



How to 'stay safe' as a councillor

Whether it's dealing with an unexpected doorstep visitor or handling unwelcome behaviour while out in your community, a new Government-funded webinar later this month aims to help councillors keep themselves safe. Run by the Local Government Association (LGA) as part of its Civility in Public Life Programme, the webinar will also deal with home visits and surgeries, and will take place on [January 16th, from 2-3.40pm](#).

A second session, dealing with online abuse and intimidation, will take place on [January 30th, from 2-3.40pm](#). In addition, the LGA will hold a webinar specifically targeted at safer canvassing – this will take place on [February 6th, from 2-3.30pm](#).

Councillors are welcome to register for any or all sessions via the links above.



Planning a VE Day 80th anniversary event?

As the countdown to VE Day's 80th anniversary begins, organisers of celebratory events can get advice and ideas from a website run by the late Queen's former pageantmaster Bruno Peek. The www.VEday80.org.uk site has details of beacons and lamplights which can be used to mark the occasion, as well as bringing together details of church services, bell-ringing, street parties and singalongs.



Terror law checklist published

As the legislation known as Martyn's Law reaches the report stage in the House of Commons, an anti-terror checklist has now been published giving councils a 'heads-up' on how to prepare.

Applicable to parish and town councils of all sizes, the list aligns with the anticipated requirements of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill. The checklist can be accessed on our website here - [Anti Terror Checklist.docx](#)



Suspension for bad behaviour – new consultation

Suspension of councillors for serious code of conduct breaches is one of the options being explored via a new Government consultation. Titled 'Strengthening the standards and conduct framework', the [consultation is open until 21st February and can be found here](#), and members are urged to respond. Views are also sought on the introduction of a mandatory code of conduct, alongside measures to ensure consistency in how councils deal with breaches. New rules would bolster the Localism Act 2011, which removed the ombudsman from the parish and town council sector.



2025/26 finance settlement – your views sought

As expected, the latest Local Government finance proposals include no limit on how much parish and town councils can increase their precept (known as the referendum principles). However, views are sought from all sectors, including ours, on the overall Finance Settlement, [via an open survey document here](#) which runs for just four weeks from December 18th-January 15th. Background and details of the Government's finance settlement, including its plans for areas such as social care, education, small business rates and recovery grants, [can be accessed here](#).



All change for audit system?

Aimed at ensuring local council audit takes “centre stage in local scrutiny”, the Government is seeking to “radically simplify the system” and now seeks our [sector's views on its plans](#). Jim McMahon, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, outlines some of the [Government's proposals in a letter here](#). The [accompanying formal consultation document](#) applies mostly to principal authorities, but there are proposals which impact parish and town councils and therefore we encourage members to respond.

Specifically:

Q1 – should there be a new Local Audit Office (LAO)?

Q3 – should the new LAO be responsible for external audit, instead of the current arrangements?

Q28/29 – should the thresholds for audit be increased (at present it is a more stringent process if turnover exceeds £25k)?

Q30 – any other suggestions on changing the regime (including point 121 towards the end of the survey which discusses elector rights and the process in relation to Parish Meetings).

The consultation will last for six weeks from December 18th-January 29th. DALC and NALC will also be responding.

New Year, New Fund, New Plan...

Derbyshire Police & Crime Commissioner Nicolle Ndiweni-Roberts has launched a new community fund alongside her five-year plan for the county. The new [Safer and Stronger Communities Fund](#) will provide grants of up to £5k to help deliver against the priorities outlined in her newly-launched 2024-29 Police & Crime Plan for Derbyshire. These are aimed at tackling issues that residents and businesses have consistently told her are most important:

- Serious violence including violence against women and girls
- Anti-social behaviour and community safety
- Neighbourhood policing
- Bringing offenders to justice
- Drugs and substance misuse
- Supporting victims and safeguarding

Details of the Police & Crime Plan 2024-29, which also incorporates measures dealing with rural crime, online safety and road safety, [can be found here](#).

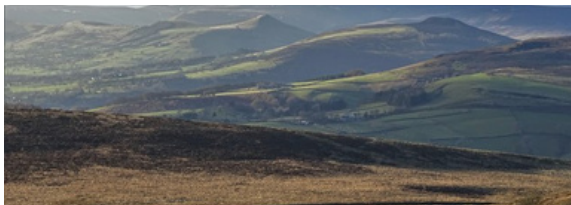
New Year, New Habitats...

Want to plant more trees so your community can support nature recovery? If so, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has a free morning workshop on February 6th which will explore access to funding, community involvement and volunteer support. The session will also discuss pasture and hedgerows, and will feature guest speakers and Q&A. The workshop will take place at Bakewell's Agricultural Business Centre from 9am-noon, and refreshments will be available. To book your place, please RSVP to DLF@derbyshirewt.co.uk.



Go with the FOI flow

A flow chart outlining the FOI process has been produced by our communications partner Breakthrough, giving a clear route for dealing with FOI requests. Councils are reminded that they have 20 working days to respond, starting the day after the request is received. NALC have a legal briefing on FOI to support councils and you can always call the DALC office for further support. The handy [flow chart can be found here](#).



Peak Park gets new powers

New habitats, better public access and more protection for peat moorlands are among the expected benefits of a raft of new powers for the Peak District National Park, says the Government. Marking the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, which created the park, the new powers will give “a clear mandate to widen the public’s access to nature”, and aim to boost nature’s recovery. The UK-wide reforms will also give local communities the ability to create new parks and green spaces under a new Community Right to Buy. [Further details can be found here](#).

Revised National Planning Policy Framework

On 12 December 2024, the [government announced major changes to the National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF). The purpose is to support the prime minister's recent Plan for Change, which targets delivering 1.5 million new homes over five years. Key changes to the NPPF include introducing mandatory housing targets for principal authorities to accelerate housebuilding, focusing on areas with the highest housing unaffordability and greatest growth potential. Principal authorities must also review greenbelt boundaries while adhering to a brownfield-first approach. Any development on greenbelt land must meet strict requirements through the new Golden Rules, which require developers to provide the necessary infrastructure for local communities, such as nurseries, GP surgeries and transport, and a premium level of social and affordable housing. Additionally, there will be a greater emphasis on social rent, with principal authorities and developers required to prioritise this in new developments. At the same time, local leaders will have increased powers to deliver affordable housing. NALC will examine the implications for parish and town councils, particularly neighbourhood planning, and will publish further information in due course. Our next Planning Training course is on 03 March at 6.00pm and is open for bookings [here](#).

Warning over devolution plans

The role of England’s 10,000+ parish and town councils as “the community tier of local government” must be recognized in any devolution plan, NALC has warned. Following Angela Rayner’s announcement of the English Devolution White Paper, NALC chair Keith Stevens called for measures to “enhance neighbourhood governance”, including strengthening civility and respect, allowing hybrid meetings, and giving support for new financial burdens such as National Insurance. He highlighted the proven track record of parish and town councils in responding effectively to issues such as the pandemic, flooding emergencies and supporting economic growth: “We’ve already demonstrated our ability to deliver on key government priorities at a local level – with the proper devolution framework, we can achieve even more. Our councils can be a strong voice for our most local neighbourhoods and help address fears of remote government resulting from any larger unitaries set up. “By strengthening their role, the government can ensure that devolution delivers tangible benefits for communities nationwide.”



Energy Partnership update

Clear Utility Solutions' latest update notes that 45 parish and town councils across Derbyshire are purchasing energy through this bulk purchase solution, with a cumulative saving of £44K since we started the scheme. If your council would like to know more about how this may save you money, follow the link to their [website](#).

Upcoming training

HR Appraisals
14/1/2025

The Role of Internal Audit
15/01/2025

Allotments 1
21/01/2025

Key points include tenancy agreements, common issues, and practical solutions for effective allotment management.

Clerk Essentials part 1
27/01/2025

Clerk Essentials Part 2
30/01/2025

New Clerk Finance (plus second course free if you attend)
28/01/2025

Allotments 2
04/02/2025

Key Points site Facilities / Health and Safety aspects of Allotment Management

Data Protection GDPR
24/02/2025

FOI
25/02/2025

January Forum Session Wednesday 22nd January

Clerks: 1.00pm to cover use of tablets for councillors, document and record retention matters, consultations on standards and external audit, plus any other topics you wish to discuss

Chairs: 2.30pm to cover engaging with younger councillors, consultations on standards and external audit, concerns regarding devolution announcement for our sector, plus any other topics you wish to discuss. Follow the link here to join

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4663925358?pwd=SUNVcFcyG5JalFsZVZGSkhXVGpyZz09>

Meeting ID: 466 392 5358

Passcode: DALC22



County 'pre-election' period announced

The pre-election period for this year's county council elections begins on March 25th, we have been informed.

Tree Survey and Inspections
11/03/2025

DALC Portal Training
20/02/2025

Councillor Essentials
27/02/2025

Introduction to Planning and Design Codes
03/03/2025

HR Essentials
06/03/2025

Charity Training Part 1
17/03/2025

This course covers the essential aspects of charitable trusts, including their nature and purpose, the requirements for establishing a charitable trust,

Charity Training part 2
18/03/2025

This course provides an overview of trusteeship, focusing on the general roles and responsibilities of trustees, including custodian, holding, and management trustees.

Grants and Funding
13/05/2025

Sustainability
15/05/2025

Please keep an eye out as we'll be adding even more new courses for the new year. You can book [online here!](#)

