



NALC - UPDATE OCTOBER

From Northumberland Association of Local Councils <info@northumberlandalc.uk>
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To NALC Info <info@northumberlandalc.uk>



Northumberland Association of Local Councils



**Council Leader invites Parish & Town Councillors to attend
a meeting to discuss their views.**

As we move forward with the delivery of our newly launched 2026-2030 Corporate Plan, we are beginning the process Of setting the 2027-28 budget to ensure resources are aligned with our priorities and ambitions for the county. We have listened carefully to residents, businesses, town and parish councils, community groups and Other stakeholders, and their feedback helped shape both our new Corporate Plan and our approach to setting the budget. Through extensive engagement last year involving more than 1 ,800 responses, people told us that maintaining roads, keeping communities clean, supporting town centres and local businesses, improving public transport, protecting frontline services. investing in housing, and enhancing leisure and green spaces were among their key priorities.

In response, we have committed significant investment in areas such as road maintenance, town centre regeneration, housing, recycling and environmental improvements, transport, and community facilities. Most importantly, this is an ongoing conversation. As we begin planning for the 2027-28 budget, we want to continue listening to residents and stakeholders to ensure our decisions reflect the needs, aspirations and priorities of the people and communities we serve I am very keen to hear about what you might want us to do more Of - or less Of. Parish and Town Councils are very important to us so I hope very much you will be able to join one of these special meetings - and have your say. We have arranged meetings across the County to ensure we capture the views Of Town and Parish Councils and do hope you will come along to have a conversation and discuss the things that are important for your local areas. Our meetings will take place across the County at the following venues, and refreshments will be provided.

Seaton Sluice Wednesday 21st October 6-8pm Seaton Sluice Community Centre, Albert Road, Seaton Sluice. NE26 4QX

Prudhoe Monday 26th October 6-8pm The Spetchell\$ Centre, 58 Front Street, Prudhoe, Northumberland. NE42 5AA

Alnwick Monday 2nd November 6•8prn St James' Church Hall, Main Hall, St James's URC, Pottergate, Alnwick. NE66 IJW

Berwick Thursday 5th November 6-8pm Berwick Sports & Leisure Centre, Northumberland Rd, Berwick-upon- Tweed. TD15 2AS

I look forward to meeting you and hearing your views on how we can continue to make Northumberland a land Of great opportunities. Please confirm attendance at the meeting you wish to attend by emailing emma.kerr@northumberland.gov.uk

With best wishes

Cllr Glen Sanderson

Leader of Northumberland County Council



THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Will take place on Thursday 8th October 2026 starting at 5:30pm at County Hall Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2AP during the County Conference.



**NALC and ACRE publish first-of-its-kind flooding case studies for
parish and town councils**

We have partnered with the Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) to publish brand-new flooding case studies as part of a dynamic project to promote the excellent work parish and town councils can do to combat flooding in their place.

The resource, the first of its kind in the parish and town council sector, has been published under the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership (RFRP), which aims to strengthen collaboration, better understand the unique vulnerabilities of rural areas, support rural communities to strengthen their flood resilience and support adaptation opportunities to reduce flood impacts.

The resource features tailored case studies from five parish and town councils in rural areas: Alcester Town Council, Cubbington Parish Council, Great Alne Parish Council, Heighington Parish Council, and Nether Whitacre Parish Council. These contribute to the RFRP work plan to ensure that planning for future flood resilience is being routinely considered by rural communities and those working with them.

Each case study is in-depth and provides details on relevant statistics, the type of flooding experienced, what the problem or issue was, what action was taken, and how the community was involved in resolving the problem. The resource also includes individual and overall key learnings from each of the five case studies.

Read more [HERE](#)



Gambling Licensing Policy

Northumberland County Council is consulting on its refreshed draft Gambling Licensing Policy (Statement of Principles), which sets out how the Council will carry out its gambling licensing responsibilities

and help protect children and vulnerable people from gambling-related harm.

The consultation is open until 16 October 2026, and we are keen to hear from residents, businesses, community organisations and partners across the county.

Town and Parish Councils are a vital part of getting of helping us to get as many views as possible.

How you can help: Please share the consultation with your local networks and encourage people to read the draft Statement before completing the survey and providing their feedback.

Consultation and draft Statement: [Consultation on the council's Gambling Licensing Policy](#) 

Thank you for helping us reach as many people as possible and ensure local views are reflected in the final policy.

Colin Macdonald
Head of Public Protection



Removing restrictive covenants on land

There was a case of a parish council successfully applying to the Upper Tribunal under section 84 (1) of the Law of Property Act 1925 to modify a restrictive covenant on the council's land. The facts, in summary, are that the council was gifted a piece of land in the 1980s for use as a doctor's surgery. A covenant restricted the use of a building to a doctor's surgery. In 2022, the medical practice that had operated from the surgery moved out, and no doctor(s) could be found who wished to use the building as a surgery. The council was

successful in widening the scope of the covenant to "medical and health uses". There may be times when a parish or town council feels it is bound by a restrictive covenant that no longer serves a purpose. This case provides a positive example of a council finding a practical solution to benefit its area. [Read more](#) about the case.

Calling an extraordinary meeting

We have had queries on the statutory provisions around calling an extraordinary meeting. It concerns chairs calling meetings and members wishing to hold their own meetings. The power to call an extraordinary meeting is given to the chair of the parish or town council by virtue of Paragraph 9 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972. Two councillors can give the chair a signed request for an extraordinary meeting, and the chair must call the meeting within seven days, failing which the two councillors can call an extraordinary meeting. In the cases we advised on, the chair had called the meeting within the relevant seven days of receiving the request. The seven days relates to the calling of the meeting, not when the meeting must occur. The extraordinary meetings had been validly called, and there was no power for the two councillors to call a meeting.

City status

We have been asked about the legal status of city councils. The advice was that a parish council can have the style "city" if the parish is the area granted city status by the ruling monarch rather than a grant by way of legislation. City status belongs to the relevant city area, and legally the councils have the status of parish councils. Parish councils with city status are rare. We understand that a city council chair can use the term "mayor". We give the following advice in our advice note on [alternative names and styles for parish councils](#): "Very few parish councils have, by the royal prerogative, the status of a city, and they are entitled by such grant of the royal prerogative to be called and styled a royal town".

Votes of no confidence and parish polls

We were asked whether a vote of no confidence in a parish council can trigger a parish poll and whether the principal authority is obliged to carry out the parish poll if all statutory requirements are met on a vote of no confidence. In short, the answer was no. The request raises two separate points. Firstly, the vote of no confidence (VONC). VONCs have no effect in law, and a VONC does not bind a parish council. The next issue is the parish poll. The following guidance is contained within

our advice note on [meetings of parish meetings](#) and quotes Paragraph 18 (4) of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972: "A poll may be demanded before the conclusion of an assembly on any question arising at the assembly; but no poll shall be taken unless either (i) the person presiding at the meeting consents or (ii) the poll is demanded by not less than ten, or one-third of the local government electors present at the meeting, whichever is less". A parish poll has no connection with a vote of no confidence.

Religious aspects of Remembrance Day events

Section 138B (1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a local authority in England may support or facilitate, or make arrangements to be represented at an event with a religious element. In our view, this would enable a parish or town council to support or facilitate a religious element of a Remembrance Day event, for example, a church service. We understand that the legislation was introduced for the purpose of clarifying that local authorities can participate in events with a religious element.

Recent team activity

We have updated our advice note on [data protection](#) following statutory changes to data protection complaints handling and our advice note on [members' conduct and the registration and disclosure of their interests in England](#), further to a legislative change to the Localism Act 2011 introducing a requirement for councillors' residential addresses not to be published in the public register of interests. We have also updated our advice notes on [celebrations and similar events](#), [easements over common land and village greens](#), [helping village halls](#), [local council powers to provide parking spaces](#), [meetings of parish meetings](#) and [responsibilities of councils as landowners](#) to remove outdated references and improve readability.



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Northumberland County Office is only an email away.

Best regards

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