

Notts ALC Newsletter

January 2024

sent to Chairs and Clerks - please kindly forward to all councillors

New Email Addresses | Training | Survey |
NALC (biodiversity, new employment contract, grant funding change) |
| HR updates | D-Day 80 | PCC | Home energy | East Midlands Councils |

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

A reminder that we have a new website www.nottsalc.com and new email addresses.

queries@nottsalc.com – for queries/advice

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

training@nottsalc.com – for Sue (training)

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.

We will alert you to additional sessions as we arrange them through the year; in addition to more New Councillor and Code of Conduct sessions, these are likely to include Cemetery Management (April), Chaining Skills (June), Playground Safety (Sept), Allotments (Nov) and Employment/HR (Dec).

We would also like to recommend the courses of our partners Breakthrough Communications and Parkinson Partnership – these are offered by arrangement to our members and you will be invoiced by us. In particular you may be interested in:

BREAKTHROUGH COMMUNICATIONS: Click [here](#) to book.

- **FOI for councils** – requirements and obligations under the Act and what policies and procedures to have in place (22nd Jan 1pm)
- **Dealing with difficult people and conversations** – practical techniques and ideas to manage difficult people and conversations in a council environment (24th Jan 1.30pm)

PARKINSON PARTNERSHIP: Click [here](#) to book.

- **Finance for Councillors** – to give councillors a greater understanding of their duties with regard to finance (16th Jan 10am)

Notts ALC – last chance to contribute to our *joint survey*

In conjunction with Rural Community Action for Nottinghamshire, we are running a **wide-ranging survey** to understand more about the wants and needs of parish and town councils across the county, so that as the support sector we can look to provide the best possible service to you. Clerks and any councillors are invited to fill in the survey, which can be found [here](#). The survey will close on Monday 15th January at 5pm.

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

1. **BIODIVERSITY DUTY – ***action required*****

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarified that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the Government guidance required all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024, with policies and actions formulated soon after. If you haven't started on this yet, don't panic! Have a look at the guidance (full information and a model biodiversity policy can be found [HERE](#)) and put it on your next agenda.

2. **NEW EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS**

The new employment contract (for new employees) has been produced by NALC and SLCC – please see an email sent to you regarding this on 22/12/23 for full details. Further information can be found [HERE](#).

3. **NEW LEGISLATION re: grants for church projects**

Following a change to legislation, NALC recommends that its members adopt the government's view when they receive requests for funding. This means that councils can use their discretionary powers to fund church repairs or improvements. It applies in the case of:

- Specific powers to fund works - for example, repairs to clocks fixed to church property (section 2 of the Parish Councils Act 1957) and the maintenance of open churchyards (section 214 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act)).
- General powers to fund works where works are not covered by a specific power - section 137 of the 1972 Act and the general power of competence can also be used by councils to fund requests for works not covered by specific powers.

A NALC briefing note can be found [HERE](#) (you may need to log in to NALC with nottsmember / aX2eJHKK) and we advise that all councillors should be aware of this change. We further suggest that councils take this opportunity to review or create a grants policy. A model grants policy can be found [HERE](#) (password = **news2024**).

HR Updates

Please see [HERE](#) (password = **hr2024**) for this month's update from our HR advisor Chris Moses. This month, Chris covers the new Flexible Working Act and Carers' Allowances.

D-Day 80

You will be aware that this year is 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 PCC Caroline Henry – policing precept survey

“As Police and Crime Commissioner, I have a duty each year to set a balanced budget and set the amount of funding that will be generated through council tax locally, known as the ‘policing precept’. Police officer numbers are now at their highest level in over a decade in Nottinghamshire, however inflationary costs and the rising scale and complexity of policing demand continue to place increasing pressure on our services. This is despite the year on year efficiency savings that we continue to deliver. I know that policing, crime reduction and community safety are important issues to the residents of Nottinghamshire, but I am also acutely aware of the financial pressures being faced by many Nottinghamshire households. To help me get the balance right, I hope you might be willing to take part in the consultation. It should take about three minutes. Take part by visiting www.nottinghamshire.pcc.police.uk/precept”

Home energy advice

The charity Marches Energy Agency, together with Nottingham Energy Partnership, are running a new project to provide home improvement guidance and energy surveys to home owners in Notts. They would like to promote their events and workshops via parish magazines so if you have contact details for these, could you drop Peter Burgess-Allen a line on peter@mea.org.uk. Information about the project can be found here: <https://www.homeenergyadviceteamhub.uk/>

Update from East Midlands Councils

“On Thursday 7th December, Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derby City Council and Nottingham City Council each approved plans to create the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), which will come into existence next Spring. EMCCA is set to bring in around £4bn of funding for the region, alongside devolved powers for transport, skills and adult education, housing, the environment and economic development. The Government will now need take the deal before Parliament, as this is first of a new type of combined authority and it requires new legislation. If the legislation is passed in the coming weeks it would come into force by March 2024, meaning the EMCCA will officially come into existence. The inaugural election for East Midlands Mayor will take place on 2 May 2024.”

With best wishes, Notts ALC



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