

NOTES FROM CLERKS' FORUM – 6th June 2017

Notes from February 2017 Meeting

Fine – some matters arising (see below)

Matters Arising

(a)Confidentiality & data protection training – some time since CALC ran a course (delivered by Information Commissioner's Officer – ICO) so CALC making enquiries with other county associations.

(b)Verge cutting – documents from CCC Highways emailed to all clerks on 6th March 2017. Note: Even though Longsleddale parish meeting does hedge cutting (as well as verge cutting), CCC Highways Peter Hosking emailed that: "hedge cutting definitely does not fall within same guidelines as verge maintenance as it is the responsibility of the landowner...There are also restrictions as to when hedges can be cut with regards to bird nesting." Any parish wishing to submit an expression of interest on verge cutting needs to send the form to their CCC community contact (ie. Carol Last, Gillian Holmes or Cherrie Trelogan).

(c)Planning – Amanda McCleery emailed SLDC Mark Shipman about whether his parishes could receive amended plans (like parishes in LDNPA do). He replied that new digital system being implemented by SLDC (summer 2018) which will allow parishes to have an account and to set alerts (eg. for automatic amendments to planning applications). The new system is not just restricted to planning and training will be offered at the time.

(d)Elections – Amanda McCleery forwarded an email from SLDC Tom Benson on 20th March 2017, confirming that there were only county elections in South Lakeland.

(e)Information management – Amanda McCleery forwarded the CALC website link to "documents – retention and disposal" on 20th March 2017, namely members\advice\meetings\document retention. One clerk advised not to store anything at County Archives that still using because there is a charge and you need to apply in advance to access them there.

(f)Correspondence lists – CALC Training Officer, Sonia Hutchinson, explained that a key reason to still include on the agenda is because the correspondence received is for the whole community, not just the councillors. As a parish clerk, Sonia does filter emails and selects the key ones that she thinks the council and community need to know about (eg. flood defence, health watch, principal authorities).

Mirrors on Roads Nobody present aware of any legal implications but also not heard of any parishes installing them before. **ACTION:** Broughton East parish clerk to contact CCC (Carol Last or Peter Hosking) about safe siting and Burton-in-Kendal parish clerk (as believe an organisation in that village installed one).

Digital Map of Parish Boundaries **ACTION:** Amanda McCleery to contact CALC and SLDC Monitoring Officer, Debbie Storr, to see if such maps exist and if so to email to clerks.

Relevance of SLCC Membership (as a clerk, not a parish council) brings a magazine with useful articles, training courses and template documents. The union part of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCCC) – which supports clerks in disputes with their councils – has been split off.

Pensions Email from Sonia at CALC to all clerks on 17th March 2017 which outlined the steps necessary if current employee does not want to join or opt into a pension scheme, completing the Pension Regulator Declaration form (stating that no employees have been enrolled into a pension scheme at the present time).

Payroll Some parishes do it themselves (eg. Broughton East, Holme) and others outsource (eg. Levens, Arnside) with an external accountant calculating PAYE and National Insurance.

Transparency Code Email from Sonia at CALC to all clerks on 16th March 2017 reminded parishes (with annual turnover not exceeding £25,000) that: all items of expenditure above £100; end of year accounts; annual governance statement; internal audit report; list of councillor responsibilities; location of public land and building assets; agendas, minutes and papers all need to be published online. £1.1million is still available via NALC's Transparency Fund for 2017/18, with an application form on the CALC website and email CALC for advice. NALC wants beneficiaries of the Transparency Fund and other small councils to know that there is a NALC Smaller Councils Committee and it is currently looking at rural issues; councils sharing services and the administration and management of councils.

Audit For those parishes with income/expenditure below £25,000 there will be no external audit of 2017/18 accounts (unless there is a query from the public). The 2016/17 accounts are submitted to BDO as usual. CALC Trainer, Jean Airey, is an internal auditor, so ask CALC for her contact details.

CCC HIMS Parishes were emailed on 20th March 2017 about CCC launching its new online service to report, respond and action a highways fault. Parish experience of the Highways Information Management System (HIMS) was mixed, with some finding it fine to log problems and others finding it not intuitive.

Website Best Practice Amanda McCleery mentioned that the website of Grange-over-Sands town council has some excellent aspects under its "Your Council" page: FAQs under which council does what; how the public can take part in meetings; filming and recording meetings. www.grangeoversandstowncouncil.gov.uk

CCC Trading Standards No Cold Calling Zone toolkit, from CCC Trading Standards, to enable communities to establish own zones – with a step-by-step guide, draft letters etc. www.cumbria.gov.uk/tradingstandards/consumers/nocoldcallingzones.asp

Neighbourhood Planning Grants Final year from organisation Locality (email: info@mycommunity.org.uk) for grants of up to £9,000 (for developing website, putting together project plan, undertaking local surveys & hiring a planning expert) or additional £6,000 for groups with complex issues (eg. housing needs or environmental assessments).

Reform of Data Protection Legislation Legal briefing (LO3-17 May 2017) from NALC on reform of data protection legislation and introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018. This was emailed to all clerks by CALC on 24th May 2017. Parish councils are recommended to read ICO's easy to read guide entitled "Preparing for the GDPR 12 steps to take now" on its website: <https://ico.org.uk/media/1624219/preparing-for-the-gdpr-12-steps.pdf> NALC is seeking clarification re. whether parish councils will need to appoint a Data Protection Officer.

Scale of Audit Fees CALC emailed, on 23rd May 2017, a scale of audit fees for parish councils with annual turnover over £25,000.

Devo + Publication NALC has produced this publication exploring what devolution means to local councils of different sizes, why NALC thinks devolution isn't going to stop and giving various case studies. www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/devolution-1/2328-devo-plus-toolkit-december-2016/file

NALC Legal Topic Notes (LTNs) www.nalc.gov.uk Login and LTNs under Publications/LTNs

(i) *Celebrations & similar events* (LTN 11) – updated to include references to LTN 88 (on event licensing) and s.138B of 1972 Act in respect of events & celebrations with a religious flavour.

(ii) *Policing area* (LTN 13) – updated to include 2016 Investigatory Powers Act & other developments in respect of use of CCTV.

(iii) *Local councils' powers to provide parking spaces* (LTN 18) – more logical structure

(iv) *Markets & other events* (LTN 20) – amended to remove some Internet links that are no longer valid

(v) *Basic Charity Law* (LTN 28) – updated to include references to procurement regulations (Public Contract Regs 2015) & to situations where there are insufficient management trustees for a charity to operate.

Section 137 Expenditure The amount is £7.57 per elector in 2017/18 under s.137 (4) (a) of 1972 Local Government Act.

Next meeting Wednesday 18th October from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at Derby Arms, Witherslack