

Did you know?

There are **10,000** parish and town councils in England. They are the first tier of local government and represent **35 million** people with **16 million** electors, raising around **£700 million** in precept and investing over **£2 billion** in communities.

Some of the largest councils have a precept of over **£1 million** a year. **100,000** councillors spend over **14 million** hours a year serving those councils to help change their communities. Over 300 new parish and town councils have been created in rural and urban areas in the last decade.

About

National Association of Local Councils

Since 1947, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has been the only recognised national membership organisation for 10,000 community, neighbourhood, parish and town councils. Parish and town councils are the first tier of local government and are statutory bodies. These councils are at the forefront of community development, ensuring that local needs are met and the community's voice is heard, ultimately enhancing the community's quality of life and wellbeing. NALC works with a network of 43 county associations to support, promote, improve and create sustainable councils. NALC believes these vibrant and dynamic parish and town councils are at the centre of community effort, delivering services and giving their communities a democratic voice.

Society of Local Council Clerks

Founded in 1972, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) has gone from strength to strength, starting with just 50 members and now representing clerks to over 5,000 parish, town and community councils in England and Wales. As the professional body for clerks and senior council employees, SLCC ensure its members are equipped with the necessary knowledge, training, and skills to thrive in their roles and best support their council and community. Their vision and ethos is clear: Inspiring professionals and empowering councils and communities. SLCC recognises the importance of support and recognition throughout a clerk's professional journey. Whether members are seeking expert advice, looking to develop their careers, or aiming to build connections with fellow clerks, SLCC is dedicated to offering the support and recognition they deserve.

Foreword

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) have committed to a strong and effective partnership to support clerks, councillors and councils in delivering for their places – building stronger, more resilient communities.

Because our country faces challenges national government alone can't solve. Delivering its missions cannot be delivered by national government on its own. It is local government working together at all levels which is the key to tackling these challenges.

This includes our most hyperlocal level of government - England's 10,000 parish and town councils and their 100,000 unpaid councillors and thousands of professional staff. They are local leaders with 'skin in the game' who know their places best and what they need. And they have an important part in working with national government and wider local government.

NALC and SLCC are ambitious for the sector and confident that it can contribute significantly to addressing issues ranging from health to housing, the climate emergency and cost of living crisis. We also know that a growing number of hyperlocal councils are taking on additional responsibilities from financially challenged principal councils to safeguard community assets and local services.

That's why we have committed to working together to ensure that the role of local councils as the first tier of local government is recognised at the local, county, regional and national level. That councils engage effectively with their communities, empowering residents and community groups and supporting them to deliver community objectives. And to ensure councils have the capacity and capability to deliver their changing role and fulfill their potential.

This publication shines a spotlight on this increasingly vital part of local government through key data and examples of how hyperlocal councils are supporting and improving their communities.

Did you know...



NALC's manifesto for building stronger communities across England sets out an offer to the government with its policy asks to strengthen local leadership through parish, town and community councils. With diverse funding and building their capacity and capability, parish, town and community councils can empower rural and urban communities and help them level up their areas. **Scan the QR code** to read more.



NALC's fringe event speakers were asked to write an article on the pivotal role of parish, town and community councils in tackling some of the country's most pressing challenges. These challenges include supporting principal authorities, building more homes, improving health and wellbeing, and engaging with young people. **Scan the QR code** and find out what they think.



You can stay in the loop and never miss out on the latest NALC updates, events, valuable insights and the weekly chief executive's bulletin by subscribing to our mailing list today! Join our community of subscribers and elevate your experience and knowledge of the parish, town and community council sector. **Scan the QR code** to sign-up.



Would you like to hear more from SLCC? Visit the SLCC website to sign up for updates on the latest events and educational news. **Scan the QR code** to register.



SLCC's Local Council Consultancy (LCC) aims to be the first-choice provider of locum clerk and consultancy services to parish, town and community councils. It provides value for money for sector-specific consultancy expertise and professional clerks to councils across England and Wales. **Scan the QR code** to find out more.



DID YOU KNOW?

Over 1,600 parish, town and community councils have signed up for the Civility and Respect Pledge, enabling them to demonstrate that they are committed to standing up to poor behaviour across the sector and driving positive changes to support civil and respectful conduct.



DID YOU KNOW?

Parish, town and community councils think globally and act locally to tackle climate change. Take Thame Town Council in Oxfordshire, which developed a Green Living Plan or Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council in Leicestershire that installed charging points for electric vehicles, and Bodmin Town Council in Cornwall, which organised a tree planting day.



DID YOU KNOW?

Young people are the future of our communities! Parish, town and community councils support young people locally by curating green spaces and holding events, funding youth groups, installing playgrounds and skate parks, providing bursaries for students and grants for school uniforms, running fitness and activity sessions, working with stakeholders, creating youth councils, and providing youth clubs and services.



DID YOU KNOW?

Over 300 new parish, town and community councils have been created in rural and urban areas in the last two decades, with new councils created every year! This includes London's first-ever parish council, Queens Park Community Council in Westminster.



DID YOU KNOW?

Health and well-being are essential parts of everyday life and integral to leading a happy and healthy lifestyle. Parish, town and community councils are supporting just that, such as Peterlee Town Council in Durham, which introduced Taste Buddies to encourage members of the community experiencing loneliness to come together weekly and Alcester Town Council, which created a health and well-being board bringing together key local partners and appointed a health and well-being co-ordinator to develop many projects including a gone fishing club!



DID YOU KNOW?

Local Council Clerk Week is a celebratory week aimed at raising the profile of this vital profession, and the work clerks do on behalf of parish, town and community councils.



DID YOU KNOW?

Star Council Awards Clerk of the Year 2023 winner Andrea Mann of Odiham Parish Council transformed the council's operations while rebuilding community trust by revamping internal processes, securing grants for local projects, and restoring a community library after negotiating its transfer from the principal authority. Her leadership significantly improved community engagement, enhanced councillor collaboration, and led to multiple community improvements despite challenging circumstances.



DID YOU KNOW?

Many parish, town and community councils nationwide have stepped up to support their communities in the cost-of-living crisis. Northwood Parish Council in the Isle of Wight provide warm spaces, Coxhoe Parish Council in Durham have opened a community pantry, and Haywards Heath Town Council in West Sussex launched the Haywards Heath Coat Exchange for anyone who needs a winter coat.



DID YOU KNOW?

Clerks are usually trained and qualified professionals in community governance and council administration. They juggle various skills, from finance and accounting to staff management and HR, to understand and interpret relevant and ever-changing legislation. 89% of clerks reported having had specific training for their posts, a marked contrast to the situation in 1991, when only approximately 33% had specific training for their roles.



DID YOU KNOW?

Parish, town and community councils nationwide are winning awards! Take Nettlestone and Seaview Parish Council, Swanage Town Council and Weymouth Town Council, who won Keep Britain Tidy's prestigious Blue Flag and Seaside Awards. Lowestoft Town Council, whose Love Parks Week campaign was honoured at the Keep Britain Tidy Awards 2023. Sevenoaks Town Council were awarded Platinum at the Loo of the Year Awards. Oswestry Town Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and South Molton Town Council were all crowned at the Great British Market Awards 2023.



DID YOU KNOW?

Parish, town and community council clerks advise their councillors, ensuring that what councils do is done properly. From lobbying MPs and AMs, working with principal authorities for changes to speed limits and car parking charges, reporting potholes, applying for grants, leading local climate change initiatives, running civic celebrations or researching complex planning applications.



DID YOU KNOW?

When parish, town and community councils actively engage with young people, it brings fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and creative solutions. It builds trust and confidence in local government initiatives. Weymouth Town Council set up and supports a youth council run by a committed core of 12 to 15 young people representing the voices of Weymouth's youth community, allowing them to discuss relevant issues and engage with the decision-making processes.



DID YOU KNOW?

The average world temperature increase of 1°C (and still rising) over the past 70 years is unprecedented in terms of timescale. Parish, town, and community councils have an essential role with many local projects existing, such as the tree planting project by Mistley Parish Council, Bollington Goes Green Week by Bollington Town Council, community polytunnels by Whitehill Town Council, and the renewable energy system project by Yate Town Council.



DID YOU KNOW?

Star Council Awards Council of the Year 2023 winner Braunstone Town Council accomplished several impressive achievements and was recognised for its strong commitment to community welfare and sustainable development. These include working with the local clinical commissioning group to establish a GP branch surgery, installing solar panels and electric vehicle charging points, transforming road construction land into a park, and managing the local library to enhance its services and accessibility.



DID YOU KNOW?

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape future growth. A government database shows roughly 2,800 neighbourhood plans at the end of 2021, with around 90% of those plans led by parish, town and community councils. Research also shows that neighbourhood plans allocate 23% more housing numbers than in the local plans.



DID YOU KNOW?

Parish, town and community councils play a significant role in creating inclusive environments and supporting LGBTQ+ communities. For example, Crewe Town Council honoured older LGBTQ+ community members at their Silver Rainbow Pride, Leighton-Linslade Town Council held a Pride Working Party that served as a platform for brainstorming inclusive policies, Hertford Town Council held a Family Pride Day designed to educate the public about LGBTQ+ issues.