

## Latest News on Remote Meetings



On 28 April, the legal challenge to the Government over the interpretation of the existing legislation (primarily the 1972 LGA) and the cessation of remote meetings legislation (4th April 2020) for Local Councils was dismissed and was therefore unsuccessful. Cllr Sarah Barker said “This is very disappointing news. Many councils will not have venues large enough to hold meetings safely and in line with the Government’s latest guidelines on social distancing and other safety measures. I would encourage member councils to voice their concerns to their local MP and to respond to the Government’s Call for Evidence, which closes on 17 June.”

Members are advised to approach the return to face-to-face meetings with great caution and base this within any prevailing national health guidance (which may well evolve around the key dates of the 17th May and the 21st June). On 29 April, Government updated its Guidance on the Safe Use of Council Buildings which can be viewed via the following link: [COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of council buildings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings). As a Local

Authority, Councils should undertake their own risk assessment and should consult with their insurers.

NALC has issued a News Release in response to the High Court verdict (see - <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/1734-nalc-responds-to-high-court-judgement-on-remote-meetings> ). Please also visit the NALC coronavirus webpage where you can also find further guidance.

The High Court has also ruled that where council meetings are ‘open to the public’, local authorities should allow members of the public to attend in person. We will provide an update on this as quickly as possible.

As highlighted above, the Government’s Call for Evidence on remote meetings can be accessed via the following link - [Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence). The deadline is 11.45pm on 17 June.

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## All About the AGAR...

### AGAR 2020/2021



You should all have received an e-mail from PKF Littlejohn with the 2020/2021 AGAR forms. If you have not received an e-mail from PKF, we would urge you to contact them as soon as possible at [sba@pkf-l.com](mailto:sba@pkf-l.com).

As set out on the PKF Littlejohn website (<https://www.pkf-l.com/services/limited-assurance-regime/timings-and-deadline/>), all statutory timings and deadlines for the 2020/21 reporting season therefore revert to those in place prior to COVID-19 as follows:

- **30 June 2021** – the date by which smaller authorities must approve Sections 1 and 2 of the 2020/21 AGAR.
- **30 September 2021** – the statutory deadline for publishing the approved Sections 1 and 2 of the 2020/21 AGAR and, for authorities not claiming exemption, Section 3 (the external auditor's certificate).

***All smaller authorities must include the first 10 working days of July within the 30 working day period they set for the exercise of public rights for 2020/21.*** This requirement was removed for 2019/20.

*NALC is lobbying Government to extend the deadlines and we will notify you if there is any change. In the meantime, you should continue to work to the above deadlines.*

### KALC Membership Subscriptions

We have now come to the end of our last financial year. April 2021 also heralds a new year for KALC and NALC membership. You should have received your subscription invoices by e-mail, together with a covering letter and Membership leaflet. As

usual, we remind you that subscriptions should be paid by 30 June at the latest when formal membership ends.

## 6 May 2021 - Elections Are Full Steam Ahead...



Local elections, as we know, are still going ahead this year. Whilst some of our councils will be holding elections, the majority of you will not. However, this is a good opportunity for those member councils that do have elections to make use of any of the Election Material that you may need as some of you approach Purdah regulations. The KALC and NALC websites have a plethora of relevant material that you can use as resources and these can be found by logging into the “Members Area” of the KALC website and clicking on the “Election Material” tab or by going to the NALC website (see <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-elections>) for their national campaign “Make a Change – Become a Councillor” . We hope this will be of use to you in the coming weeks and that if you do have elections that they will run smoothly and efficiently as usual, given that this year is definitely not a “normal” election year!

**Kent  
County  
Council**  
kent.gov.uk



### Kent County Council Elections

Kent County Council will be holding elections this year: 81 seats are available for County Councillors, and the poll will be a combined one with the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner role. Further information can be found here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/kent-county-council-elections>

## Police and Crime Commissioner Election



Along with the County Council Elections, the role of Police and Crime Commissioner in Kent is also up for election. From 15 April, you can find out information on the candidates standing for election in your police area on this site and also be download a PDF booklet of the candidate details through the following link: <https://www.choosemypcc.org.uk/>

Further information on elections can be found at the website of the Electoral Commission here:

[Home Page | Electoral Commission](#)

## COVID 19: National Updates



Britain continues its Leaving of Lockdown during this month. We have already had some restrictions lifted, and more are set to be ended on 17 May. This does mean that there are changes that we should all make,

especially in our community settings. Outdoor sports areas are now available to the public, as well as gyms and swimming pools. Public play areas fall into this category, so it is important that they are COVID compliant in the months ahead. The [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) has plenty of guidance in this regard and you should

obviously make yourselves familiar with it. Likewise, any visual resources that you may wish to download can be found here: [Resources - Coronavirus Resource centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](https://phe.gov.uk) with the latest campaign logos.

- Guidance: [COVID-19 Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- Roadmap: [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 \(Roadmap\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)



## Kent and Medway COVID 19 UPDATES

**Make sure you keep up to date both nationally and locally by looking at the**

- **NHS website** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- **NALC website** <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/>
- **KALC website** <https://www.kentalc.gov.uk/>
- **Medway Council:** [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | Medway Council](https://www.medway.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**Kent County Council:** [www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether](https://www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether) or by calling on 03000 41 92 92.

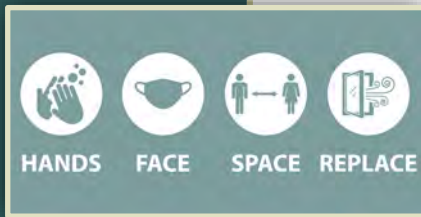
The helpline – called **Kent Together** – provides a single, convenient point of contact for anyone in the county who is in urgent need of help during the Coronavirus outbreak. It is a collaboration between KCC, central Government, District, Borough and local councils, the voluntary and community sector, the NHS, emergency services and other partners to ensure help is at hand for vulnerable people.

It is also the place to report your concerns about the welfare of someone else.

KALC  
NEWS

Caption  
describing  
picture or  
graphic.

## Kent and Medway COVID 19 Updates



Kent County Council continues to offer Asymptomatic COVID 19 Tests in the community, but you can now also obtain Lateral Flow Tests from pharmacies, or by registering for them by post. You can [book an appointment](#) any of the sites that are still available in Kent - there will be one in every district area you can attend. These sites are in addition to the regional and local testing sites for people who have symptoms.

Symptom-free testing sites were set up using funding from central government to support local councils and help reduce rates of COVID-19.

Further details regarding the Symptom Free COVID tests that are available by following this link:

[Symptom-free testing - Kent County Council](#)

Make sure your community knows all about them! In addition, here is the link to postal delivery of tests to home settings:

[Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Caption describing picture or graphic.



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- ▶ Town and Parish Councils
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 [local.councils@cameandcompany.co.uk](mailto:local.councils@cameandcompany.co.uk)

 [www.parishinsurance.co.uk](http://www.parishinsurance.co.uk)

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# Events



For events to be insured under the Councils' insurance policy, the Council, a working party or a sub-committee of the Council must be the sole organiser of the event.

*Please note all events must be organised in accordance with COVID-19 secure guidance and Government advice applicable at the time of the event. For further information please refer to the Government website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).*

We should be advised of any event with more than 1,000 attendees at any one time and the following is a guide to the information we would require:

- A full list of activities and who is responsible for them. All Third Parties must have their own Public Liability insurance evidenced to the Council, for example: catering vans, fair rides, pony rides, bouncy castles and other inflatable bouncy devices, bands, and stalls that aren't organised by the Council. All Permits and Licenses must be in place, especially if you are seeking road closures and, if required, the Police and Fire Brigade should be notified.
- A Risk Assessment should be carried out and documented prior to the event. The location should be suitable for the event.
- There should be sufficient Marshalls for the number of people attending. Please note the risk assessment of the event will determine the marshalling.
- Will there be any music? If yes, what type i.e. local band, type of music. If the band is semi-professional/ professional they will need their own Public Liability insurance in place.
- A qualified first aider should be in attendance and they must have means to call the Emergency Services.
- Start and finish time of the event: If the event is for more than one day; how many days, start and finish times, security overnight.
- Will there be any electrics? If yes, how will it be generated i.e. if it is a generator, what is the security on the generator; if it is a plug into mains, will there be circuit breakers in place, will the cables be covered with matting and is there a contingency plan for wet weather.
- If the beacon is a basket type attached to a building or a pole a risk assessment should be undertaken to ensure the public is kept at a safe distance and there is no danger of the flames or hot particles affecting nearby properties or vehicles. If the beacon will be a bonfire type, cover is subject to the Council providing their insurers with a copy of their risk assessment to approve at least 14 days prior to the event. The bonfire site should be at least 75 metres away from property or vehicles which are not owned, hired or rented by the Council. If this is an issue, you will need to seek your insurer's approval before cover can be confirmed.



# Booking Our Events

Kent Association of Local Councils uses its website and Eventbrite to announce its events so that delegates can choose the workshop or conference they wish to attend. At the present time, all our events are delivered online via the Zoom video conferencing programme, which we find suits everyone's needs for when we cannot deliver traditional face to face venue events. Both Eventbrite and Zoom are easy to use with a few simple pointers.

We will always send out a "flyer" to inform our membership of upcoming events, so look out for them in your inbox.

There will always be a hyperlink for you to click on, which will direct you to our website in the first place.

The date and time will be shown here, with a brief description of the event. Click on the relevant link and that will take you straight to the Eventbrite booking page for the event you would like to join.

We strongly encourage individual Councillors to sign up for an event via the Clerk to the Council. However, when that is not possible, please check with your clerk before booking your own place.

There are two sections that need to be completed. One is the "ticket buyer" - this is the Clerk or Responsible Finance Officer. Invoices are generated automatically from the site, so you should know what is payable to KALC immediately. You should insert the name and contact details of the Clerk/RFO here so they receive our invoice at once. KALC no longer sends out invoices for Training and Events.

The second section refers to the "Attendee". This is for the individual who will be attending the event. It is particularly important that the email address for that person is entered and is correct as this is where all joining instructions will be sent. Do double check the form before you hit the "Send" button.

If all your details are correct, you will receive a notification via Eventbrite (not KALC) one week before and again within 48 hours of the event that informs you of:

The date and time of registration

What you might need to read beforehand and any links that will provide that information

The joining instructions - a link to the Zoom account and Meeting ID should that fail.

We also provide contact details so that if you encounter any issue on the day, we can help you as much as possible.

That should mean that you get the best outcome from attending one of our online courses. We are always happy to help if you have any problems in booking your place but hope that this guide will help you to book an event at your own leisure.

## KALC LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### E-LEARNING



KALC's Learning and Development programme continues to go very well in its online format. We are continuing to roll out specialist courses over the next couple of months and there are still places available to book. We have wound down our monthly Dynamic Councillor webinars til the Autumn programme now as there are bound to be new councillors who will need

training after the May elections. Our Breakthrough Communications webinars are currently on our website and we are still running our Bitesize Courses in association with NALC and Nimble eLearning. These are all available to book via our website and there is no start or end date for completion of the course: [Bitesize Training - KALC \(kentalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.kentalc.gov.uk/training/bitesize-training)

## What's On: KALC Events for Booking



- KALC Planning Conference. All Day Event 12 May 2021
- Strategies to Identify and Recruit New Councillors. Morning Event. 13 May 2021
- How to Engage with Young People in Your Community. Morning Event. 20 May 2021.
- Writing Effective Press Releases for Local Coverage. Morning Event. 17 June 2021

All events are booking now, via our website, here: [Training & Events - KALC \(kentalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.kentalc.gov.uk/training-events)

## What's On: Future Events at KALC



As well as our regular online events, we have others in the pipeline!

- June 2021: Chairmanship Networking Event
- July 2021: Councillor Networking Event
- September 2021: Clerks Conference and Dynamic Councillor Events
- October 2021: Finance and Dynamic Councillor Events
- November 2021: Annual General Meeting and Dynamic Councillor Events. Health and Wellbeing Conference
- December 2021: Dynamic Councillor Event

We will let you know the finer details of all these events in due course via our usual channels. But in the meantime, keep looking out for our flyers!

Kent Association of  
Local Councils  
Dover District Council  
Offices  
White Cliffs Business Park  
Whitfield, Dover

Email: [kalc@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:kalc@kentalc.gov.uk)



Association of Kent Local Councils

## News From Our National Association

**inalc** The government is strongly encouraging principal authorities to work with local (parish and town) councils and pass on funding from the £56m Welcome Back Fund.

Robert Jenrick MP, secretary of state for Housing, Communities and Local Government, has written to the chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Cllr Sue Baxter, about the new fund which aims to help councils boost tourism, improve green spaces and provide more outdoor seating areas, markets and food stall pop-ups.

NALC has been lobbying the government on the issue of funding and has called for dedicated funding initiatives - such as for parks, high streets and town centres - to be made available to local councils.

Cllr Sue Baxter said: "It is good the government is recognising and backing the important role local councils will need to play in delivering initiatives in the community and on our high streets.

"Many local councils already deliver the activities covered by the fund such as street planting, parks, green spaces and markets. It is therefore right that this funding is passed on to local councils to help them boost their shopping areas and high streets as part of the recovery from the pandemic.

"I am urging local councils to contact their principal councils about the fund and to let their county association know if principal councils are not passing on funding in line with the government's clear expectation."

*Please let KALC know what response you receive from your principal authority by emailing [chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk). Likewise, do let us know if you have been successful, or not, with any other COVID 19 funding from your principal authority via the same email address.*

## Engaging with your Young People



Is your local (parish and town) council doing fantastic work to support young people in the community? If so, let NALC know by completing the survey.

The survey will explore what local councils are currently doing to support young people in our communities and will help paint an accurate picture of what is truly happening in the local council sector. While also helping NALC to support local councils to help create thriving communities.

A key theme of NALC's work over the coming year will focus on young people as they are vital to the future of communities. The survey results will help collect case study examples that allow NALC to demonstrate the high calibre of work to stakeholders and government while also acting as a source of inspiration to other councils with similar interests.

## News From Our National Association

# nalc



NALC's Star Council Awards are the only awards in England that recognise the local (parish and town) council sector's positive contribution to its communities, rewarding local councils, councillors, young councillors, county associations and clerks.

It has not been an easy 12 months. However, those in the sector have gone above and beyond their regular duties during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the theme of this year's awards will focus on projects that have positively impacted communities in the context of the pandemic. So please provide examples of your work concerning your response to COVID-19.

Winning a Star Council Award not only allows you to gain national recognition for the services you have provided to your community in challenging times but also to share your expertise with your peers and learn about best practice and successful initiatives in the sector. An award will also provide your community with evidence of your successful projects.

This year, NALC will also transform the winners' ceremony into an online event, which will take place in September.

Further information can be found by visiting NALC's webpage here:

[STAR COUNCIL AWARDS 2021 \(nalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.nalc.gov.uk)

**Closing date for submissions is 25 May 2021**

## Consultation, Consultation, Consultation

### Changes to Permitted Development Rights for Electronic Communications Infrastructure



The government has launched a consultation seeking views on proposed planning reforms that will allow the deployment of telecoms equipment to be quicker whilst ensuring that there are appropriate environmental protections and safeguards in place.

Proposals being consulted on include permitting alteration, replacement or increases in width and height to existing masts so sites can be upgraded for 5G and for mast sharing, and enabling higher, new masts to deliver better mobile coverage and mast sharing.

This technical consultation follows an earlier consultation on the principle of these proposed reforms.

- Consultation:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-permitted-development-rights-for-electronic-communications-infrastructure-technical-consultation>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-permitted-development-rights-to-support-the-deployment-of-5g-and-extend-mobile-coverage> (Earlier consultation)
- <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/digital-infrastructure-planning/technical-consultation-on-permitted-development-ri/>

This consultation closes at 11:45pm on 14 June 2021.

## News from Kent County Council



### Drone trial technology project

Along with Amey VTOL, Collins Aerospace, and Aviat drones, Kent County Council is embarking on phase two of the drone trial technology project, this time in a bid to inspect vegetation (soft landscape) and highways assets around the network and identify any defects in power and water utilities infrastructure around Kent.

During phase one of the trial which we carried out in 2020 at the Kent Showground in Detling, the aim was to get a better understanding of our roads and assets, looking at potholes, surface degradation, trees and streetlighting. We carried out 3 flights over a period of 7 months to monitor how a surface deteriorated over time, and to spot new defects.

Phase two of the trials, funded by the Kent Lane Rental scheme will be taking place along a stretch of the A20 near Lenham and will run from April to November 2021 with 3 flights taking place. The footage we capture from the drones will be used to better understand the health and ecosystem of the soft landscape, highways assets as well as the condition of the power and water infrastructure assets in the area. This will enable us and the utility asset owners to manage assets better and help with the planning of maintenance.

The trial will look at how effective the technology can be used for capturing wildlife habitats, understanding any future repair works regarding utilities infrastructure whilst still using the technology for highway inspections potentially further proving the case for it to be used more widely in the future.

The first flight is due to take place Mid-April (weather dependant) so we look forward to updating you all as the flights take place.

The trial, which is part of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) SMART Places Live Labs programme, will look at how effective the technology can be used for capturing wildlife habitats, understanding any future repair works regarding utilities infrastructure whilst still using the technology for highway inspections potentially further proving the case for it to be used more widely in the future.

The ADEPT SMART Places Live Labs programme is a two-year £22.9 million project funded by the Department for Transport and supported by project partners SNC-Lavalin's Atkins business, EY, Kier, O2, Ringway and WSP.

Nine local authorities are working on projects to introduce digital innovation across SMART mobility, transport, highways, maintenance, data, energy and communications. Live Labs is part of ADEPT's SMART Places programme to support the use of digital technology in place-based services.

Our Project Manager, Carol Valentine said: "We're excited to be working with this technology to understand the benefits it can bring to improving our services to people in Kent. These trials will help us better understand the health and ecosystem of our soft landscape, highways assets and the condition of power and water infrastructure. The trial data will be assessed, and we could potentially be using this technology across the county in the future."

Ramin Akhyani, Programme Manager at Amey, said: "This is a great opportunity to investigate the potential of using drones for capturing the condition of highways assets, soft vegetation and utilities in the area as well as highlighting the benefits of using drones in the areas of health and safety, cost, data and proactive asset management."

Russell Coleman, Collins Aerospace, said: "Collins are excited to be working in partnership with AmeyVTOL to help Kent County Council explore the use of remote sensors on aerial platforms to collect data on assets and infrastructure. By generating highly detailed measureable digital replicas, a full record of assets and infrastructure can be captured and utilised to provide an analysis of current asset condition and to provide a snapshot in time for future automatic change detection."

## Kent Fire And Rescue Service



### Kent Fire & Rescue Service

Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) will soon be joining a national initiative to crackdown on incident hotspots within Kent and Medway.

KFRS is teaming up with FireStoppers, an anonymous service for customers to share intelligence about people they suspect are responsible for arson or deliberate fires.

The free phone number is available 24/7, 365 days a year, and there's also an online form, for people to share information at any time.

Any area in the county that is identified as a potential hotspot, will be targeted with safety awareness messages and promotional materials, such as posters and leaflets.

Emergencies should be reported by calling 999.

People can call FireStoppers anonymously, for free, on 0800 169 5558. An online form can be found at [www.firestoppersreport.co.uk](http://www.firestoppersreport.co.uk), which is also completely anonymous.

**FireStoppers.**  
**0800 169 5558**

## Armed Forces Network Information - Information Sessions for the Nepalese Community



**Kent Police** are offering two bespoke information sessions for the Nepalese community and serving or retired Gurkha's where we will talk about available career opportunities with Kent Police. There are two events you can attend (both will be the same):

1. Saturday 15 May 11am to 12.30pm – via Microsoft Teams
2. Thursday 27 May 6pm to 7.30pm – via Microsoft Teams

Please register your interest clicking this link: Also you can go to the Kent Police website for further details.

[www.kent.police.uk/nepalese-event](http://www.kent.police.uk/nepalese-event)



## Together for our Planet

### UK enshrines new target in law to slash emissions by 78% by 2035

On 20 April, the UK Government announced that it would set into law to reduce carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-enshrines-new-target-in-law-to-slash-emissions-by-78-by-2035>).

The Government is already working towards its commitment to reduce emissions in 2030 by at least 68% compared to 1990 levels. The new target will become enshrined in law by the end of June 2021.

As the Government has said "Everyone needs to play a role in tackling climate change and bringing businesses and the public along is vital to reach the UK's climate change goals." and has launched the campaign, [Together For Our Planet](#), calling on businesses, civil society groups, schools and the British public to take action on climate change.

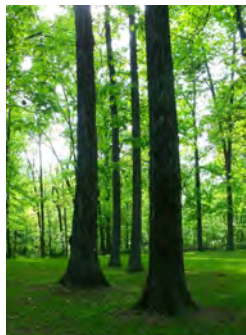
Climate change is a priority area for both KALC and NALC. NALC has established a very helpful climate change webpage at <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/climate-change>, which highlights the different things your council could do to help tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions. NALC has also produced a Climate Change Case Studies publication, highlighting work that is already being undertaken around the country by Local Councils. This can be downloaded from the NALC webpage (see link above).

Through the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy ([Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy.pdf](#)), public and private sector organisations are looking to set out how they will respond to the UK climate emergency and drive clean, resilient economic recovery across the county and reach net-zero emission for the county by 2050.

KALC is working closely with key partners in the county to increase awareness of work in Kent on climate change and increase participation in, and uptake of, community action to help deliver Net Zero for Kent. We started this off with a virtual Climate Change Conference in November 2020, followed by 2 virtual workshops on Delivering the Green Agenda in March 2021. We have now set up a Climate Change Advisory Committee to lead on this priority area and will be providing more information and opportunities for our member councils to engage in the climate change agenda going forward. If your council is already taking steps to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions in your area, then please send details to [chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk).

One area for reducing carbon emissions is transport. Many of you will know that Kent County Council has been running an Electric Vehicle Charging Point infrastructure project with some of our member councils. There is a webinar on Thursday 13th May at 11.30 by Connected Kerb, who were involved in the KCC project, focussing on how KCC put together the project where EV charging infrastructure was delivered to multiple villages across Kent. Here is a link to register for the webinar - [ev-charging-infrastructure-a-path-to-electrifying-rural-areas](#).

## Trees and Greens - things that make Kent the Garden of England



The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has launched a new publication on local (parish and town) councils and the Tree Charter.

The publication which features a number of case studies captures the stories of local councils who were Charter Branches (local networks that signed up to the Tree Charter) and their actions from the Tree Charter as a resource of inspiration to other local councils.

Cllr Sue Baxter, NALC chair, said: "NALC is

thankful to The Woodland Trust for their cooperation and partnership through the Tree Charter project over the past three years. Trees are an important resource not only for our communities health and wellbeing but for improving local biodiversity and tackling climate change."

Between 2017 and 2020, NALC partnered with The Woodland Trust, the National Union for Students, and the Tree Council to embed the ten principles of the Charter for Trees, Woods, and People (the Tree Charter) within communities across the UK. The partnership was funded by The Big Lottery.

### Open Spaces Society – Grant a Green...



Do you own a green space which you would like to see protected and enjoyed by local people for ever? If so, the Open

Spaces Society recommends that you consider voluntarily registering it as a town or village green. You can do this, under section 15(8) of the Commons Act 2006, with your county or unitary council which makes no charge for the application. Once registered as a green, local people will enjoy the right to recreation there, and the space is protected for ever from development—what a gift to your community!

It is more important now than ever to secure our green spaces. The restrictions on movement have meant that people have discovered how essential their local open spaces are to good health and sanity. But here is the irony: green spaces are under threat from the government's destruction of the planning system, as outlined in the white paper of autumn last year and

subsequent 'consultations'. The society is deeply concerned that just when we need them most green spaces are at growing risk of development.

So please do consider whether, if you are fortunate enough to own a green space, you can register it as a green. In the last year we have celebrated such registrations at Scorton in North Yorkshire and the society's home town of Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire, where the local councils have acted in the interests of their residents.

We explain on our website how this is done, with a how-to-do it guide to take you through the process. And the society's case officers are on hand to give you further assistance if you need it.

With your help, we really can make a difference.

Please visit <https://www.oss.org.uk/grant-a-green-campaign/>

## Government Announces Opening of Treescape Fund Grant

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced that the £2.7 million Local Authority Treescapes Fund has now opened for applications.

Through the fund, up to 50 grants worth between £50,000 and £300,000 will be available for councils, working together with community groups and volunteers, to plant trees and restore neglected green spaces. ***If your Council is interested in this fund, please contact your principal authority as soon as possible as the county only has one month to pull together a bid.***

The fund is aimed at establishing more trees around riverbanks, hedgerows, parklands, urban areas, and beside roads and footpaths, including neglected, disused and vacant community spaces. Trees in these settings are particularly valuable as they can provide the greatest levels of benefit to ecosystems and society, such as carbon absorption, flood protection and support for biodiversity, as well as connecting fragmented habitats.

Further information is available in the application pack and any questions should be directed to [LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk).

Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-treescapes-fund>

Pack and form:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-treescapes-fund-application-form>

Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-tree-fund-for-local-communities-announced>



### Litter Motion and Petition

NALC Policy Committee has agreed with the principle of the motion from the 2020 KALC AGM that all drive through food outlets print on all packaging of sold items the vehicle registration number from which occupants made the purchase and such printing include the time, date and venue of that purchase. NALC will highlight its intent to member local councils, the LGA and Keep Britain Tidy as good practice.

KALC has also just been made aware of a Petition on the UK Government and Parliament website calling for mandatory printing of car registration numbers on all Drive Thru packaging, which has been signed by over 57,000 people. If the Petition has 100,000 signatures it will be considered for debate in Parliament – see [https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/580772?fbclid=IwAR3or-1licyDK2gs9ohrc7Jb36vcmcQA4DzyLTRKU0-OwFAV7l\\_bxH2NdyI](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/580772?fbclid=IwAR3or-1licyDK2gs9ohrc7Jb36vcmcQA4DzyLTRKU0-OwFAV7l_bxH2NdyI).

The Government doesn't think that the proposal is cost-effective as it would "require take-away food vendors to implement a vehicle registration number printing and tracing system for packaging. This is due to the additional burden it would place on these businesses and those involved in enforcement. However, we strongly support voluntary initiatives to reduce littering." We would encourage you to sign the Petition to help reach 100,000 signatures and trigger a debate in Parliament.

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**EMPOWERCARE**

LAZB2019-10004/01/EN/000001714/01

**Want to help people in your community improve their digital skills?**

We are currently recruiting for volunteers to become digital ambassadors across Kent to offer skills training and support over 65s in the community. Digital Ambassadors will receive three days of free training to ensure they have all the confidence and resources they need to be able to support individuals with their digital skills. The training will begin in April.

[See our Flyer for full details.](#)

Our volunteers do not need to have excellent digital skills, just to be able to support someone in learning the basics.

If you are interested in becoming a Digital Ambassador, please complete our [expression of interest form](#) or contact [empowercare@kent.gov.uk](mailto:empowercare@kent.gov.uk).

**Would you like support with Digital Skills?**

Our network of volunteer Digital Ambassadors can help you get to grips with technology, whether you have a device that you want to make the most of or would like to take advantage of our device loan scheme and learn from scratch, we would love to help you get some new skills.

We can show you how to:

- Do online shopping.
- Make video calls to your family and friends.
- Access community services e.g., libraries.
- Do anything you think would be useful to you!

It is completely free. Initially, contact with your Digital Ambassador will be over the phone but we aim to roll this out in person as soon as we are able. See our flyer for full details.

If you would like to sign-up you can email us: [empowercare@kent.gov.uk](mailto:empowercare@kent.gov.uk) or give us a call 03000 422122.

## Missing From Your Inbox - Keeping Up to Date...



### Acts of Defamation - What you need to Know...

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the act of Defamation is “the act of damaging someone's reputation by saying or writing bad or false things about them”. Legal publications go somewhat further.

A defamatory statement is one “which tends to lower a person in the estimation of right-thinking members of society generally or to cause him to be shunned or avoided or to expose him to hatred, contempt or ridicule, or to convey an imputation on him disparaging or injurious to him in his office, profession, calling, trade or business” (Halsbury's Laws of England).

A defamatory statement made in writing or in some other permanent form (such as in an image, or on the radio, television, or a website) is called libel. A defamatory statement made orally or in some other transient form (such as a gesture) is called slander.

The law of defamation is governed by common law and statute such as the Defamation Act 1996 (“the 1996 Act”) and the Defamation Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”). One of the objects of 2013 Act, which came into force on 1 January 2014, is to discourage trivial defamation claims. Local Councils need to be aware of the 2013 Defamation Act. Members are advised that Local Councils and Local Councillors do not benefit from “parliamentary privilege” (i.e. the ability to speak your mind unfettered), which means that they are subject (even in closed session) to the laws of defamation. In addition, councillors should be careful in assuming that the Council's insurance policy will cover them. It is likely (but the actual policy should be checked) that they will only be covered if they have defamed someone *unwittingly* (i.e. accidentally). Councillors who believe that they have been defamed must seek and pay for their own legal advice and any consequential legal action will fall to them. They may, however, have cover here in their own personal insurance and all councillors should check this.

Once again, the actual insurance policy that applies to the Council should be checked, but it's very likely that the clerk as an *employee* will be covered at both ends. This means that if the clerk defames someone accidentally they will be covered and if they are also defamed *themselves* in the line of their work then redress under the policy can be sought.

A comprehensive Legal Topic Note (LTN) was issued in October 2020 by the National Association of Local Councils. This is available to our members via our website Member Area, under the Legal sub heading here: [Home - KALC \(kentalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.kentalc.gov.uk) . **You should look for LTN 30 in that heading.**

You should make sure that you familiarise yourselves with the main points of that LTN and where necessary, defer to our Adviser, Clive Powell, for further information and/or advice.

# Missing From Your Inbox - Keeping Up to Date...

## Windows 8 / 7 / Server 2018 Ransomware



As you may be aware, Microsoft support for Windows 7 (and below) has ceased. Indeed, those of you running Windows version 8 may also understand that there has been an increased risk of attack, by those wishing to steal your data, and then hold you to ransom in order to unlock your system.

There has been a spate, of late, where companies of all sizes have been caught out in this way, with some medium-sized businesses being told that they need to hand over as much as £650,000 in order to get access to their data.

Whilst we are not aware, at this time, of Parish, Town or Community Councils being affected, it is only a matter of time. Certainly, the risk is there, and increasing.

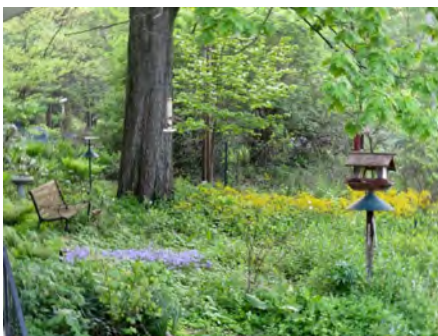
### What to do?

1. Ensure your Windows Computer is current, running the latest version of Windows 10, and keep that version up to date regularly.
2. Do not bring files across from 'outside' or older computers. They may have been compromised and allow hackers to gain access to your newer Windows 10 computer system.

As Microsoft do not attempt to block threats to outdated Windows, and with so many computers running older operating systems, it is now rich-pickings for these hackers. It has also become 'big business' for criminal gangs. Data is key to so many, losing access to it can be expensive, frustrating, and damage the work that you do.

**Please be careful.**

## Let It Grow!



It's time to put away the lawnmowers and the strimmers and sit back, relax and tune in to the gentle hum of the bees and hoverflies.

'No Mow May' is a campaign by the charity Plantlife to let your lawn grow and provide a carpet of flowers for our pollinators to feed on. Why not give it a go this May to see what colourful flowers appear and the butterflies, beetles and bees that they attract? Even leaving a small patch of your lawn uncut will make a big difference.

Find out more about how you can help pollinators and what Kent County Council are doing as part of Kent's Plan Bee.



## Kent Association of Local Councils

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CT16 3PJ

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Web: [www.kentalc.gov.uk](http://www.kentalc.gov.uk)

### How To Contact Us:

- For KALC specific issues contact Terry Martin:  
[chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk) or phone 07475 034346
- For legal & technical advice contact Clive Powell: [adviser@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:adviser@kentalc.gov.uk) or phone 07475 017247
- For Finance, Events, KALC website and general enquiries contact Laura Dyer: [manager@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:manager@kentalc.gov.uk) or phone 07475 066155
- For Events, KALC News and general enquiries contact Tricia Casey-Green: [communications.officer@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:communications.officer@kentalc.gov.uk) or phone 07577 058306 (9.00am to 12:00pm – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)
- Learning & Development Support Officer – Charmaine Keatley: [support@kentalc.gov.uk](mailto:support@kentalc.gov.uk) or phone 07378 175948