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Northumberland Association of Local Councils

**NALC Enews
24 February 2022**

**Please forward to all Councillors
and Staff**

Coronavirus

The Govt. has announced that from today - 24 February 2022

- "You will no longer be legally required to self-isolate if you test positive for COVID-19. New guidance will advise people who test positive to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.
- You will no longer be legally required to self-isolate if you are an unvaccinated close contact, and will no longer be advised to test for 7 days if you are a fully vaccinated close contact. New guidance will set out precautions for reducing risk to yourself and others.

This guidance will be updated shortly to include information on the above changes. **You should continue to follow the guidance to keep yourself and others safe."**

The extract is taken from this page

at 0850 today with the emphasis added. As Stephen Rickitt will be on leave until 15 March, please look at that page (and others on the Govt.'s website) and also the national NALC's website (shown below) for any changes to the guidance.

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

Contrary to the impression given by some commentators, this does not mean that all suggested precautions can be immediately removed. Councils will still have to consider what precautions may be necessary after considering the most up-to-date guidance.

Briefings

We are preparing the programme for the rest of the year and would welcome suggestions of topics please.

The Conservation Area briefing is being rescheduled.

Vacancies for Clerks

Stocksfield Parish Council are seeking a new clerk. Details are at

<https://stocksfieldpc.org.uk/news/newsitems/405-vacancy-for-a-clerk>

Whittingham, Callaly & Alnham Parish Council have asked that their vacancy be readvertised, their original advert is at

https://mcusercontent.com/5060a2022e1081d67bbdd9b3a/files/fa31711c-d856-a6ef-5a23-88496e5bd168/WPC_Advert_for_Parish_Clerk_6.02.2022.01.pdf

National Pay Negotiations

The national NALC have advised us that

"Further to previous information we have provided to you on the national pay negotiations, this is the latest information from LGA:

Unite's strike ballots close today in England and Wales and on 24

We have been informed that Unite's national local government committee will be meeting on Mon 28 February to discuss next steps. Therefore, there is little prospect of the pay deal being finalised before that date.

The National Employers continue to advise very strongly against implementing the pay offer before a formal collective deal has been finalised. To do so before the collective bargaining process has concluded would not only fragment the unity of the position held by all councils since the [full and final offer](#) was made last July, but it also leaves councils vulnerable to questions being asked by auditors as to why expenditure has been unnecessarily incurred in the absence of a national collective agreement. In addition, councils would need to consider very carefully the wider legal issues, including those arising out of the case of *Kostal UK Limited v Dunkley* (as explained in Advisory Bulletin 696)."

NB: Unfortunately the LGA's Advisory Bulletin 696 is only available to LGA Members

Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

In June 2021, the Boundary Commission for England's (BCE) 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies was published. This included a consultation to get feedback on proposed new boundary lines and constituency names.

BCE is now running a secondary consultation on their initial proposals.

To help promote this secondary consultation, BCE has produced a partner pack, available at the link below, containing a range of materials that can be used in various communication channels e.g. websites, bulletins, social media channels.

The consultation will run from 22 February to 4 April.

Details of the consultation are available via

<https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/>

The partner pack

<https://mcusercontent.com/5060a2022e1081d67bbdd9b3a/files/15053166-6b61-756e-6265->

2022/2023 Council Tax Rebate

On 23 February, the Govt. sent guidance on the rebate to the billing authorities. It seems that the £150 rebate for Bands A-D will be paid direct to householders and will not be deducted from bills going out.

We anticipate more details will appear on the City and County Councils' website once they have had the opportunity to work through the guidance. This initial impression may therefore change.

We are not currently aware of any effect on the precepts paid to Parish Town and Community Councils by the City and County Councils.

The Govt.'s guidance is at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-council-tax-rebate-2022-23-billing-authority-guidance/support-for-energy-bills-the-council-tax-rebate-2022-23-billing-authority-guidance>

Annual Leave

Stephen Rickitt is on annual leave for the fortnight starting on Monday 28 February 2022, returning to NALC duties on Tuesday 15 March 2022.

Reports and other articles of possible interest

[Covid 19 and Councils](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic placed unprecedented pressure on councils and care providers, and a new report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman analyses just how those organisations coped.

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2022/feb/ombudsman-s-covid-report-highlights-how-councils-and-care-providers-coped>

[Local Government Pension Scheme investments](#)

Scheme funds in England and Wales make investment decisions, how they can and should take into account environment, social and governance issues, including the risks and opportunities associated with climate change and investment in infrastructure

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7309/>

[Levelling Up](#)

The House of Commons Library Briefing looks at the Government's "levelling up" agenda, including a summary of its February 2022 levelling up white paper.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9463/>



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