Kent Association of Local Councils

# KALC NEWS

## **Your Front Page News**

#### The Queen's Speech

Earlier this month, the Queen opened the new session of Parliament and delivered The Queen's Speech, setting out the Government's legislative programme for the year ahead. Areas of particular interest to member councils among the 30 bills announced include the Planning Bill, Environment Bill, Procurement Bill, Product Security and **Telecommunications Infrastructure** Bill and the Charities Bill. KALC will work closely with NALC in engaging with the government and MPs to influence the government's proposals, including pressing for legislation on remote meetings and standards.

#### **Pay Offer**

As you may have seen in the latest NALC Chief Executive Bulletin, further to the National Employers' pay offer to the National Joint Council (NJC) Unions in respect of staff covered by the local government services NJC (the Green Book) of an increase of 1.5% on all NJC pay points 1 and above with effect from 1 April 2021, the trade unions have written to the National Employers to reject the pay offer and have asked for urgent talks. The employers have said they will consider the letter and respond in due course. NALC and KALC will keep you updated.

### Your Subscriptions to KALC



A big thank you to all the councils that have already renewed their membership subscriptions for this financial year. For those councils that have yet to renew, *please remember that the deadline is 30 June*. If your council is unable to meet this deadline, please let the KALC Chief Executive know as soon as possible (e-mail chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk).

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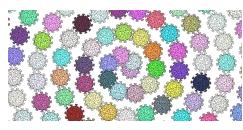
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#### Latest COVID 19 Updates

The latest stage of the "Leaving of Lockdown" began on 17 May 2021, and a number of restrictions were relaxed. Whilst we can now begin to meet indoors under a "rule of six" basis in a

private household, the rules regarding community settings are different, and indeed those rules for meeting outside are also subject to other limits. Please make sure you familiarize yourselves with the current guidance here:

<u>Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and</u> <u>support - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>



Please also bear in mind, that, for the time being, face coverings continue to be mandatory in public indoor spaces in certain circumstances. In the meantime, we all wait for the next guidance that is

due from 21 June. 2021, when a clearer idea of what we can expect over the summer months.

# LOCAL COVID 19 UPDATES



For items that are specific to local councils, make sure you check both the NALC and KALC websites for up to date information.

You can do so here:

NALC: <u>National Association of Local Councils</u> (nalc.gov.uk)

KALC: Home - KALC (kentalc.gov.uk)

The latest local updates for the current state of play concerning Kent and Medway's response to the COVID 19 pandemic can be found here:

Protect Kent and Medway - Kent County Council

This webpage is easy to navigate and has an abundance of information as to how Kent and Medway are now emerging from restrictions since 17 May 2021 when the next stage of the Lockdown Roadmap came into being.

Do keep up to date with these local updates on a regular basis.



#### CHANGES TO KENT'S TESTING SITES OPENING HOURS AS MORE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO TEST AT HOME

Kent's interim Director of Public Health, Allison Duggal, has praised residents in the county for continuing to test

themselves regularly for COVID-19 and supporting the county's road map out of lockdown.

Home testing kits are now widely available at hundreds of pharmacies and workplaces across Kent and can also be ordered online and delivered to your door. As a result of all the different ways to access testing, and a reduction in the number of people choosing to come and get tested in one of our testing sites, a decision has been made to reduce the opening times from the beginning of June.

As pubs, restaurants, gyms and events are now open again it is vitally important that people continue take a test twice a week, even if they have been vaccinated, just to check whether or not they are unwittingly carrying the virus. One in three people show no symptoms of COVID-19.and regular testing will ensure we put a stop to the spread of the virus. "I cannot thank residents of Kent enough for the massive part they have played, and continue to play, in driving down infection rates through regular testing," said Allison Duggal. "I am hugely encouraged by the take up of home testing kits from pharmacies and online. A home test is quick and easy to do and, with everyone getting out and about and socialising more, it is so important that we keep testing, testing, testing to identify any positive cases and continue to prevent the spread of the virus. Please remember to register your test result online so we receive a record of how many people are taking tests.

"We are all aware there are COVID-19 variants emerging that could be more transmissible than other strains. The good news is that we are confident that the vaccine can protect against it but, vaccinated or not, regular testing is vital if we are to stop cases increasing in Kent as they are in other parts of the UK.

"We work closely with Public Health England whenever there is an outbreak and the public should feel reassured that we act quickly to manage the spread of the virus. As soon as we even suspect that someone in Kent has a variant of Covid-19 we have very clear processes that we follow, to carry out PCR testing quickly and effectively and send any positive test results off for 'sequencing' which identifies which strain of the virus it is. While I want people to be confident that we can – and do – manage any outbreaks well, I also want our residents to support this by continuing to test and also thinking Hands, Face, Space and Fresh Air at all times.

"We don't want anything to jeopardise the further lifting of restrictions on 21 June by taking our eye off the ball now. Thank you again for your continued efforts to keep everyone safe."

There is a symptom free test site in every district of Kent and these have played an important part in driving down infection rates and identifying cases that have been isolated, preventing further transmission in the community.

### LOCAL COVID 19 UPDATES

Now that home tests are more readily available, more people are choosing to test themselves at home or in the workplace. The testing centres will stay open, but some operating hours are being reduced in line with the number of people using them. From Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June until Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 the following changes will be taking place to opening times of symptom free testing sites in Kent:

- Monday CLOSED
- Tuesday 9am-2pm
- Wednesday 2pm-7pm
- Thursday 9am-2pm
- Friday 9am 7pm
- Saturday CLOSED
- Sunday 9am 7pm

# \*Please note that the testing site at Sheerness Working Men's Club will be open from 9am to 7pm on Saturday and closed on Sunday. The sites at Sandwich and Sheerness will be closing down on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June.

To find out more details and to book a test please go to our website <u>here</u>. It is easy to book online and there are plenty of appointments available at all sites. Most community pharmacies in Kent have joined the collect scheme. For more information on where to get lateral flow tests, including community pharmacies, please click <u>here</u>.

If you are experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms – high temperature, a new or continuous cough, a loss or change in taste or smell – you should NOT visit a symptom free testing site and continue to self-isolate. You can book a test by visiting the gov.uk website <a href="https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test">https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test</a> or by calling 119.

### For more information please contact Lucy Mayor, KCC Communications Manager on 03000 416421 or Lucy.mayor@kent.gov.uk

### OUR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



KALC continues to deliver its learning and development events online.

Whilst the lockdown restrictions are easing, the KALC team continue to work in their home environments for the time being. This may change as time goes on but we will let you know when we will return to face to face training sessions. When that time comes, we will also continue to provide online training sessions as well.

As the summer season begins, we have launched two events which will be of interest. These are detailed below.

We urge our member councils to take advantage of our events where they can. The KALC Executive Committee strongly advises that councils set a training budget so that both officers and councillors are up to date with their roles.

# What's On...

- Writing Effective Press Releases for local coverage. 17 June 2021. In association with Breakthrough Communications
- An Introduction to Neighbourhood
  Planning 23 June 2021 <u>SOLD</u>
  OUT
- ONGOING BITESIZE COURSES
  including newly launched subjects
   see opposite page!

#### JUST LAUNCHED...

- Chairmanship Networking Day. 17 June 2021. Whole day event
- Councillors Networking Day.
  10 July 2021. Whole day event.

Booking now at our website here:

Training & Events - KALC (kentalc.gov.uk)

#### KALC BITESIZE LEARNING

#### Summer 2021 - Newly Launched Courses!

KALC has its summer programme of Bitesize Learning and Development courses in partnership with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Nimble eLearning.

Nimble eLearning courses are designed to be short: in most cases, no longer than an hour in duration. The emphasis is on subjects you would like to gain more information from, but don't want to spend too much time in doing so. KALC has handpicked several webinar based sessions that you can join, and all of them come priced at a very reasonable price of £14 plus VAT. Non Member Councils are charged at £28 plus VAT

#### What Can We Expect?

 An online course delivered by NALC and Nimble eLearning that you can work through at your own pace, that shouldn't take too much time.

A learning outcome that is suitable for your needs and simple to achieve.

 Various subjects to choose from that enhance your Learning and Development aims for the Local Council tier.

 The opportunity to boost your Career and Professional Development (CPD) portfolio: most courses come with a validated CPD point system, and the minimum is 1.5 CPD Credits per course.

Visit our website here:

https://www.kentalc.gov.uk/ Bitesize Training 31970.aspx for further details

We will continue to add new subjects during the year and there will be no time limit as to when you sign up for the session.

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#### Here are our latest courses:

- Team leadership essentials
- Data Protection Essentials
- Anti-bribery essentials
- Fire safety essentials
- Home working essentials
- Information security awareness
- Introduction to Local Councils
- Introduction to Planning for Parish Councils
- Display Equipment Assessment
- Managing and Reducing Stress

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

Email: kalc@kentalc.gov.uk

#### Kent Association of Local Councils

# It's Time! Sign Up Now...

Our Website: Your Gateway to Information

Clerks - please let all your serving councillors know this information...

#### Kent Association of Local Councils

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

Email: kalc@kentalc.gov.uk



The KALC website is accessible to all member councils. If you are a clerk/RFO or a councillor in our membership, you should obtain a "Log In" password. It's easy to do, and means that you can have information at your fingertips!

You can do so by emailing Laura Dyer: Click on this link <u>Sign Up for KALC Website Access</u> or by emailing Charmaine Keatley here: <u>Sign Up for KALC Website</u> <u>Access</u>

We look forward to hearing from you.





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#### Home Office Consultation – Protect Duty:

Making the public safer at publicly accessible locations Consultation Deadline: 2 July 2021 This Home Office consultation is open to the public, and is targeted at:

- venues
- organisations
- businesses
- local authorities
- public authorities
- individuals

who own or operate at publicly accessible locations or others that a 'Protect Duty' would potentially affect.

A publicly accessible location is defined as any place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission.

The first proposal in the consultation is that the Duty should apply to owners and/or operators of publicly accessible venues with a capacity of 100 persons or more.

For further details please see <u>Protect Duty - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> KALC will be considering the consultation and issuing a response before the deadline.

# **News From Our National Association**

#### NALC Responds to Queens Speech

Responding to the Queen's Speech, Cllr Sue Baxter, chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), said:

"Just as England's 10,000 local (parish and town) councils stepped up to support their communities during the pandemic, they will continue to have an important part to play in the recovery.

"Which is why the Government's proposals in the Queen's Speech to create a stronger, healthier and more prosperous nation, must ensure local councils are empowered to build strong, healthy and prosperous localities.

"More and more local councils are playing their part in tackling the climate emergency and I look forward to the Environment Bill continuing its passage through Parliament and NALC will be pressing for additional powers and funding to help councils do even more.

"Communities must be at the heart of a modernised planning system which is kept local and democratic. While we agree the planning system can be improved and there should be more emphasis on design, new legislation must also strengthen the neighbourhood planning process and provide greater protection for neighbourhood plans. NALC will continue to work with the government to ensure the delivery of its white paper does just this and keeps planning locally.

"Rural and coastal areas must not continue to be left behind in accessing and benefitting from good digital and transport connectivity and it will be important that new legislation addresses this and prioritises rural and coastal communities.

"Proposals to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy for the voluntary sector will be welcome but should extend beyond charities to local councils. And measures to strengthen and renew democracy must reform outdated laws such as allowing remote council meetings, modernise elections such as digital voting, and promote local democracy so more people understand and get involved in how their community is run.

"While no legislation has been announced regarding devolution, I look forward to continuing to engage constructively with the government on its Levelling Up White Paper and press for the establishment of local councils everywhere and the powers and funding to enable them to deliver on the needs and priorities of local people."

#### A Message from Cross Sector Safety and Security Communications: South East



A message from Justin Torgout - Centre Director | The Cyber Resilience Centre for the South East

The Cyber Resilience Centre for the South East is a police-led, not-for-profit business which keeps local charities and businesses up to speed with the latest scams. Our core membership is free, and with it, you get top-notch guidance about how to do the basics and stay safe online.

Businesses in the South East can sign up for a free Core Membership online and receive a welcome pack full of practical resources and tools that will help you identify your risks and vulnerabilities and the steps you can take to increase your levels of protection. Through your membership, you will also get regular updates on new threats, designed to help you stay safer.

We are currently supporting businesses from a wide range of industry's including, Leisure and Travel, Retail and Hospitality, Construction and Architecture, Manufacturing and Engineering, Financial and Legal, Charity/Not for Profit and Education and Academia.

As the SECRC grows we are keen to engage extend our support to all businesses and organisations across the region.

Each month, we are producing a 20-minute short podcast designed to help educate and inform businesses of the risk posed by cybercrime and we are seeking volunteer businesses to feature in one of our episodes, specifically any company or organisation who may have fallen victim to a cyberattack and who are willing to share their experiences to help others.

- June Retail and Hospitality
- July Health care and Personal care
- August Charity/Not-for-Profits
- September Education
- October Financial, Legal and Property
- November Agriculture
- December- Logistics and Operations

The podcast would be a short informal conversation with 2-3 other guests chaired by Justin Torgout, Director of the SECRC who would ask you a few short questions, all business names can be removed and anonymised.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please get in touch via email: enquiries@secrc.co.uk

# BECOME A MEN'S SHED HEALTH CHAMPION



Our free training package will give you the skills to have informal conversations about health with men

# What is Health Champion training?

Our Health Champion training isn't going to turn you into a health expert. It's a skills boost in providing reassurance and confidence to your other group members



We give you the tools, you do the talking







# You won't win any trophies... How does it work?

# What's covered?

This isn't just theory: you'll get the evidence-based resources and tools that can support yours and others' health and wellbeing. We'll start with the basics of men's health and what your role will be as your group's health champion. You'll learn how to have 'healthy conversations'. We'll talk to you about the art of active listening, how to ask open questions, and give the right information and support. Once you've had the training, you'll get our free Health Champion manual that provides helpful tips from the training and provides further information on men's health issues and national and local services. But that's not all. You can join the Health Champion Network and get advice and support.

In return, we ask that you work with others in your group to embrace the Health Champion role and embed it in your group. We'll also ask you to give us some anonymous information on the types of health issues being raised when you have conversations with your group so that we can provide further information and support where required

It's learning to give simple, helpful advice man to man

# Interested?

To book your chosen days, go to: www.eventbrite.co.uk & search for "SBS Men's Health Champion Training"

Available dates: 2nd - 3rd June 7th - 8th July 28th - 29th July

Training is delivered across 2 days in 2-hour sessions You must attend both days to complete the training

# **News from Kent Fire and Rescue Service**



**Kent** Fire & Rescue Service

together KFRS Urges People to Do Their Bit to Prevent Devastating Grass Fires

Grass, crop and woodland fires can have a devastating impact, injuring or killing wildlife, destroying property and livelihoods, and even putting people's lives at risk.

As we enter peak season for these types of incidents, residents, workers and visitors are being urged to do their bit to reduce the number of accidental grass fires across the county.

Most happen between May and September when grassland can get very dry, and many are caused by out of control bonfires, as well as careless disposal of hot smoking materials, and disposable barbecues.

In a bid to crack down on these largely avoidable types of incidents and make the county safer for everyone, KFRS has launched an accidental grass fire prevention campaign which will educate the public about what they can do to help and stay safe.

#### These types of fires can have devastating consequences"

Colin King, KFRS' Assistant Director for Customer Engagement and Safety, said: "In 2020 our crews responded to 617 accidental grass fires, many of which were preventable.

"Grass, crop and woodland fires have the potential to take hold and spread rapidly, especially in warmer months when grassland can be very dry – 83% of last year's accidental grass fires happened between May and September.

"These types of incidents can have devastating consequences, therefore it's important that everyone living, visiting and working in the county plays their part in preventing them from happening in the first place – something we hope this campaign will help to achieve."

The campaign will highlight simple things people can do to avoid accidentally starting grass fires, and as a result protect themselves, the local community, property and wildlife. Such as:

• When lighting a bonfire, keep it to a manageable size, make sure it's well clear of greenery and property, and always supervise it while it's burning. Avoid having a bonfire in windy weather.

• Dispose of smoking materials responsibly, making sure they're fully stubbed out and cooled before being put in a bin - consider using a portable ashtray when on the go.

• Place disposable barbecues on a sturdy, non-flammable surface when cooking, away from greenery and property, and only place in a bin once fully cool.

Colin added: "Grass fires often require a large amount of fire service resources and can take hours, days or even weeks in complex cases, to fully extinguish. This campaign is all about working together with the public to drive the number of accidental grass fires down, keeping people safe and freeing up our crews to respond to other, less-preventable emergencies.

"While everyone can play their part in this, it is inevitable that grass fires will still occur and we advise people not to try and tackle grass fires, or any fire, themselves - instead to move to a safe place and call 999. We will always be here to respond when people need us."

# **News from Kent Fire and Rescue Service**



**Kent** Fire & Rescue Service

together Ten Years of Kent Volunteers!

Dedicated, motivated and compassionate are just some of the words that sum up the inspiring people who volunteer at Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), and this month marks an entire decade of their invaluable support.

KFRS volunteers are selfless individuals who give up their time to help wherever and however they can. Whether that's supporting operational crews and office-based departments, or helping members of the public at their time of need.

Since the team launched in 2011, it's continued to grow from strength-to-strength, both in size and with the variety of roles available, to help create a safer future for Kent and Medway.

Neil Bloxham was one of the first people to sign-up for the position 10 years ago and is now KFRS' longest-serving volunteer.

"It's wonderful to see how much the team has grown over the years," Neil said. "We have a fantastic range of people of all ages and from different walks of life, who are dedicated to helping in any way they can.

"We need that diverse mix of volunteers to be able to offer the best support and care that we can to our customers, which we strive to do every day.

"For me, being a volunteer is just the best feeling in the world. I enjoy it because I get to make a difference to somebody's day and help to keep them safe."

Neil is joined by 38 other volunteers on the team, who each play a pivotal role across the service. The variety of responsibilities include delivering safety advice, research, working alongside the education team, and providing welfare for crews and customer care at emergency incidents.

One of the newest recruits is Vicky Day. She said: "A big part of what we do as a Service, and probably the most important part for me as a volunteer, is listening to people and being able to support them in an individual way. The customer is at the centre of everything we do.

"I would absolutely recommend volunteering to anyone - it's the best thing you will ever do. Personally, I've gained so much from it and that's because of the fantastic teamwork among the volunteers and within the wider KFRS family. We're all in it together and we are one team."

The volunteer team is looking to expand again, with a range of <u>vacancies</u> set to go live on Friday (4 June).



# **News from Kent Fire and Rescue Service**



Kent Fire & Rescue Service

together KFRS Employment Opportunities

Kent Fire and Rescue Service is recruiting!

Take a look at their webpages here: Current vacancies - Kent Fire and Rescue Service (fire-uk.org)

Presently, vacancies for the following roles are being advertised:

- Independent Person
- Senior Content Designer
- IT Systems Developer
- Safeguarding Officer
- Ongoing On Call Firefighters across the county

# **News from ACRK - Rural Kent**

#### Kent Electric Vehicle Charging Network

I



Tuesday 15 June 12 midday to 1:15pm

Speaker: Tim Middleton, Transport Innovations Manager, Kent County Council

Would you like to offer electric vehicle charging at your community building or parish car park? In this session, Tim Middleton from KCC will talk about the Council's electric vehicle charge point scheme.

The scheme is open to village halls who own carparks as well as parish and town councils. It will pay for the installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charge points across rural Kent, where commercial providers are unlikely to reach.

The aim is to provide a publicly available network of charge points for communities as well as visitors to Kent. This will support KCC's Strategic Plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

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Role of

The talk will cover:

Village How the scheme will work and the benefits to village Halls and halls and parish councils Parish The criteria for inclusion to Councils the Scheme **New Event** How village halls and parish councils can register their interest in the Scheme. More information on the scheme is available here: **Travel Plan Management** System (kentsmartertravel.co.uk) This event is FREE! A link to bookings through Eventbrite will be sent nearer WITHCOMM the time, but further information can be sought by contacting Angela Milligan, Village and Community Halls

adviser at ACRK:

<u>Angela.Milligan@ruralkent.org</u> .uk

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### Your Young People: Your Community!

Young people are part of your community and play an important part in making it work. We all know the importance of outdoor spaces for them, and our own member councils have been excellent in making sure there are play areas available, especially for the very young.

This is wonderful, but those who are past playing on swings and slides are also in need of activities and projects in their area. We tend to think that they can be catered for via youth groups such as Scouts and Guides, but this is not always the case. Reaching this age group is an important part of community cohesion, and is not as difficult as it seems.

We generally use an age bench mark of 14 to 26 years to describe a group as "young people". This cohort, as we know, love to engage in the phenomenon of Social Media, and this is always a good place to start.

- Your council probably has a Facebook page. This is a good, general information point, but attracts an older age group now. You may consider starting an Instagram page, which is currently the most popular medium for that age group to communicate. It's also an easy way for your message to be conveyed both on that platform and Facebook.
  - If you want to know what your teenagers and young adults feel about a particular subject, or project - ask them! Set up that SurveyMonkey feedback form, put it on social media, and encourage them for an answer.
- Make the content short. Get straight to the point and above all, make it an attractive post. Don't spare your "emojis" and "memes" when doing so. If your council is brave enough, use the power of YouTube to make a video that attracts your target group.

- Now that community spaces are beginning to open up once more, you may be able to visit one of the youth groups that rent space in your area and ask opinions directly. Likewise, schools are a good place to "pitch your plan" especially if it is a specific project that your community has mooted for some time.
- Never underestimate the power of the Parish/Town noticeboard either - but make sure any poster includes links, QR Codes or a "further information" sign post.

Young people are at the heart of our future. The very young will soon grow up, and will need more than a playground to keep them engaged. If you have any ideas that may keep them occupied after the homework is done, now is the time to start. As the world emerges from a very tough year, we need to seriously think about this often overlooked group of our community.

KALC and Breakthrough Communications ran a workshop on this subject on 20 May and much of the information here is from that event. It proved a very popular theme and we hope to be running an identical event sometime in the future.

So much good work has been done by so many already in our county and we look forward to hearing from you regarding any new project that our councils have in mind for their young people.

#### In Your Neck of the Woods: News from our Parishes and Towns



#### **Community Awards 2021: In Pictures**

The 2021 KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils) Community Award (for Ickham and Well Parish was presented to Jacque Grimsley by members of the Parish Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The presentation took place on the village green in front of St John The Evangelist Church, Ickham. Jacque was also presented with a bottle of her favourite tipple.

Her nomination cited "For over 20 years Jacque has documented local life in words, images and via social media. Through the Pandemic she has kept us connected by co ordinating a community support network."

From left to right: Chris Davison, Geraldine Wyant, John deGraft-Johnson, Jacque Grimsley, Ali Giles, Kate Richards.



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: <u>chief.executive@kentalc.gov.uk</u> or phone 07475 034346

For legal & technical advice contact Clive Powell:<u>adviser@kentalc.gov.uk</u> or phone 07475 017247

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

For Events, KALC News and general enquiries contact Tricia Casey-Green: <u>communications.officer@kentalc.gov.uk</u> or phone 07577 058306 (9.00am to 12:00pm – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

Learning & Development Support Officer – Charmaine Keatley: <u>support@kentalc.gov.uk</u> or phone 07378 175948



Don't forget that KALC is always happy to advertise any vacancies you may have at your Council free of charge on our website. Email Laura Dyer here: <u>manager@kentalc.gov.uk</u> with any advertisement and relevant job description.

