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Northumberland Association of Local Councils

NALC Enews 22 September 2020 Please forward to all Councillors and Staff

Emails to Member Councils

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

10 September 2020 containing

- Physical Meetings
- Funding
- Audit

15 September 2020 containing

- Meetings
- The AGM
- Briefings

21 September 2020 containing

- North-East Local Lockdown
- North-East Local Lockdown Sources of Information
- Local Council Meetings

has changed, please let me know.

Briefings

The following events are scheduled over the next few weeks. All are free and on-line using ZOOM. They all start at 7.00 pm and last for a maximum of two hours. Briefings are open to Councillors and staff from member councils.

Please use the appropriate link for more information and booking.

Tuesday 13 Oct 2020 - Budgets, Precepts and Finance

This will look at how to set a budget, what this means for the precept and other financial issues

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/budgets-precepts-and-finance-tickets-119216382409>

Thursday 22 Oct 2020 - Introduction to Planning

This will provide an overview of the Town & Country Planning system, how to respond to planning applications and enforcement.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-planning-tickets-119216755525>

Tuesday 27 October - Being the Chairman of a Smaller Parish Council

This will consider the role of the Chairman, their relationships with fellow Councillors, the clerk and staff.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/being-the-chairman-of-a-smaller-parish-council-tickets-119217222923>

Wednesday 25 Nov 2020 - Freedom of Information

This will provide a general introduction to FoIs, including how requests can be managed and what to do with persistent requesters

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/freedom-of-information-tickets-119217592027>

Coronavirus

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The most up-to-date sources of information are likely to be

The City Council <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/>

The County Council <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

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

The national NALC <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Colleagues at Community Action Northumberland are advising village halls and community centres

<http://ca-north.org.uk/>

The County Council's Community Chest Scheme

Parish councils are able to apply to the Community Chest Scheme this year for the first time for support for projects that directly link to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Items of expenditure must be eligible under the scheme which typically funds items of equipment, capital works on land or buildings and one off hire costs. Applications can be up to 100% up to a maximum of £5,000.

The 100% up to £5,000 also applies to community and voluntary sector organs for specifically covid-19 related projects.

For non-Covid -19 projects, it is 75% but parish councils cannot apply.

Forms and guidance can be found here

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Councillors/Community-Chest.aspx>

The deadline is 2nd October with a further round deadline on 15 January. The Scheme is competitive and the panel decision is final.

Vacancy for a clerk

The Haltwhistle & District Joint Burial Committee are seeking a clerk. Details are at this link

Elections

The Cabinet Office Minister responsible for elections recently sent this letter to the Returning Officers confirming there are to be no elections before May 2021.

https://mcusercontent.com/5060a2022e1081d67bbdd9b3a/files/c1945b26-44b7-4667-9c87-7f7bd051ecf9/Chloe_Smith_letter_to_ROs_and_EROs.pdf

All Parish, Town and Community Councils in Northumberland will hold elections in 6 May 2021. Contested elections will take place on Thursday 6 May 2021. The Association is working with the County Council's Elections Team and will be providing briefings later in the autumn.

Website Accessibility

The Association aims to produce some guidance for Member Councils in the near future, this has been delayed because of the need to deal with matters arising from the pandemic.

One point which has emerged is that Councils should avoid, if possible, uploading Word or Excel spreadsheets to the website. It seems that some hackers are able to use these as a way to get into a Council's computer. The advice is to use PDFs which are safer.

Please do not ask for details of the IT issues as we do not have them. It is an aspect of electronic life which we thought best to pass on.



If you have any comments or observations, please contact
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