

**Wiltshire Association of Local Councils**  
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Chair, Clerk and Councillors  
Parish Councils  
Wiltshire and Swindon Unitary Authority Area

Dear Councillors and Officers

### **Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)**

It is that time of year again when annual subscriptions need attention. It may be insurance renewals, Information Commissioner registration, the parish magazine, or membership to associated professional bodies including SLCC and the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils.

### **What is WALC?**

Each County Association is federated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Membership is exclusively for Local Councils, whether Parish, Town or City. In Wales there is a slightly different set up with One Voice Wales. Local Associations (like WALC) nominate a representative to speak on their behalf at NALC, this works in the same way as Councillors attending community groups as a representative of the Council. There is also an Executive Committee for WALC consisting of Parish Councillors from each area of Wiltshire and Swindon who represent their Councils – there are vacancies at present, if you are interested, please do get in touch.

So, what will your Council gain from being a member? The following extract is taken from the NALC AGM held in October 2016, although coming up to seven years ago these benefits are still very relevant:

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and county associations have a key national and local role including:



- building the sector's reputation with principal councils, national organisations, and the media.
- lobbying government and Parliament.
- identifying and sharing good practice.
- improving councils' capacity to do the job.
- providing high quality advice and guidance, including on legal, finance, planning, housing and other subjects.
- ensuring councils are aware of upcoming legislation and issues of potential interest to them so they can act accordingly.

In addition to the above each County Association will offer services that are required locally, that may be training, networking, advice on the legal and financial framework by which Councils are bound, supporting devolution of assets and/or services from principal authorities especially when areas are being merged into Unitary Authorities, or any issue the Councils' within that area need help with.

Wiltshire members will directly benefit from up-to-date advice, training sessions led by qualified professionals, access to the WALC website and the NALC website – where various toolkits and templates for Standing Orders etc can be found. As well as all the above, member councils will be made aware of briefings or update sessions being given by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC); any information gathering being carried out by DLUHC relevant to Parish and Town Councils; or if the government “Calls for Information” from Local Councils. Whilst it is possible to gain a lot of this information from various Government websites, it is very often difficult to find, membership is time saving for clerks and chairmen who are required to be aware of the current changes.

Uniquely, WALC does not directly employ staff – instead having an agreement with Community First who manage staff on their behalf. This close relationship means the Local Council Advisor works alongside advisors for village halls, community organisers, Link schemes and various other voluntary related initiatives within Swindon and Wiltshire. Services like training are chargeable, but they are provided to WALC members at greatly reduced rates. Current examples are the Play Inspection Training is £100 more expensive for non-member councils while the County Conference due to take place in June is free this year to member councils while non-members are required to pay £40.00



per attendee. Effectively this means the more events (both charged for and free) attended the better the value is for membership of this organisation.

If you are already a member of WALC, or wish to join immediately, an invoice detailing your subscription is enclosed. Please pay this either by cheque or BACS whichever suits your circumstances. Also enclosed is a contact form, please supply details of who will be the Council contact for WALC, and who within your council would like to receive monthly newsletters.

If you would like someone to attend your Council meeting to discuss this membership organisation further, please do contact us to arrange a date and time to meet.

Yours Faithfully

*Deborah Bourne*

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