

Notts ALC Newsletter

April 2024



**sent to Chairs and Clerks –
please kindly forward to all councillors**

Events | Notts ALC Training | Best Kept Village | Renewal Survey | NALC | Woodland Trust | PCC | NSDC survey | NCC Electric Blanket safety | D-Day 80 | Service Directory | Reminders

Events

Notts ALC attended two events in March.



RUSHCLIFFE TOWN AND PARISH FORUM

Kaffy and Julie attended the Town and Parish Forum arranged by RCAN (Jenny Kirkwood, far right) at the Rushcliffe Arena on Friday 22nd March. Delegates heard an update on Borough activities from Cllr Abby Brennan (centre) and an explanation of the complaints process from the Monitoring Officer, Gemma Dennis (second from left). Kaffy (second from right) spoke about the work of the Association, the Civility and Respect Project, the Code of Conduct and the Local Council Award Scheme. The morning concluded with a Q&A facilitated by CEO Kath Marriott (far left).

It was brilliant to see so many councillors and clerks from the Rushcliffe area and we are now working with RCAN to run similar events with the other district/borough councils – watch this space!

RCAN VILLAGE HALLS EVENT

Kaffy, Sue and Julie (left to right in the photo on the next page) attended RCAN's free community buildings network event at Bingham Arena on Wednesday 27th March. This event was open to all councils and village hall committees county-wide. Speakers included the chair of a village hall on the projects they were running and a representative from the borough council on how to decarbonise

your building. We also heard from Rob Bryant at Notts CC about the [nottshelpyourself](#) directory – if you’ve not heard of it, do take a look. You may have events you can list on it or you may be able to direct residents to it when they need help.



If you know of an event being run in your area that we could usefully attend with our banners and leaflets, do drop us a line!



Notts ALC – Training

All training currently arranged for 2024 is listed [HERE](#) and is bookable now. Coming up:

Biodiversity

Wed 10th April 10am via Zoom. £45pp.

Did you know Parish and Town Councils now have a duty to help promote biodiversity and should have passed a resolution to adopt a policy supporting biodiversity? This 2-hour webinar will identify the practical changes and steps councils can realistically take to improve and support biodiversity in their parishes.

Committee Meetings

Mon 22nd April 10am via Zoom. £45pp.

Everything you ever needed to know about committees, sub-committees and working parties. Suitable for both Clerks and Councillors. This is the first time we have offered this course and it looks like it will be very popular. Don't delay, book your place today and make sure decisions made by your council's committees are not unnecessarily ratified at full council or possibly subject to a legal challenge.

Parish Councillor

Wed 24th April 7pm via Zoom. £45pp

We still have places available on this popular course; even if you're an experienced councillor there may be things you're not sure of. Do you know how the Band D Tax Base is calculated? What is Section 137 and why do I need to know? What changes have been made to declaring any interests I have? Join us over Zoom for an interactive, fun 2 hours and find out. *(Ok, says Sue, I can't guarantee fun, but I'll do my best and the refreshments are the best your kitchen is able to provide.)*

Code of Conduct

Thu 2nd May 7pm via Zoom. £45pp

Yes, we know it's not the most exciting way to spend your evening, but do you know what the Ledbury ruling is and how it may affect your council? Did you know there have been changes to interests you must declare? Just who is the Monitoring Officer and what do they do? All these questions will be answered and a lot more besides. We at Notts ALC see what happens when there are problems at a Parish or Town Council and many of them just wouldn't happen if councillors knew and followed the Code of Conduct.

Planning Nuts & Bolts

Wed 5th June 10am via Zoom. £45pp

A very popular course for either Councillors or Clerks, covering the basic principles of planning, including policy, applications, appeals and enforcement. A two-hour course from Lance Wiggins, who has many years' experience as a planning consultant for local councils and a volume house builder.

Chair Skills

Wed 12th June 7pm Epperstone Village Hall. £50pp.

For Chairs newly elected in May or existing Chairs who would like to brush up on their skills. What duties does a Chair have? How do I chair a challenging meeting? How do I get the best out of my fellow Councillors? Come along and find out! Tea, coffee and biscuits included, as well as the opportunity to chat to your fellow Chairs.

Finance (Parkinson Partnership). All on Zoom, £30pp. Details [HERE](#).

- **16/4 10am** VAT for VAT registered councils
- **23/4 10am** VAT for unregistered councils (VAT 126)
- **25/4 6.30pm** Finance for Councillors

Crisis Communications (Breakthrough Communications), various dates in March, May & June. Via Zoom, £30pp.

Would your council know how to respond to a sudden crisis? That may be flooding, a large planning application, or even the recording of your last meeting 'going viral' for all the wrong reasons. For info and booking link, see [HERE](#).



BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2024



Kaffy was pleased to meet up last month with representatives from Farnsfield Parish Council and Farnsfield Community Spaces who put together the successful submission in 2019, and as this was the last time the competition ran, Farnsfield is currently crowned Best in Notts!

Cllr Lesley Healy said: *"It was about community effort. It was fifth time lucky. We were always runners up, always the bridesmaid, never the bride! It brought the village together and everyone got involved. It's raised the profile of the village and it's just a fun thing to do, gets everyone on board. It's about pride in the place that you live."*

Entry is FREE for all towns and villages with a population of under 10,000.

Councillor Ben Bradley MP says: *"The Best-Kept Village Competition has long been a cornerstone of community pride and engagement, showcasing the dedication of village volunteers and parish councils in nurturing our rural communities. It's fantastic to see this event back for 2024 and I'd like to thank CPRE Nottinghamshire and Notts ALC for their collaborative efforts in making this possible. This competition not only celebrates the beauty of our villages but also recognises the hard work and commitment of our volunteers and parish councils. I urge all villages in Nottinghamshire to get involved as we celebrate the beauty and charm of our County and showcase the pride we have in our communities."*

Thanks to those of you who have entered already, and for those still considering... 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. CLOSING DATE 17th MAY.



Minster Chambers, Church Street, Southwell NG25 0HD
President: Ivor Walker Chair: Cllr Mick Baker CEO: Kaffy Rice-Oxley
Email: queries@nottsalc.com Phone: 01636 816890 Website: www.nottsalc.com
[Facebook](#)

Notts ALC Renewal Survey – please complete!

Thank you to those councils who have already paid their subs for next year. 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](#). **Please fill in this [RENEWAL SURVEY](#) by April 7th to help us continue improving our service to you.**

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

- 1. [Reissued guidance on pre-election publicity](#):** NALC has reissued legal briefing L01-24 on the code of recommended practice on local authority publicity in England and publicity during the pre-election period – and with the Mayoral elections just weeks away we are now in a pre-election period. Read a copy of the briefing [HERE](#) (password for members' area: notts2024)
- 2. [Parish Council Domains Helper Service - .gov.uk domains](#):** Are you thinking about going .gov.uk? Just complete the [simple form](#) to register your interest, and the Parish Council Domains Helper Service will invite you to one of the 45 min free introductory sessions. You can pick a date and time that is most convenient for you. They'll also tell you how to access the £100 (plus VAT) funding to help with initial costs!
- 3. [Local audit backlog consultation](#):** NALC recently responded to the government's [consultation on addressing the local audit backlog in England](#), intensifying its campaign to exempt local councils from entering the rigorous Category 1 full audit regime. In our response, NALC backed the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) proposal to eliminate the existing minimum threshold of £6.5 million per annum for the full audit regime, arguing local councils and internal drainage boards should be classified as smaller authorities, irrespective of their turnover. NALC's response also called for an increase to the £25,000 audit threshold and introduction of a transparency code for councils with turnover between this lower threshold and £200,000. Read the full consultation response [here](#).
- 4. [A new edition of the Practitioners' Guide](#):** NALC has published the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) 2024 edition of the Practitioners' Guide. The 2024 edition applies to Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2024. The most notable changes to the Practitioners' Guide this year are a stronger encouragement for councils to use .gov.uk domains for websites and emails, and a recommendation that local councils publish their full internal audit report on their website alongside the AGAR. [Read the Practitioners' Guide](#) on the NALC website.
- 5. [Community Ownership Fund](#):** The fourth and final round of the government's £150 million Community Ownership Fund opened for applications on 25th March. The fund, which was opened last year to allow applications from local councils as a result of NALC's lobbying, aims to support communities to take ownership of assets at risk of being lost and those already in community ownership but in need of essential renovations to be sustainable. Local councils can bid for up to £2 million in capital funding and £50,000 in revenue to help protect local assets such as sports

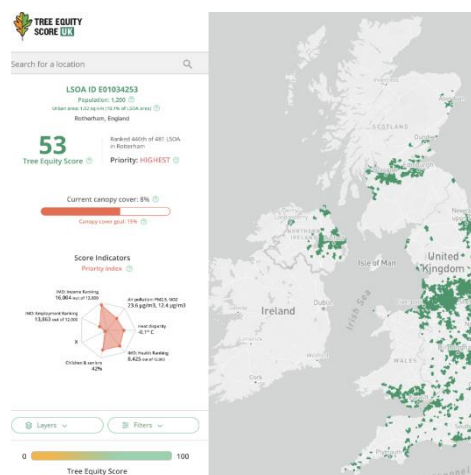
facilities, arts and music venues, museums and galleries, parks, pubs, post offices and shops. The first window of the fourth round is open until **10th April**, with the second window due to open in late May. More information, including how to apply, is [HERE](#).

- 6. Council tax levels for 2024/25:** The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) [has published information on council tax levels set by councils in England for the financial year 2024/25](#). The average Band D precept charged by local precepting bodies (including local councils) for 2024/25 will be £85.88, an increase of £6.74 or 8.5% on 2023/24. Total precepts in 2024/25 are £783 million, £75 million higher than last year and just 1.9% of overall council tax.

The Woodland Trust – free trees! and more

Kaffy recently met up with Ben Green, External Affairs Officer for the Woodland Trust, to hear about how the Trust can support our councils as they look to care for and increase the greenery and trees in their communities. There are various initiatives to be aware of:

1. [Register NOW](#) for November delivery of free trees!
2. Check out your [Tree Equity Score](#) – enter your postcode to see how your area compares. Tree Equity Score UK (pic on the right) is a map-based application that was created to help address disparities in urban tree distribution by identifying the areas in greatest need of people-focused investment in trees.
3. Sign up to the [Tree Charter](#) movement – lots of info and advice here.
4. Consider using trees in areas that flood – the Woodland Trust works in partnership with councils to support flood mitigation planting. Drop us a line at queries@nottsalc.com if you would like us to put you in touch with Ben.



PCC's newsletter

Read the March newsletter from our PCC Caroline Henry [HERE](#).

Newark and Sherwood DC – PSPO survey

A number of Newark and Sherwood's Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) will come to an end in 2024 and as such, a review of the PSPOs and the related information is being undertaken, and the Council is reaching out to residents, businesses, partner agencies and wider groups to hear their thoughts. To comment on the proposed list of orders and their content you can fill out the survey which will be open to responses until Sunday 14th April. See [HERE](#) for info and the survey link.

FREE electric blanket safety messaging materials

From the Trading Standards Officer at Notts CC, Tessa Coates: *Following on from the very successful electric blanket testing events that Nottinghamshire Trading Standards ran last year, we now have posters and leaflets on electric blanket safety available for use in the community. **68% of all blankets tested failed basic safety checks** during our testing events, and we know that there are still thousands more in people's homes throughout Nottinghamshire. **Two Nottinghamshire residents lost their lives last winter due to fires started by faulty electric blankets and we want to try and stop this happening again.** Our materials are free of charge and aim to spread the message of the dangers of electric blankets and what to look out for when buying new blankets. There is a PDF [HERE](#) (password for members area: notts2024) , however we also have hard copy A5 leaflets and A4 sized posters available that we can post out. If you have anywhere you can display the poster or give out leaflets, then please write to trading_standards@nottscc.gov.uk and we will send them free of charge.*

D-Day 80

The 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings is fast approaching. 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.

FLAG OF PEACE: A simple, meaningful and cost-effective way to support the 80th anniversary is to fly the D-Day 80 Flag of Peace from 9am on 6th June, leaving it up for one week should you wish to. The Flags come in various sizes and can be purchased direct from official suppliers Newton Newton Flags Limited – see [The D-Day 80 Flag of Peace - Newton Newton](#).

Notts ALC – Services Directory

Don't forget we have businesses that advertise with us who work within our sector – you can find them in our [SERVICES 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:**

Clear Councils Insurance (Previously BHIB Councils)

0330 0130036 councils@thecleargroup.com www.clearcouncils.co.uk

With local councils providing an ever-growing range of services, it is more important to have sector experts you can rely on and be partnered with to support and arrange the right protection for you. At Clear Councils we provide tailor-made, insurance and risk management solutions through an experienced specialist team dedicated to local councils. Get in touch to discuss your insurance with a Council Insurance specialist broker and get a free, no-obligation independent review and quotation. Clear Councils is part of Clear Insurance Management.

Surrey Hills Solicitors

296 High Street, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1QT, 01306 877592

enquiries@surreyhillssolicitors.co.uk www.surreyhillssolicitors.co.uk

Surrey Hills Solicitors offer a wealth of legal experience in key areas including: Allotments, Burial Ground & Cemeteries, Commons, Green & Open Spaces, Council Procedures and Practice, Data Protections and Freedom of Information, Employment Law, Footpaths and Rights of Way, Land and Property, Litigation, Village Halls and Charities.

Our focus is to work alongside our clients to achieve the best possible outcome. We work in an efficient way offering you an excellent service at a cost-effective price.



Minster Chambers, Church Street, Southwell NG25 0HD

President: Ivor Walker **Chair: Cllr Mick Baker** **CEO: Kaffy Rice-Oxley**
Email: queries@nottsalc.com Phone: 01636 816890 Website: www.nottsalc.com

[Facebook](#)

Reminders



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.

Job Listings

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

Jobs listed at the moment are at:

- EGMANTON PM
- GRANBY CUM SUTTON PC
- MATTERSLEY PC
- NORTON, CUCKNEY, HOLBECK AND WELBECK PC
- RADCLIFFE ON TRENT PC
- NEWARK TC
- WESTON PC
- WEST STOCKWITH PC

Members' Area of the Notts ALC website

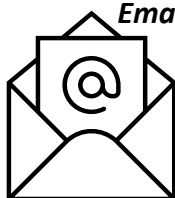
If you go to nottsalc.com and click on the **Members' Area**, either from the homepage or using the menu at the top of the page, you will be asked to give a password for the 'Guest Area'.

The password is **notts2024**

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

From the password-protected page you can **click on the links** to access items including the job and locum advert request forms, copies of the newsletter, FAQs and HR updates.

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