

Kent Association
of Local Councils



KALC News

January 2021

Serving Parish & Town
Councils in Kent

A New Year with Challenges...

Welcome to this January edition of KALC News. We send our best wishes to you all for the coming year.

- The Prime Minister made a statement on 27 January in the House of Commons that outlined the latest updates concerning COVID 19 measures that are now taking place in the UK and specifically in England. You can read his statement here:

[Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons on coronavirus: 27 January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-minister-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-on-coronavirus-27-january-2021)

- Members should be alerted to the continuing issue of so called Vaccination Fraud, which is currently a nationwide problem. Criminals are using the coronavirus vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages telling people they are eligible for the vaccine or are phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS or their local pharmacy. Further details on how the government is combatting the issue can be found here:

[Resources for raising awareness about vaccine fraud - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/vaccine-fraud)

- Our members will also be interested in the latest data available from Kent County Council that outlines COVID 19 rates in the county. You can access this data here:

[Coronavirus cases in Kent - Kent County Council](https://www.kent.gov.uk/coronavirus-cases-in-kent) . This will be updated on a regular basis.

For the foreseeable future, most of us will continue to be working remotely in home settings. This applies to the KALC team but we are always available for you to contact us for your queries, advice and events. Our

website is updated very regularly and we will continue to send you relevant national news and guidelines.

This year will be a challenging one, not only because of the Pandemic.

2021

- We saw before the Christmas Holiday that Kent was subject to traffic problems at the Port of Dover and the major road routes that surround it. At the time of writing, this has calmed down, but there is always a risk that member councils will have to deal with similar issues whilst the documentation process post Brexit continues to affect logistics on this side of the Channel.

- The government is not currently planning to extend the remote meeting regulations beyond 7 May 2021. Along with other local government bodies, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is continuing to press for this extension. It is also preparing guidance for local councils on preparing for and managing the return to physical meetings in May and beyond.

- **Please be aware that the deadline for nominations to the KALC Community Awards is 12 February 2021 - more on this subject can be found on page 3.**

Do let us know how your communities are coping at the present time, and indeed if you have good news that you think should be shared for whatever reason. We are always happy to hear from you!

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2021 Community Awards Scheme launched to recognise community champions

On 23 November, the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) launched its eighth KALC Community Awards Scheme, inviting nominations for selfless individuals from across the county, who make significant contributions to their communities.

The scheme is supported by the High Sheriff of Kent, Kent County Council and Medway Council.

Nominations are invited from Parish, Town and Community Councils and Parish Meetings (Local Councils) for people living or working within their boundary. The Local Councils make their own decisions about how they want to identify those who have made a significant contribution to the local community and there are no pre-determined criteria for what the contribution to the community might be. The Awards Scheme has proved very successful since it was originally launched in 2013. Among last year's winners were volunteers who had spent many years organising village activities, serving on local community groups and local charities, caring for elderly and lonely people, improving the local war memorial, helping keep the community tidy, fundraising activities, arranging village events, local church warden, helping young people.



The winners will receive a certificate signed by the High Sheriff of Kent, KCC Chairman/Mayor of Medway and the KALC Chairman. The Local Councils can decide whether they want to present something extra to the winner or to all nominees.

The High Sheriff of Kent, Remony Millwater commented: *"In this unprecedented year I believe it is more important than ever to recognise the unsung heroes who have done so much to help others and give their time and energy for the well-being of their fellow citizens."*

I have been delighted to visit many charities and organisations during my year as High Sheriff and have been humbled by the dedication and compassion of volunteers. I am honoured to play a small part in recognising these local heroes, and the fantastic contribution that they make to the community."

KCC Chairman Graham Gibbens said: *"I am really pleased to be able to help launch this Award scheme for 2021. In these really difficult times community is even more important and with more and more people are helping their local communities, these Awards are needed now more than ever. Without the recognition of local Parish and Town councils many of these voluntary roles would go unnoticed in the wider community and it is great that these Awards offer an opportunity to recognise these unsung heroes."*

KALC Chairman Mrs Sarah Barker said: *"We are delighted that the High Sheriff of Kent, Chairman of Kent County Council and the Mayor of Medway are supporting this excellent Awards Scheme. As the first tier of local government closest to their communities, our member Councils are ideally placed to recognise those individuals who make a significant contribution to their local communities across the county."*

The closing date for nominations is Friday 12 February 2021.

Contact Terry Martin by email: chief.Executive@kentalc.gov.uk or by phone on 07475 034346 for further details



- There are new resources available from the GOV. UK website which are downloadable for your use. They are very useful for publicising national instructions and guidelines that everyone should follow during this third #lockdown that has been in place since 4 January.
- You can obtain the zip file here: [Resources - Coronavirus Resource centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](https://www.phe.gov.uk/resources/coronavirus)

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](#)



Kent County Council: 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.

Caption describing picture or graphic.



Caption describing picture or graphic.



Everyone without symptoms should get tested every 2 weeks, especially if you're leaving the house for a necessary reason, such as going to work or shopping for essentials. Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 have no symptoms, so get tested regularly to make sure you are not unknowingly spreading the virus.

You can [book an appointment](#) at any of the 22 sites across Kent.

These sites are in addition to the regional and local testing sites for people who have symptoms.

Symptom-free testing sites are being 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](#)

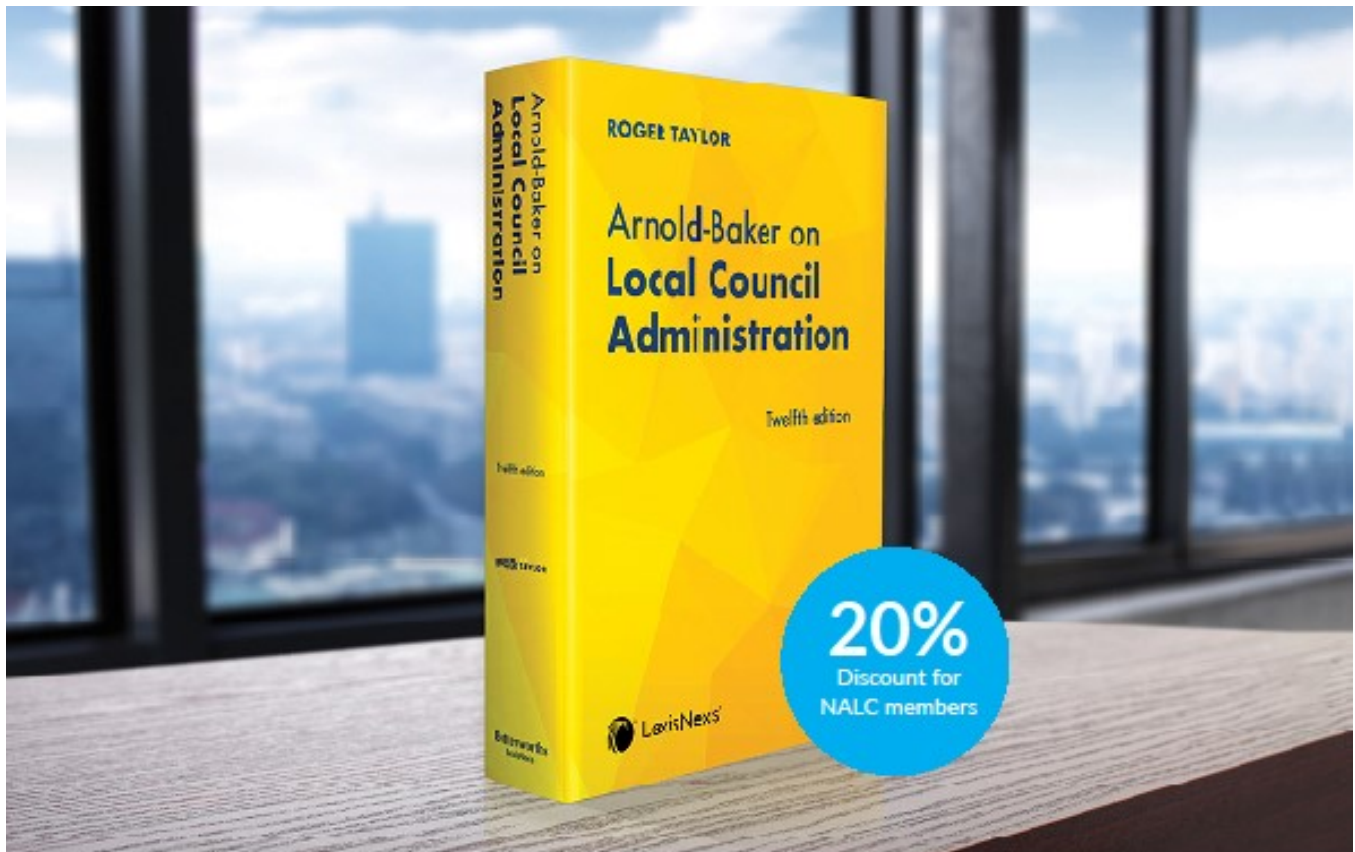
Make sure your community knows all about them!

So You've Had Your Vaccination...

Many people in Kent have already had their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination and the roll out is now top priority for those who are now over 70 years of age. Your communities may well have some questions regarding their health once this has been done. The Government has now issued a leaflet that many may find helpful to them. It can be accessed by following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-what-to-expect-after-vaccination>

Make sure you add it to your websites so that your residents have as much information on the subject as possible.



The bible on local government law

Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration Twelfth Edition

Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration has long been established as the key text for parish and community councils, local authorities and solicitors practising in local government and public and administrative law. It comprehensively covers all aspects of this specialist area of local government law in a reader-friendly style.

What's New

With the changing nature of the pandemic there has been an increase in the workload and weight of responsibility that they carry in relation to school closures, burials and cremations, weddings, and support for homeless people.

The comprehensive and authoritative guide to local government law has been extensively revised for its 12th edition, providing the definitive guide for everyone working in this specialist area.

The new edition has been updated to include:

- Disqualification criteria for councillors and mayors
- Further amendments to the Local Elections Rules
- New ICO guidance on GDPR for local councils

Order now

visit lexisnexis.co.uk/nalc20

or contact **Lewis Williams** via mobile (07795450207)

or email (lewis.williams@lexisnexis.co.uk)



KALC Learning and Development

Our online Learning and Development programme continues with great success. We have been able to deliver our induction Dynamic Councillor courses on a monthly basis and we are now introducing other webinars that will be of use to members working in a virtual environment.

Likewise our Bitesize Learning Webinars continue on a rolling basis and these are available to book through our website.

We have just launched a two hour workshop on “*GDPR and Web Accessibility*” as well as “*An*

Introduction to Chairmanship for Local Councils” for the end of February. Our “*Annual Planning Conference*” is on 17 March and we will be launching that very soon. **Further details for these events are in our “What’s On” section below.**

If you would like more information regarding our current and future events, please visit our Training and Event webpages or contact us through our normal channels which can be found on the back page of KALC News.

What’s On...

- **Using Facebook to Enhance your Council’s Communications.** Thursday 11 February
- **Using Facebook to Enhance your Council’s Communications.** Thursday 18 February
- **The Dynamic Councillor.** Tuesday 23 February
- **GDPR and Web Accessibility in 2021.** Wednesday 24 February
- **Vision Zero Strategy Consultation – Towards Safer Roads, Towns and Villages in Kent.** Wednesday 24 February
- **An Introduction to Chairmanship.** Saturday 27 February
- **Delivering the Green Agenda for Local Councils.** Tuesday 2 March
- **Vision Zero Strategy Consultation – Towards Safer**

Roads, Towns and Villages in Kent. Wednesday 3 March

- **Delivering the Green Agenda for Local Councils.** Tuesday 9 March
- **Beyond Facebook: Making the Most of Other Social Media Platforms.** Thursday 11 March
- **Annual Planning Conference.** Wednesday 17 March
- *Bitesize courses continue on a rolling basis which can be booked monthly and there is no limit as to when delegates access the content.*
- **All our events can be booked by visiting our dedicated webpage here:**

[Training & Events - KALC \(kentalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.kentalc.gov.uk/training-events)

Covid-19 – Supporting your Local Community

Dear Members

As we all know, we are now in the midst of the third national Lockdown since 4 January 2021. This has been particularly hard on Kent and Medway, having been under tight restrictions since December of last year.

We know our member councils have been helping their communities in making life in lockdown easier and we have been impressed with all your endeavours.

We are very keen to hear from you on this subject. KALC is aware of so much good being done, and we know that some things have had to alter. This could be because of the season that we are now in, the added issues with post Brexit Transition, or that many more residents are now in isolation due to the virus.

Our document "Examples of Councils Supporting their Local Community" has many examples of the good work that has been done. We would like to know if there is anything that you are doing now that has changed, or indeed of any new initiatives that have been launched since local Tier 4 Restrictions began in December. *You can view our **Examples of Councils Supporting their Local Community** by visiting the KALC website and logging in to the Members Area and going to the Coronavirus COVID-19 webpage.*

The winter is, in any case, a tough time for many people particularly for those that live alone. If you have something that you can share with others, let us know so that we can add it to our document. Tell us what has worked well, what might have needed to change, and if there have been any obstacles that have been overcome whilst doing so.

KALC will be doing an updated "round up" of these new, or altered, initiatives in the February issue of KALC News, so any news would be much appreciated. Send in anything you have to:

Communications.Officer@kentalc.gov.uk

Many thanks

Tricia Casey-Green
KALC

Kent Association of
Local Councils

WHAT'S
GOING
ON?

Tell

us

your

story

Kent Association of Local
Councils

Dover District Council Offices
White Cliffs Business Park
Whitfield, Dover
CT16 3PJ

Email: kalc@kentalc.gov.uk



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Unoccupied buildings: top tips from Came & Company

Leaving local council buildings unoccupied may result in increased risks, and can mean that unexpected incidents can potentially do more damage as they are not identified as quickly. We have put together some tips to help you minimise some potential issues.

- Review your risk assessment of the property to identify and minimise potential risks including Covid-19 considerations.
- Water damage can be an issue for unoccupied buildings so consider whether it's appropriate to turn off the water supply at the mains or drain down systems.
- Review your existing fire prevention plan to ensure that fire risk is minimised as much as possible.
- Fire and burglar alarms should be activated and all internal doors should be closed.
- Activate sprinklers and other fire suppression systems you may have in place.
- Non-essential electrical equipment should be unplugged.
- Unoccupied premises may be more at a risk of theft, criminal damage or arson so try and ensure premises are as secure as possible.
- Remove IT equipment or other valuable assets from view if you can, and lock away machinery and tools.
- Avoid leaving vehicles parked next to the property if possible.
- Don't leave any bins or other combustible materials against your property – they should be at least 10m from any building and 2m away from any boundary if possible.
- Make sure gates are locked securely to prevent access and reduce the risk of potential fly tipping in the grounds.
- If you are able to inspect the property on a regular basis, then include the perimeter fence and any out-buildings in the inspection.

For more information on how to minimise risks to unoccupied buildings please get in touch and this is just one guide available for free in the Resource Centre of our web site at <https://www.parishinsurance.co.uk/resource-centre/>

Kevin Millard – Regional Representative for Kent

Kevin.millard@cameandcompany.co.uk

Direct Tel. 01483 462 897

The opinions and views expressed in the above articles are those of the author only and are for guidance purposes only. The authors disclaim any liability for reliance upon those opinions and would encourage readers to rely upon more than one source before making a decision based on the information.

News From Our National Association

nalc

“The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is urging the government to push the **Non-Domestic Rates (Public Lavatories) Bill 2021-22** over the finish line and finally deliver on its 2018 budget pledge.

The bill has its long-awaited second reading in the House of Lords on 18 January after being resurrected last year by the government following pressure from NALC and the All-party parliamentary group on local democracy. Once royal assent for the bill is received, it will finally end the “toilet tax” – business rates local (parish and town) councils have to pay on public conveniences they own or manage – and result in a backdated rebate of these rates since 1 April 2020.

This bill is the latest in a long line of government bills since 2016 which have not completed their journey through parliament. NALC has welcomed this next stage of the Bill but is now pressing the government to prioritise this bill for its remaining stages and finally get it through parliament, after a campaign lasting well over five years.

In a briefing to Peers in advance of next week’s debate, NALC has also warned that local councils continue to face financial pressures as a result of COVID funding from the government not reaching local councils. Among the measures, NALC continues to lobby the government on are access for local councils to apply in their own right to central government funding sources, and long term exemption from referendum principles.”

Your Section 137 Figures for 2021/2022

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has notified the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for parish and town councils in England for 2021-22 is £8.41 per elector.

This is the amount as a result of increasing the amount of £8.32 for 2020-2021 by the percentage increase in the retail index between

September 2019 and September 2020, in accordance with Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act.

Cllr Sue Baxter, chairman of NALC, responded: “I welcome this important notification from the government about the increase to the level of section 137 expenditure for local (parish and town) councils. This enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory power, and will help England’s 10,000 local councils continue to play their part in responding to the Coronavirus pandemic and supporting their communities.”

ONWARD >*The Policies of Belonging*

News From Our National Association

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is supporting the call from the think-tank Onward to give every area a local (parish and town) council to bolster communities and community resilience.

The report, *The Policies of Belonging*, says that when the government publishes the Devolution White Paper it should include a provision for the introduction of local councils in places where they do not currently exist because every area should be given the "right to self-government" through a local council.

The report adds that "ministers should pave the way for the widespread introduction of [local councils], while also giving [local councils] the right to assume ownership of, and responsibility for, green spaces, community sports facilities, community centres and local high street maintenance in their area".

Cllr Sue Baxter, NALC chairman, said: "Levelling up local democracy by creating more local councils everywhere and expanding their role is rightly at the heart of Onwards timely proposals to repair our social fabric.

"Local councils have been the

backbone of the pandemic's response, demonstrating their importance as a growing and changing unit of solidarity and natural focus of community effort in building strong and resilient communities.

"I look forward to working with Onward to take on the proposals in its report and support local councils to continue to be ambitious and help make a change in their area."

Since 2013, a number of measures have been introduced to increase the use of local councils in England, including reducing the number of petition signatures required from 10% to 7.5% and giving community groups the freedom to create local councils as long as a neighbourhood plan is in place. However, only 25% of the population of England is covered by local councils, compared to 70% of Wales and 100% of Scotland.

The full report can be found on NALC's website here:

[NALC supports report's appeal for all areas to have local councils - News](#)

News From Our National Association



The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has been invited to sit on and secretariat the Prime Minister's Champion Group (PMCG) on dementia.

NALC has been invited to sit on the group alongside other key stakeholders, to collaborate on a national scale to create Dementia-Friendly Communities and services. NALC has also agreed to become the secretariat group for 2021.

The PMCG was established by former prime minister David Cameron in 2012 and looks to make the UK the best in the world for dementia care, support, research, and awareness. Given the ongoing impact of COVID-19 for people living with dementia and their families, the work of this group has never been more critical.

NALC's involvement in the PMCG continues a running thread of work on dementia, as in 2020 NALC co-wrote and published a publication on Dementia-Friendly Communities alongside the University of Plymouth. The document aimed to encourage all local councils to support people living with dementia and their families in their communities and is supported, by prime minister Boris Johnson MP.

NALC chairman, Cllr Sue Baxter, said: "Dementia is a cause close to my heart due to the effect that it has on our residents and

communities. I am thrilled that NALC has been invited to be involved in the Prime Minister's Champion Group on dementia. Local (parish and town) councils are essential to improving the lives of people in our communities and I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the group's work over the coming year."

Co-chairs of the PMCG on dementia, Angela Rippon CBE and Jeremy Hughes CBE said: "It is enormously valuable to have NALC providing the secretariat for the Prime Minister's Champion Group. This is a further demonstration of their commitment to support dementia-friendly communities across the UK."



RECRUITING
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Kent Police



Kent Police continues its recruitment campaign! In 2019, the Home Office announced its uplift of 20,000 extra Police. Kent is keen to promote its current wave of new roles in its force. Further details of the campaign can be found by following this link:

[Careers | Kent Police](#)

You can also download posters and other resources for your notice board and council websites here:

[Kent Police Recruitment Information Pack](#)

#MoreThanTheBadge



**Kent Fire &
Rescue Service**

Let us help you feel



Safe and Well

“Kent Fire and Rescue Service is still offering Safe and Well home visits and providing fire safety advice during the lockdown. We'll have a chat with you on the phone to start with, which will take about 20 minutes. Then if you need a home visit, we'll arrange one with you. Any visit to your home will be done as safely as possible, to protect you and our team.

If you would like to talk to us about a Safe and Well visit or have any fire safety worries about your home, please call our Safe and Well team on [0800 923 7000](tel:08009237000) (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, voicemail outside these hours) and we will be happy to get in touch.

We offer a free Safe and Well home visit service for people living in Kent and Medway

From testing, fitting and relocating smoke alarms, to looking out for potential fire hazards and planning escape routes - one of our friendly home safety officers can help to make your home fire safe. Book a free visit for yourself or a loved one today.”



News from Kent County Council





Road Resurfacing

In December 2020, KCC awarded a new contract for road resurfacing to a Kent-based company, GW Highways. This covers the next two calendar years, with the possibility of extending for a further two years based on performance. The work delivered under this contract will include medium to large scale resurfacing schemes and a number of projects involving full reconstruction of roads, which in turn will reduce potholes on

these roads for years to come. The first phase of Kent's road resurfacing programme for 2021 delivered by this contract, worth £5 million and including twenty six locations around the county, will be delivered before the end of March.

A considerably larger programme will continue over the spring, summer and autumn months. Combined with our road preservation programme, which extends the life of roads and also prevents potholes, the investment by Kent Highways in planned road maintenance will continue to be a significant increase on past years.

A thank you and reminder from the Street Lighting Team

Following an extremely busy and successful Festive Lighting season we would like to thank all of you who submitted their applications in good time for the festive switch on.

We thought we would take this opportunity to remind you of the process for Attachments to Street Lighting Furniture on the Highway. You will recall that in the January 2020 KALC newsletter we talked about the different types of attachments we are generally asked about and explained our requirements to enable a smooth and trouble-free application process. Many of you have implemented the load testing which is required, but as we find ourselves nearing the 'in Bloom, 2021' season we thought it would be an opportune time to remind you that your applications should be sent in for your Hanging Baskets as soon as you possibly can so that we can ensure that there is no hold up and that your baskets can be placed on the Street Lighting Assets on the dates you require.

First time applications

Should this be your first time in applying for this or any type of permit please contact Sharon Robbins at Sharon.robbins@kent.gov.uk who will be happy to assist you and explain any additional requirements we may

need. Attachments can include festive decorations, hanging baskets, banners, signs, CCTV cameras, ANPR cameras, traffic count equipment etc.

Fees

In 2016 fees were introduced for the processing of permits. This recovers the administrative and engineer time taken to review each permit. The fee does not include any load testing that may be required, and this is chargeable to the applicant.

A new permit application or change in assets to be used currently attracts a fee of £102.00. A repeat application using the same assets is charged at £29.00. Fees are reviewed each year and updated rates are published on the KCC website in April. The application form can also be found on the KCC website: - https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/5261/Attachments-to-street-lighting-licence.pdf.

An application is required every year so that we can carry out the checks identified above and verify that assets are still suitable to be used. We try to process every application within 28 working days but are sometimes restricted at certain times of the year, which is why we encourage early application as much as possible.

News from Kent County Council



“Dear Member & non-Member Councils

On 26 January, Kent County Council launched a consultation on Vision Zero: The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2020 – 2026 – see <https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/visionzero/consultationHome> .

The consultation closes at 23:59 on 15 March 2021.

As set out on the KCC website, they are consulting on their **draft five year Road Safety Strategy for Kent** and their 30 year vision. 'Vision Zero' aims for zero, or as close as possible, fatalities on Kent's roads each year by 2050. To achieve Vision Zero, KCC propose adopting the '**Safe Systems**' approach, which is rooted in the belief that every traffic death reflects a failure in the system, and that none are acceptable.

Safe Systems put the human being at its core, accepting that even the most conscientious person may make a mistake at some point. The goal of **Safe Systems** is to ensure that these mistakes do not lead to a crash or, if a crash does occur, it is sufficiently controlled to not cause a death or a life-changing injury. As KCC highlight, the success of this strategy will depend on engagement with Kent's communities to work together towards safer roads, towns and villages.

As part of that early engagement, we have organised 2 FREE virtual workshops with KCC to provide an opportunity for Parish, Town, Community and County Councillors to discuss the detail of the Vision Zero

Strategy.

The two free workshops will be taking place on Zoom on :

- **Wednesday 24 February** – registration from 1340 and start at 1400
- **Wednesday 3 March** - registration from 1340 and start at 1400

To book a place on one of these two virtual events, please go to the Training & Events page on the KALC website at

https://www.kentalc.gov.uk/Training_and_Events_21677.aspx

and click on one of the two events entitled “

KALC/ KCC Event: Vision Zero Strategy Consultation – Towards Safer Roads, Towns and Villages in Kent”.

Best wishes

Terry”

*Terry Martin
Chief Executive
Kent Association of Local Councils
White Cliffs Business Park
Whitfield
Dover
Kent, CT16 3PJ*

Consultation, Consultation, Consultation



- **Department for Transport – Future of Transport - Rural Strategy:**

The Department for Transport has issued a call for evidence on ***Future of Transport – Rural Strategy***

Please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence>.

The consultation deadline is 16 February 2021.



- **Government Night Flights Consultation**

The Department for Transport (DfT) has issued a two-stage consultation process (see [night-flight-restrictions-consultation](#)) which seeks views on the regime at the designated airports beyond 2022, and night flights in the national context. The DfT is formally consulting on its proposal to maintain the existing night flight restrictions for the designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) from 2022 to 2024 and its proposal to ban QC4 rated aircraft movements during the night quota period (23:30 to 06:00). It is also seeking early views and evidence on policy options for the government's future night flight policy at designated airports beyond 2024 and nationally.

The consultation deadline is 3 March 2021.



- **Government consultation on a new 'Right to Regenerate' to turn derelict buildings into homes and community assets**

Please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/right-to-regenerate-to-turn-derelict-buildings-into-homes-and-community-assets>.

The consultation deadline is 13 March 2021.

Health and Wellbeing: Everyone's Responsibility

Every Mind Matters

The ongoing pandemic has affected everyone in many different ways. Families have had to cope with losing loved ones. Every "household" has had to adjust to the Stay at Home message, which has had varying consequences, from homeschooling to being in isolation for at least ten days.

There is very strong evidence that the Lockdowns have taken its toll on the nation's mental health and this is something the Government is tackling as well as rising

hospital admissions. There are things we can all do to reassure ourselves at this time. Public Health England launched the "**Every Mind Matters**" campaign on 18 January

to support the nation's mental wellbeing with the message that "When things aren't so good out there, make inside feel better".

The partner resources include a range of

materials that will direct people to the Mind Plan tool and Every Mind Matters content on NHS.UK.

The campaign is being supported by councils, the NHS and a range of mental health charities, health organisations as well as other charities and commercial sector partners.

Here is a link to the various resources that your community might find helpful:

Mind plan: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz/>

Every Mind Matters: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

Hub: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/>

It is a valuable resource for us all, and it may just make a difference to those who might need it.

Don't Forget to Knock and Check!

The Kent Community Foundation (KCF) launched its "Knock and Check" Campaign in October. We featured the scheme in KALC News last year and for the moment, it is still something we should continue. Each year, there are at least 1600 avoidable winter deaths across Kent and Medway. Now, more than ever, it is important that we make sure that those who are vulnerable, clinically or psychologically, are looked after. It is easy to knock a door and check that your

neighbours are indeed alright. Encourage your communities to do so. The winter is far from over, and at the time of writing, it has been very cold so some may not venture out even for permitted exercise purposes. You can download the booklet and other resources, such as posters and so on, by visiting the KCF website pages here:

[Kent Community Foundation Knock & Check \(kentcf.org.uk\)](https://www.kentcf.org.uk)



**KNOCK
& CHECK**



Please support your local NHS ambulance service by becoming a member.

It's **FREE** to be a member of South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and you can sign up online here: <https://www.secamb.nhs.uk/join-us/become-a-member/>

We are keen for members of local associations of Councils to join our Trust as Public Foundation Trust Members. As a member of our Trust you'll receive our newsletter three times a year which we would be grateful if you could share with your local contacts. You will also be invited to events (when we can hold them again!) and if you are looking to be a bit more involved, you can vote or even stand in our Governor elections. Governors represent our members and act as a critical friend to the Trust holding our Board to account for its performance.



If you'd like to support your local NHS ambulance service by [becoming a member](#), we would be grateful if you could provide an email address if you can when you sign up to become a member. As a member you are also be eligible to receive discounts from selected retailers via Health Service Discount scheme:

[\(https://healthservicediscounts.com/\)](https://healthservicediscounts.com/)

Thank you in advance.

Katie Spendiff
Corporate Governance and Membership Manager
Katie.Spendiff@secamb.nhs.uk

Missing From Your Inbox: Stories You May Have Missed...

Procurement and subsidy control guidance



The Government has updated guidance for public bodies following the UK's exit from the European

Union. This is required as EU law no longer has any force in the UK except in those areas provided for by the Withdrawal Agreement.

Councils, as with all public bodies, should continue to ensure compliance with all relevant domestic and international law, including World Trade Organisation commitments and commitments the UK has entered into under bilateral Trade Agreements.



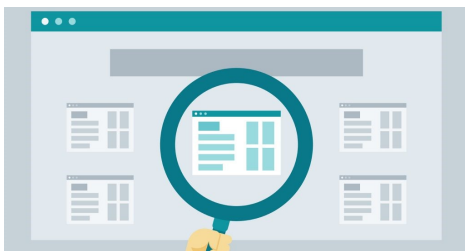
Councils should also be aware that obligations arising from domestic and international law are binding for the whole public sector and should assist partner organisations in complying where new obligations have arisen. In particular, the Government has published updated guidance relating to public-sector procurement and subsidy control for public authorities.

Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-sector-procurement>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities>

Kent County Council Grants Towards New Websites



Parish Councils who are/were customers of Cantium/EIS and whose precept is under £30,000 could be eligible for a KCC grant towards their new website. Those councils should have received a letter from Kent County Council on 20 November 2020 where KCC explained that they would provide financial support for those councils who had a precept of less than £30k and who were a customer of the Cantium Business Services web platform prior to the legislative change (Web Accessibility Regulations). This support includes a financial package that covers the website for the first year (up to £900) as well as up to £300 towards off-boarding costs associated with moving from the current platform to Aubergine or another website provider. Funding after the first year will then fall to the parish/town council.

We have written to all those councils that we think are eligible – sent on 5 January 2021. However, not everyone has responded. If your council was a customer of Cantium Business Services/ KCC EIS prior to the legislative change and your council has a precept of less than £30,000, then please contact chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk as soon as possible to see whether your council is eligible for a grant. The deadline for applications is **31 March 2021 at the latest**.

In Your Neck of the Woods - Updates from Our Parishes and Towns. Support Still Going Strong in Lockdown!

Thank you for all your articles regarding your community efforts in making #Lockdown that little bit easier on your residents.

We will be doing a "feature article" next month in our February issue of KALC News that we hope

will bring together some of the new initiatives that you have launched in this second National Lockdown.

In the meantime, we have news of two particular schemes that need mentioning to our readers.

Our members will be aware from our article on page 5, that Kent County Council is now offering "symptom free testing" for the COVID 19 virus. This is not to replace the normal NHS testing that is booked through GOV.UK, but is available to anyone without symptoms to see whether they could be carrying the virus without knowledge. There are many sites that have been set up to do this.

One of them is at Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council and this is what Graham Blew, the Town Clerk, told us:

"Working with KALC and KCC we managed to ensure that one of the Town Council's facilities was used by KCC as a one of their Asymptomatic Testing Centres. This obviously has huge benefits not only for the residents of Swanscombe and Greenhithe but also those in the surrounding communities who will now have far less distances to travel.

When we promoted this facility , one

of our entries on Facebook received 12,366 views, 2,033 engagements and 56 shares" .

Borough Green Parish Council also wrote to KALC and let us know what they have been up to in their community. Mike Taylor, Chairman of the Parish Council said:

"We were approached by the Parent Teacher

Association (PTA) at Borough Green Primary School about some disadvantaged pupils who did not have internet access for home schooling, or had to share a single device with siblings.

Two of our Councillors are in IT and sourced a supply of HP Chromebooks. The Parish Council checked our legal position with Clive, and bought 20 devices, 15 for Borough Green Parish Council and 5 for Borough Green Children at nearby Platt primary school.

It struck me that this initiative might be useful to other communities. Primary schools seem to have fallen short in the Government initiative to get devices out to secondary school pupils, and most Parishes could manage a small donation to their local primary school."



Fundraising Opportunity

SUSSEX LUND 2021 GRANTS PROGRAMME NOW OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS

Community groups, trusts, charities, town and parish councils, schools and individuals who own or manage land in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) can now submit new applications for funding from the [Sussex Lund grants programme](#).

Following a year that has highlighted the huge importance of our connection with the beautiful landscape on our doorstep – and our responsibility to look after it – the scheme is offering grants of between **£500 and £10,000** for practical projects that improve habitats, wildlife and natural beauty.

Sussex Lund is a collaboration between the High Weald AONB Partnership and Lund Trust, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. Since it was launched in 2016, the annual scheme has awarded over £750,000 to more than 160 projects, including:

- Restoring hazel coppice for dormice and creating glades and rides in woodland
- Replacing and installing new barn owl nesting boxes across a 10km stretch of farmland
- Planting fruit trees and managing orchards in a nature-friendly way
- Creating wildflower-rich grassland to boost the number and diversity of pollinators
- Restoring and creating ponds and other wetland habitats
- Creating new woodland to provide habitat for a farm's breeding nightingale population.

High Weald AONB co-director, Jason Lavender, said: *"We're seeing more and more people keen to manage land within the High Weald for nature and scenic beauty, which is fantastic. However, the funding needed for some projects means they can be out of reach, particularly after a tough year. We are delighted to be launching Sussex Lund in 2021 as a wonderful way of helping community groups, land managers and others across the area to recover nature."*

Those thinking of applying to Sussex Lund must first discuss their project idea with the High Weald AONB team to ensure it meets all the application criteria – if you haven't already made contact, please call Christine Meadows on 01424 723009 for an informal chat (you may need to leave a voicemail due to current remote working arrangements). Alternatively, email sussexlund@highweald.org with information about your proposed project.

READY TO APPLY? The deadline for applications for this round of funding is **Monday 8 March 2021**. Visit www.highweald.org/sussexlund for more information about Sussex Lund including application forms, guidance on how to apply and inspiration from previous projects.



Kent Association of Local
Councils

Dover District Council Offices
White Cliffs Business Park
Whitfield, Dover
CT16 3PJ

Email: kalc@kentalc.gov.uk
Web: www.kentalc.gov.uk

For KALC specific issues contact Terry
Martin: chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk or
phone 07475 034346
For legal & technical advice contact Clive
Powell: adviser@kentalc.gov.uk or phone
07475 017247

For Finance, Events, KALC website and
general enquiries contact Laura Dyer:
manager@kentalc.gov.uk or phone 07475
066155

For Events, KALC News and general
enquiries contact Tricia Casey-Green:
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 or phone 07378
175948