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## Northumberland Association of Local Councils

### **NALC Enews 16 December 2021**

**Please forward to all Councillors  
and Staff**

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### **Emails to Member Councils**

The Chairmen and Clerks of Member Councils have been sent the following email since the last issue of the Enews.

9 December 2021 containing

- Coronavirus and Home Working
- Storm Arwen

If your Council has not received a copy, or if your Chairman or Clerk has changed, please let me know.

### **Storm Arwen**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-review-into-storm-arwen-response-launched>

As an interim report is to be made within 8 weeks, time is critical.

The County Committee identified the following key issues

- Strength of the electricity supply infrastructure for both Northern Powergrid and Scottish Power
- Lack of generators to use at local sub-stations
- Failure of the mobile phone networks
- Failure of broadband infrastructure
- Apparent lack of alternative means to pump water when mains electricity failed
- How to communicate when there are no internet or mobile phone connections

There is no criticism of the workers on the ground but there is for investment programs and communications.

Is there any key point not shown?

If so, please email details to [info@northumberlandalc.uk](mailto:info@northumberlandalc.uk) by 31 December 2021 please.

## Coronavirus

The rules and guidance on wearing face masks and working-from-home are available on the Govt.'s website at

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

With updated advice on outdoor play areas etc. at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-public-places-managing-public-outdoor-settings>

and updated workplace guidance at

The national NALC's guidance is at

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The Health & Safety Executive's guidance is at

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/roadmap-further-guidance.htm>

For those involved with halls, ACRE guidance is available via

<https://acre.org.uk/>

Their view of the guidance (at 10 December) is that face coverings are required to be worn at council meetings held in indoor public places, subject to exemptions or reasonable excuse (see the guidance for further information). They have advised that councils consider not meeting in December if possible. The effect is that if a Parish, Town or Community Council meet in a village hall, community centre or similar, face masks must be worn unless there is a medical exemption.

All tiers of local govt. are pressing for legislation to formally allow the resumption of digital meetings but no announcements have been made as yet. (15 Dec).

Given media comments, it seems likely that rules and guidance will change before the New Year. If your Council is planning to have a face-to-face meeting in early January 2022, then it would be wise to have contingency arrangements in place should this no longer be possible.

## Briefings

The following events are scheduled over the next few weeks. Please use the appropriate link for more information and booking.

[Planning - Neighbourhood Plans - Lessons Learnt](#)

Thu, 20 Jan 2022 19:00

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### Planning - Enforcement

Mon, 24 Jan 2022 19:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/planning-enforcement-tickets-185693774077>

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### Planning - Conservation Areas

Wed, 2 Feb 2022 19:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/planning-conservation-areas-tickets-185690093067>

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### Planning – Highway and Rights of Way Issues

Tue, 8 Feb 2022 19:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/planning-highway-and-rights-of-way-issues-tickets-185681758137>

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### Standards for Parish, Town & Community Councils

Thu, 10 Feb 2022 19:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/standards-for-parish-town-community-councils-tickets-216137712717>

## **Certificates of Lawful Development**

One Council recently became aware of more applications in its area for these being made to the County Council's Planning Dept. We made enquiries and this type of application is encouraged as it means that assertions by landowners/developers have to be backed up by evidence.

validated applications on the County Council's website.

The number of applications for certificates for the County as a whole have remained broadly constant over the past few years.

There's more information on Certificates of Lawful Development via the Planning Portal at

[https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200187/your\\_responsibilities/37/planning\\_permission/3](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200187/your_responsibilities/37/planning_permission/3)

## Climate Change

In a legal article, Laura Hughes sets out the key points for local authorities following the conclusion of COP26 in Glasgow.

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/environment/767-environmental-features/49039-post-cop26-where-now-for-local-government-and-net-zero>

## Christmas and New Year

Our best wishes for Christmas and hopes for a happy 2022.

Stephen Rickitt, the Chief Officer, is on leave from Noon Tuesday 21 December and is scheduled to return on Tuesday 4 January 2022.

## Reports and other articles of possible interest

### Budget Consultations

The City Council

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/budget-performance-and-spend/council-plan-and-budget/budget-2022-clean-green-and>

The County Council

<https://haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/communications/2022->

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## Elections

The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee are calling for the Government to stop the passage of a Bill that would introduce a requirement to show photographic ID to vote at polling stations and could give Downing Street more power over the election watchdog until more thorough consultations take place.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/327/public-administration-and-constitutional-affairs-committee/news/159702/election-reform-proposals-lack-evidence-base-consultation-and-transparency/>

The Electoral Commission's report into the May 2021 elections

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/police-and-crime-commissioner-elections/report-may-2021-elections-england>

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## HMRC PAYE

The December 2021 Employer Bulletin is at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-bulletin-december-2021>

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## Planning

Emily Knowles discusses new legislation on the requirement of electric vehicle charging points, and its potential impact on the Electric Vehicle Revolution.

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/sharpeedge/801-sharpeedge-environment/49055-the-electric-vehicle-revolution-or>

A government minister has called the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) a “truly malign piece of legislation”. Ibrahim Hasan looks at what the comments tell us.

<https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/information-law/344-information-law-features/49034-foi-under-attack>

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*If you have any comments or observations, please  
contact [info@northumberlandalc.uk](mailto:info@northumberlandalc.uk)*

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