



NEWSLETTER

No.114 - May 2007

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Last month I mentioned the Revised Code of Conduct and made reference to training expected to take place following Election Day on 3 May. The dates for this training will be circulated as soon as possible – meanwhile the existing Code remains in operation and details of the new Code should have been sent out to your Council from the Department for Communities and Local Government or your District Monitoring Officers.

Town and parish councillors and clerks will be aware of the Unitary options selected by DCLG from those submitted by the County and Chester City Council on behalf of the Districts and Boroughs in Cheshire. The Association has had a preliminary meeting with Chester City Council to try to gain a better understanding of their proposals. Anticipating that during the consultation period, the Association as a designated consultee locally and the National Association similarly nominated nationally, we shall be asked for our view before the closing date on 26 June. I must stress that the Association is not currently taking a stance and selecting one option over the other. Town and Parish Councils will, of course, work with whatever form of Unitary is finally established. However, we are preparing a Position Paper for ratification by the Executive Committee which sets out some of the key expectations of Town and Parish Councils from whatever form of local government we eventually have. Perhaps most important is that Town and Parish Councils must have help with resources if they are to undertake more local service delivery

The Association through the North West Federation of Town and Parish Councils has met with the Chief Executive of the Regional

Assembly seeking better representation along the lines of that enjoyed in West Midlands and SE England. Our request has been declined but we have been assured of an open line of communication so that we can raise issues of concern to us.

Also at the regional level we are seeking a closer, collaborative working relationship with the Rural Community Councils who already play an important part in the support of parish and town councils through, for example, the parish plan process. We feel that in Cheshire we have some excellent examples of 'best practice' that the rest of the region might benefit from. We shall report on this development over forthcoming months.

ROGER PARKIN

NALC CONFERENCE

5-7 October 2007

Bournemouth International Centre

The theme of this year's conference is '**Building the Future of Local Communities**'. With the Local Government Bill progressing through parliament, town and parish councils need to ensure that they are ready to take on the opportunities which this may provide.

At the conference will be the largest exhibition of its kind, attracting a wide variety of commercial companies as well as public sector organisations and charities.

If you would like to register for the conference, please contact Susan Harding at the County Office for a Booking Form and further details.

THE CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Blue Bache Barn • Burleydam • Whitchurch • Shropshire • SY13 4AW

☎ 01948 871314 • 📞 07957 804764 • 📠 0870 1319 465 • www.chalc.org.uk

Developing Effective Grant Applications

Cheshire County Council is organising a full day training course aimed at supporting the Voluntary and Community groups to develop and write effective grant applications. The course is being run by Stephen Wright from the External Funding & European Unit. It identifies the principles for producing robust grant applications and offers hints and tips to increase their chances of success. (The course does not explain the broad range of grant funding opportunities).

Course Dates: Wednesday 13 June and Wednesday 18 July

Venue: Comberbach Memorial Hall, Marbury Road, Comberbach, nr Northwich, CW9 6AU

Time: 09.15hrs – 16.30hrs (course is free and lunch provided)

- Evidence a case for grant funding
- Identify the needs of target groups of people and/or organisations
- Address equal opportunities issues
- Understand the grant funding 'jargon'
- Understand why many grant funding applications are unsuccessful

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Develop and write a well thought out and realistic grant funding application
- Evidence a case for grant funding
- Identify the needs of target groups of people and/or organisations
- Address equal opportunities issues
- Understand the grant funding 'jargon'
- Understand why many grant funding applications are unsuccessful

If you would like to register an interest in attending either of these events, contact Susan Harding at the County Office or Steve and his team direct at:

External Funding and European Unit
Cheshire County Council
01244 603331
Stephen.Wright@cheshire.gov.uk

Celebrating together

(from the County Council Chairman)



As you all know, the Chairman of the County Council, Councillor Neville Price hosted a Special Choral Evensong on Sunday 25 March in Chester Cathedral to celebrate and give thanks for the Contribution made by Cheshire's Town and Parish Councils to the Community Life of the County. This event was well supported and very much enjoyed by all those who attended.

The County Council's relationship with local councils has always been strong and productive and has been a major contribution to the quality of life of Cheshire's communities. The detailed knowledge that the Local Councils' Association has of our towns and villages has been of crucial importance, for example, in putting together the Statement of Community Involvement chapter for the latest local area agreement (LAA). Local councils have been swift to offer advice and help in times of crisis such as the foot-and-mouth outbreak or in the development of the planning for the Weaver Valley Way and this support has been warmly welcomed. They have also been very pro-active in developing parish plans, with around 30 now in place and many acquiring quality status.

The addresses given by the Chief Executive of the County Council and Bishop Alan Chesters, President of ChALC emphasised the value of public democratic service and the increased role envisaged for Town and Parish Councils in the new Government Legislation.

Town and Parish Councils are an integral part of Cheshire's way of life, and the celebration at Chester Cathedral was the County Council's public "thank you" to them for all that they do.

Section 137 – Reminder ...

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has confirmed the appropriate sum for the purposes of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for 2007/08 is £5.64.

This is the amount that results from increasing the amount for 2006/07 (£5.44) by the percentage increase in the retail prices index between September 2005 and September 2006 (of 3.6%), in accordance with Schedule 12B to the Act.

THE CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Blue Bache Barn • Burleydam • Whitchurch • Shropshire • SY13 4AW

☎ 01948 871314 • 📞 07957 804764 • 📠 0870 1319 465 • www.chalc.org.uk

REVIEW OF THE POTENTIAL PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATION SERVICE

Introduction

The 640,000 plus planning applications submitted to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in England and Wales in 2006 involved over a million consultations with non statutory and statutory consultees. All but a small percentage of these were paper based involving the creation, handling and processing of thousands of paper case files. LPAs are requested to forward the vast majority of these files to consultees by post or courier services. The 149 Highway Authorities estimate they receive 600,000 consultation requests/year and over 900 government bodies an estimated 80,000. It has proved difficult to accurately estimate just how many were dealt with by over 10,000 Parish Councils.

PARSOL Exchange

As part of the PARSOL (Planning and Regulatory Services Online) project, a Government funded consultation initiative, a PARSOL Exchange pilot was built to prove the concept of electronic data transfer to enable online internet consultation (eConsultation). The exchange was tested using live transactions by several LPAs, consultees and agencies. PARSOL Exchange successfully proved the technology is available to exchange data between LPAs, Consultees and agencies via a central web based hub, thus making a fully automated eConsultation service practical.

eConsultation Demonstrator (Portal Exchange)

Using funding from PARSOL eConsultation and CLG Planning Portal budgets a demonstrator, now called Portal Exchange, has been developed to familiarise LPAs, Consultees and agencies with the basic functions and facilities of a potential eConsultation solution.

Invitation

This invitation is to freely view and experiment with the demonstrator and let us know if the basic functions and facilities it provides meet your requirements, tell us what additions you would like us to include or how you feel it should be developed further. Your feedback is essential. Please let me know if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity to evaluate and influence development of the Portal Exchange or if you would like to nominate one or more of your colleagues to participate. The URL will then be

forwarded to enable full online access to the demonstrator plus user guidance notes and a very brief questionnaire.

Stuart Mockford - Deputy Director

DCLG Planning Portal
Room G/08 - Temple Quay House
2 The Square - Temple Quay - Bristol - BS1 6PN
0117 372 8180 - 07765 89-69-59
stuart.mockford@planningportal.gov.uk

AWARDS FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

Following last year's successful awards, NALC is working with partners to ensure that the work of town and parish councils is recognised and celebrated, not only across the sector, but in the communities which they serve. The winners of all awards will be announced at the NALC Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held in the Bournemouth International Centre 5-7 October 2007. At present there are three awards schemes:

AON/NALC Clerk and Council of the Year Awards – Closing date: Friday 25 May 2007

The search is on to find the AON/NALC clerk and council of the year 2007. We want to highlight and promote the work of the best clerk and councils across the country.

LCR/Co-operative Bank Communication Awards – Closing date: Friday 25 May 2007

Communicating with your community is a key part of the work which all local councils carry out. The Communications Awards look to recognise and reward those councils in these areas, and also assist those looking to evaluate or improve their current offering.

Community Empowerment Awards sponsored by the CRC – Closing date: Friday 15 June 2007

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) are now inviting entries for the Community Empowerment Awards 2007.

The awards are split into four categories: young people, older people, housing, and Gypsies, Travellers and migrant Workers. The CRC are looking for examples of the work that is carried out on a day-to-day basis, which helps to engage and empower your local community.

Please visit the NALC website - www.nalc.gov.uk for further information.

THE CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Blue Bache Barn • Burleydam • Whitchurch • Shropshire • SY13 4AW

☎ 01948 871314 • 📞 07957 804764 • 📠 0870 1319 465 • www.chalc.org.uk

MOTIONS FOR NALC AGM

Member Councils are invited to submit motions for discussion at the National Conference on **Sunday 7 October 2007**. Please ensure that all motions are both relevant and competent.

Whilst the Conference has no policy making functions, all motions discussed and passed will be reported to the National Associations Policy Committee. Please note that if a motion already exists as NALC Policy, it will not be debated. Amendments to motions will not be permitted, either prior to or at the motions session. All motions should be sent to Susan Harding no later than Friday 27th July.

An Introduction to Fixed Penalty Notices for Litter, Graffiti, Flyposting and Dog Control Orders

You may have recently received a letter from Defra giving news of a new course aimed at officers authorised by parish councils and district council officers with LEQ enforcement roles (specifically the issuing of FPN's for litter, dog control, graffiti and flyposting).

On behalf of Defra this course aims to provide a basic understanding of how to apply the relevant sections of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 relating to litter, dogs, flyposting and graffiti by means of a Fixed Penalty Notice lawfully, safely and appropriately. *It is also the obligatory course for Parish Councils staff who would, on completion of this course, have the authority to issue FPNs.*

We are now pleased to report that we are running courses over the coming year and are able to offer places on the course at the reduced rate of **£185 per delegate (normal rate is £295)**.

These courses are taking place as follows:

- 4 July 2007 Birmingham
- 11 October 2007 London
- 24 January 2008 Manchester

If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact the training department where we will be happy to assist you.

Michelle Wright - Training Manager
Ann Charman - Training Administrator
ENCAMS - Elizabeth House
The Pier - Wigan - WN3 4EX
01942 612655 - <http://www.encams.org>

CODE OF CONDUCT

As you are no doubt aware, the revised Code of Conduct for members (Statutory Instrument 2007 No.1159) was laid in Parliament earlier this month and will come into effect on 3rd May. It has been brought to our attention that you may have received advice that the Code of Conduct that local authorities are currently covered by will no longer apply from the 3rd May because the new order making the revised Code of Conduct revoked the preceding Codes of Conduct made in 2001. Consequently, if this were the case all local authorities would have to adopt the revised Code of Conduct before or on 3rd May. As you can imagine this would cause significant practical problems to local authorities.

I would like to clarify that this advice is not accurate. Under s.51 of the Local Government Act 2000 it is the duty of local authorities to adopt the revised Code in place of their existing Code within 6 months of the revised Code being made. This means that local authorities will have until 1 October 2007 to adopt the revised Code. After that time, members of local authorities that have not adopted a revised Code will be automatically covered by it. The existing Code will continue in force until such time as the local authority adopts the revised Code, or until 1 October 2007, whichever is sooner.

To ensure that all members are subject to the same standards across the country, the Standards Board for England encourages local authorities to adopt the revised Code at the first opportunity. I would also like to note that we have published a parish version of the revised Code which only contains the provisions relevant to parish and town councils. You can view this on our website at www.standardsboard.co.uk/TheCodeofConduct/ReviewingtheCode/

PAUL HOEY (SBOE)

ENCLOSURES

Area Meeting Representatives Notification Form

Council Members List Advisory Form

ChALC Position Paper on the current consultation on Local Government Reform

If you would like additional copies of any of the enclosure, contact Susan Harding at the County Office.

THE CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Blue Bache Barn • Burleydam • Whitchurch • Shropshire • SY13 4AW

☎ 01948 871314 • 📞 07957 804764 • 📠 0870 1319 465 • www.chalc.org.uk