



E-NEWS UPDATE...

Lincolnshire Councils Covid-19 Impact Survey

A huge thank you to those Councils that have taken the time to complete and return the Covid-19 Impact Survey.

Although the closing date has now passed, we are asking those Councils which have not yet responded to please do so as the information we are asking for is extremely important in assessing the impact of Coronavirus on the Councils and Communities in Lincolnshire, particularly in regard to any financial impact that Covid-19 has caused.

As previously highlighted, the information gathered is being used to feed back to Lincolnshire's MP's about the financial implications faced by some Councils in the region but also to shout up about the fantastic support each of you are currently offering your communities.

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LALC News Summer Edition 2020 – Share Your Good News Stories!

As always, we are looking to share Good News Stories in the next edition of LALC News which will be published in July/August. Most especially, for this edition, we are looking to receive stories of fantastic community support and Councils and community members going above and beyond during the Covid-19 Outbreak.

Please could those interested share a small article with us at amy.bestwick@lalc.co.uk by Friday 18th July 2020 and we will endeavour to share as many of these as possible.

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There has been many queries over the last couple of weeks with regard to the re-opening of play areas and also councils meeting face-to-face. NALC have released guidance which can be found below and on the website. It is important that prior to the re-opening of play areas, village halls, etc that a risk assessment is carried out and BHIB have produced guidance and templates (previously circulated and uploaded to the website) which councils may find useful.

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LALC are continuing to work remotely. Lindsey is in the office Monday, Tuesday and Friday whilst Amy and myself are working from home. June was an extremely busy month, as CILCA training was being delivered remotely, as well as weekly meetings and the usual queries. We will endeavour to answer your calls and emails as quickly as possible. Further remote training has been planned for some of the courses that have been cancelled and Lindsey will be contacting the delegates to ascertain their wish to join the remote training sessions.

We have also received several queries with regard to the new LCC websites and hopefully most of you will have received the latest LCC newsletter with the following statement:

Apologies for the delay as we had hoped to send this information earlier. However, we are now able to start sending out log-in details and access to websites to all those who were able to attend the training sessions before the rest were unfortunately cancelled due to the covid pandemic.

We will also be releasing virtual training dates for everyone at your parish that wants to learn how to use the website that needs access. Training dates will take place from mid-July and through August.

Please keep an eye out for these emails over the next coming weeks.

Thank you for your continued patience with the roll out of the websites.

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A reminder to councils

Coronavirus and cybersecurity

The [National Centre for Cyber Security](#) has [launched a campaign](#) geared towards the public during COVID-19 times. This includes useful best practice we can all be following at work, but also it is useful information to share with residents.

Two of NALC's partners have also provided advice for local councils on cybersecurity:

- Microshade has provided additional [advice for local councils as fraudsters are exploiting the spread of coronavirus to facilitate various types of fraud and cybercrime](#).
- BHIB Councils Insurance has developed [cybersecurity tips to help keep local councils and their staff to stay secure and keep online data safe](#).

CiLCA deadlines pushed back

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, all CiLCA candidates who are currently registered will be granted an additional three months to complete their portfolio. This extension will be automatically granted for all candidates and you will not need to contact the CiLCA administrator. This automatic extension will be reviewed at the end of June. In the meantime, all registered candidates who have attended relevant training should continue to submit work when it has been completed to an appropriate standard. New candidates are reminded that they should not register for CiLCA until they have a training programme in place.

Data protection and GDPR

On 12 March the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) [released a statement](#) to reassure organisations seeking to support their communities at this time. It includes this information: "Data protection and electronic communication laws do not stop Government, the NHS or any other health professionals from sending public health messages to people, either by phone, text or email as these messages are not direct marketing. Nor does it stop them using the latest technology to facilitate safe and speedy consultations and diagnoses. Public bodies may require additional collection and sharing of personal data to protect against serious threats to public health."

The ICO is a reasonable and pragmatic regulator, one that does not operate in isolation from matters of serious public concern. Regarding compliance with data protection, we will take into account the compelling public interest in the current health emergency."

To support this statement the ICO has also produced [further guidance around data protection and coronavirus](#).

Managing facilities and public spaces

We have also added a range of guidance related to the management of facilities and public spaces:

- On 3 June, CFP published a guide to [managing public parks during COVID-19](#). This includes specific sections related to car parks, children's play areas, outdoor gyms, ball courts, sports activities, public toilets, cafes and visitor centres.
- The Lawn Tennis Association has produced [information related to tennis activities](#) during COVID-19.
- Skateboard England has produced a set of [guidelines for skating safely](#).

The Visitors Safety Group have produced [guidance on work practices for landowners and countryside managers](#).

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NALC launches publication on website accessibility

NALC has launched a new publication on website accessibility requirements.

The publication provides practical steps that local (parish and town) councils can follow to understand the new regulations, put in place an accessibility statement, and start plans to improve the accessibility of their website.

Many people rely on the internet as a source of information on public services. Local councils already consider those with disabilities when organising events, delivering services and public meetings. Similarly, thought must be given to how accessible information is on council websites. Disabilities can have a significant impact on how a person can access information online, so local councils must make their websites as accessible as possible. Even making small adjustments to a website can have a considerable effect.

To reflect the need for accessing information online from public sector organisations, The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 aim to ensure reasonable adjustments to websites are made, so they are accessible to people with various disabilities. From 23 September 2020, all local councils must have an action plan and an accessibility statement in place and would have started work to their websites to become more accessible.

[Read the website accessibility requirements publication](#)

NALC publishes new edition of Points of Light

NALC has today published its new edition of Points of Light, which showcases the excellent work of local (parish and town) councils in building stronger communities.

Points of Light aims to promote good practice and raise awareness of the diverse range of services local councils are facilitating. Running a post office, providing a changing places toilet, employing a youth skills manager, launching a community alcohol partnership and declaring a climate emergency are just some of the examples contained in this year's edition.

Cllr Sue Baxter, chairman of NALC, says: "NALC's latest edition of Points of Light underscores why England's 10,000 local councils are well placed to be at the heart of building back communities. Local councils have stepped up during these challenging times, providing a range of vital services. The examples gathered were before the pandemic and illustrate how local councils are an essential part of the community."

Points of Light is a collection of case studies which include summaries and information on electorate, precept and expenditure that highlight the work of England's 10,000 local councils.

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New model code of conduct consultation

The Local Government Association (LGA) has launched a [consultation](#) on a new [model member code of conduct](#).

High standards of conduct and behaviour are of huge importance to the local (parish and town) council sector as they are needed to protect the integrity of decision making, maintain public confidence, and safeguard local democracy.

NALC therefore strongly encourages local councils and county associations of local councils to consider the proposed new [model member code of conduct](#) and respond to the LGA [consultation](#) before the deadline of 17 August 2020.

We all know the impact that poor behaviour, bullying and harassment can have on individuals and on local councils as organisations, so it is vital we continue to work as a sector to improve standards and push for further reform, at both local and national level.

Therefore, while NALC will be responding to the consultation and engaging further with the LGA, we are also calling for further action by the government to introduce a new power for local authorities to suspend councillors for a period of up to six months, and for the Committee on Standards in Public Life to review progress on the implementation of the reports wider recommendations.

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New legal guidance

Legal Topic Note 8: Elections has been updated to make it more relevant for the needs of local councils and to clarify our guidance on co-option. It is now called Elections and co-option. Legal briefing L15-08 has been removed from the website. Do please note that the updated LTN should be read in conjunction with our Legal Briefing L03-20. You can access the briefing in the members' area of both the LALC and the [NALC website](#) (login required).

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Local council meetings

Today we updated our [dedicated Coronavirus webpage](#) with a statement on local (parish and town) council meetings. Following the government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4 July, both NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks are strongly advising local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face-to-face contact. You can read the statement in the Local Council Activity and Operations section, under Local meetings

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Meeting with the local government minister

Our chairman, Cllr Sue Baxter, held her first meeting with the new local government minister, Simon Clarke MP, on 22 June, making strong representations on council finances, which you can read more about in our news story [here](#). While the minister was very positive indeed about the role of our councils in communities, including proposals likely in the devolution white paper this autumn to take forward the communities framework, we pressed hard on the more immediate issue of financial support for those councils most impacted by the pandemic. The minister did recognise the financial pressures facing councils and agreed to reflect on our representations. Sue also took part in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government webinar for local government leaders on 25 June, which was hosted by the secretary of state, Robert Jenrick MP, and again raised the issue of financial support. We will be writing to the minister to follow up on our meeting, as well as engaging further with officials, and rest assured we will be continuing to work with county associations and local councils on this important issue.

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Coronavirus — information for parish & town councils

NALC has updated its dedicated webpage on the coronavirus. This includes updates on advice for users and parents, Arts Fund grants, free litter posters, inspections, public toilets, local council meetings, play areas, first aid training, remote meeting guide, re-opening and hygiene, risk assessment and helping high streets. See the updates below:

Advice for users and parents

- Children and parents must not interfere with closure measures where a playground remains closed. If it is closed then this will be for a good reason. Do not endanger yourself by breaching closure measures. Wait until the playground has been opened properly.
- Maintain social distancing within the playground, according to the government's latest advice.
- If the playground is too busy then find another playground in which to play.
- Wash your hands before entering the playground and after you have finished. Use hand sanitiser often.

Arts Fund Respond and Reimagine Grants

The Arts Fund has announced new [Respond and Reimagine Grants](#) to help museums, galleries and cultural organisations respond to immediate challenges connected to the COVID-19 crisis, and offer support to adapt and reimagine ways of working for the future.

Free posters and resources to help discourage littering

- Natural England has updated its [Countryside code](#).
- Marine Conservation Society (MCS) has created some [posters and other materials](#) for partners to use, which are geared toward use on beaches/in coastal areas.
- Keep Britain Tidy have created a range of [anti-littering campaign resources](#).

Inspections

- It is important that playgrounds are inspected before opening to ensure they are suitably safe for visitors. The British Standard EN 1176-1:2017 sets out a three-tier inspection system: a) routine visual inspections, b) operational inspections, and c) annual main inspections.
- We recommend that all playgrounds are up to date with their inspections before opening to the public.
- It is likely that playgrounds will be used heavily once they are opened. It is therefore important that operators consider the frequency of their inspections. It may be that routine inspection will need to be undertaken more often to detect problems arising from misuse, vandalism, litter, wear and tear and weather conditions.

Lockdown loo

[Lockdown loo](#) is a free website that encourages organisations and members of the public to provide information on which public loos are open. Do have a check of your local area and update or add information to help people find local facilities.

Local council meetings

Following the government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4 July, both NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks are strongly advising local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face-to-face contact.

Play areas

On 26 June, the government produced guidance for [managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms](#). NALC will be engaging with the government on the impractical nature of much of this guidance and the financial implication for local councils.

[RoSPA](#) has provided NALC with additional information to complement government guidance: The government has announced that in England children's playgrounds are allowed to open from 4 July 2020. It is important that playgrounds are suitably safe for use and have an effective inspection and maintenance regime in place prior to opening.

Psychological first aid training

Front line staff and volunteers at the forefront of the coronavirus response across England will be able to access a new [Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) training course](#) developed by Public Health England. The free online course teaches responders how to give practical and emotional support on issues such as job worries, bereavement or isolation to those affected by COVID-19.

Public toilets

On 28 June, Local government minister, Simon Clarke MP and environment minister, Rebecca Pow MP [wrote to councils](#) setting out the government's position on public access to household waste recycling centres and municipal public toilets, which includes government guidance on opening public toilets.

Remote meetings guide updated

At the time of writing this guide, NALC strongly advises local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face to face contact. However, it is worth starting to think ahead to when local councils may be able to start holding in-person meetings again. This updated guide includes a description of what councils must take into consideration when planning for how to hold council meetings in future, plus some practical steps to hold effective hybrid meetings.

Re-opening and hygiene

Playgrounds must be opened in a safe way in accordance with government guidance. If the playground remains closed then it is important that it is still inspected. It is also important that any closure measures (such as signage and locks) remain in place and remain effective. These measures will need to be checked during routine inspections.

Risk assessment

To support local councils using the *Risk assessment for COVID-19* guide – the templates for [council reopening checklist](#) and [general workplace risk assessment](#) have been made editable.

Support to help high streets

[The High Streets Task Force](#), an alliance of place-making experts that provides encouragement, tools and skills to help communities and councils transform their high streets, have launched a range of support for high streets in England. The support, which is available to local councils and all organisations involved with high streets, includes free access to online training programmes and webinars, as well as data and intelligence on topics including recovery planning and coordination, public space and place marketing.

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Coronavirus Job Retention Grant Scheme Flexible Furlough Leave Update

24th June 2020

As you are no doubt aware, the Government has announced that workers who were on Furlough Leave before the 10th June 2020, can return to work on a Part Time/Reduced hours basis from the 1st July.

- It is up to Employers to decide what hours should be worked, as long as they would fall within Employees normal hours of work.
- Staff will get paid 100% of their normal hourly rate of pay for the hours that they work.

- Employers will be able to claim 80% of the difference between the part time worked hours, and the workers contracted hours, through the Job Retention Grant.
- Employers will need to get an updated "Flexible Furlough" Agreement signed, see attached. This would probably be signed by the worker on the day they start their part time/reduced hours.
- The original Furlough Leave Agreement stated that workers could be recalled at short notice. As long as Employers provide "reasonable" advance notice, and the part time hours are during the workers normal hours, the Employer is within their rights to make this request.

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