Survey on issues relating to child poverty

As part of the Life Chances group, (a sub-group of the Best Start Partnership), focused on helping address the effects of child poverty, we have carried out some initial mapping of baby bank provision in Nottinghamshire and whilst there is provision in our neighbouring local authorities, we have been unable to identify provision within the county of Nottinghamshire. To this end, we are keen to work with the community and voluntary sector to try to establish provision to support Nottinghamshire families. Our initial idea is that some existing community groups and organisations might be willing to explore extending their existing offer. This consultation will help us gather information as to what support may be needed and identify any organisations who would be happy to work with us to develop baby banks, ideally building a supportive local network, to link with the national baby bank network [Baby Bank Alliance](#) and funding opportunities. [Please give us your views here.](#)

2. Planning Validation Guidance Consultation

Councils are invited to comment on **the proposed new planning validation list – please note the consultation closes 5th February**. Full information and how to comment can be found [HERE](#).

D-Day 80

This year is of course the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings. Local councils across the country will be involved in this important commemoration. The national organisers have written to local councils about how to get involved - click [HERE](#) and then on the paperclip to open the letter.

Update from the Internal Audit Forum

It is only 'best practice' that the Annual Internal Audit Report is displayed on council websites – but to aid transparency and accountability for local communities, the **Internal Audit Forum recommends that the Annual Internal Audit Report should be displayed on your website**, and this will be recommended in the new Practitioner's Guide for 2024.

News from Government

(From Local Government bulletin:)

1. Revised Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 published

DLUHC has recently (26/1) published [a revised Town and Country Planning \(Consultation\) \(England\) Direction 2024 \(Consultation Direction\)](#) in response to [Section 136 of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023](#). It requires local planning authorities in England to consult the Secretary of State for LUHC before granting planning permission for certain types of development.

2. Health and Social Care Act 2008 update and consultation

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) [held a consultation in June 2023 on visiting in care homes, hospitals and hospices and published the government response on 5 December](#). In December

2023, the government laid before Parliament the [Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated Activities\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023](#), which sets a standard for visiting in care homes, hospitals and hospices. The regulations will commence on 6 April. [The Care Quality Commission \(CQC\) is now consulting on its proposed guidance for this legislation to help the health and social care sector understand what is required of them](#). The CQC has published draft guidance and invites councils to give their feedback through the [online form](#) or [easy read](#). The consultation closes at midday on 20 February. If you have any questions, please contact: visiting@dhsc.gov.uk.

Notts ALC – Service Directory

Don't forget we have businesses that advertise with us who work within our sector – you can find them in our [SERVICE DIRECTORY](#). We have listings from companies in the fields of Building Preservation, IT, Creative, Employment Advice, Insurance, Legal, Outdoor Equipment and Street Furniture. In the newsletter this month, we feature:

OUTDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT AND FITNESS

[HAGS Limited Clockhouse Nurseries](#): *HAGS is a leading global provider of play, sports, and outdoor recreation solutions with over 50 years of experience. We balance community needs with maintenance requirements, offering design flexibility and budget optimization. Our mission is to promote activity through inclusive and engaging outdoor spaces.*

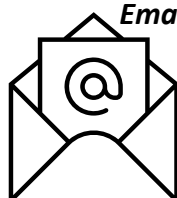
[Playinnovation](#): *We specialise in getting people active through the creation of patented, unique and exciting family inclusive activity areas. Collaborators and partners range from NIKE to the Football Foundation, and memberships include the API (Association of Play Industries) and SAPCA.*

[Sovereign Play](#): *Sovereign Play, based in the UK, offers a diverse range of outdoor timber and steel play equipment, providing solutions for any budget. With a personal approach, innovative design, and in-house installation teams, we ensure top-quality results and ongoing support. Benefit from quick spare parts turnaround and a no obligation consultation.*

[Streetscape](#): *Based in North Yorkshire, we specialise in playground equipment, outdoor fitness, and more. Family-run, we offer free site surveys, funding advice and designs for all budgets. With expertise meeting industry standards and experienced leadership, we provide tailored solutions and arrange site visits for firsthand inspection of completed projects.*

Please note that Notts ALC does not recommend individual companies.

And finally... Notts ALC – Getting in touch



Email is the best way to reach us. You can get in touch via:

queries@nottsalc.com – for queries/advice

ceo@nottsalc.com – for Kaffy, CEO

admin@nottsalc.com – for Julie (finance, admin)

training@nottsalc.com – for Sue (training)

With best wishes,
Notts ALC