 **Bulletin – 11th February**

**Elections**

The Electoral Commission has confirmed that following the UKs departure from the EU there are no changes to the franchise for local elections. European citizens will still be able to vote and stand in local polls taking place in England without any change to the current process and the qualifications needed to stand remain the same, as per section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It will also be noted that whilst the Government has reconfirmed that elections will go ahead in May, this will not affect the vast majority of parish and town councils in Staffordshire as we have no elections in the four-year cycle in the county in 2021. Other than in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough area, which will see elections next year, elections are not due to be held in Staffordshire until May 2023. Other councils may nonetheless be interested in the Government’s related [**delivery plan**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=bbf8c43e76&e=268ef73eff), which covers public health and social distancing, nominations and campaigning, voting, and the delivery of elections.

***Jonathan Owen, NALC CEO, writes…***

**NALC Lobby Day**

Remote meetings were among the key issues we were lobbying parliamentarians on this week at our annual Lobby Day. I’m really pleased this has now become a regular fixture in the calendar for NALC and county associations to meet with Members of Parliament and the House of Lords to raise the profile of local councils and the issues they face. In total on Tuesday, we engaged with over 50 Parliamentarians – including ministers, shadow ministers and spokespeople – with more meetings taking place in the coming days and weeks and several county associations writing to all their MPs. We also hosted a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on local democracy which you can read more about [**here**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=5993907e84&e=268ef73eff) and held a briefing for Peers. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone involved in ensuring the sector’s voice gets heard!

**Local Government Finance Settlement**

The documents for 2021 to 2022 local government finance settlement have been laid in the House of Commons alongside a [**written ministerial statement**](https://nalc.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=16886b5d6c31eade2f9a50027&id=b0a25bd498&e=268ef73eff). This confirms council tax referendum principles will not be extended to local councils and is a direct result of our lobbying! The final settlement debate and vote will be held in the House of Commons next week and we will be briefing MPs

**The *‘Village Halls Domesday Book’***

ACRE has approached NALC as part of Village Halls Week to promote its online record for village halls to complete to let the world know what they’re doing as they celebrate 100 years of rural action, as well as their hopes for the future. The *‘Village Halls Domesday Book’* can be accessed here: [https://coda.io/@acre/village-halls-doomsday-book-2021](https://coda.io/%40acre/village-halls-doomsday-book-2021). A [press release](https://acre.org.uk/news/2021-02-08-rural-charity-overwhelmed-by-village-halls-scramble-to-sign-online-domesday-book) has been issued by ACRE encouraging more halls to join the initiative.

**Hednesford Town Council: Locum Clerk Required**

Prep for and clerking at meetings (to include minutes) 5 hours per month; Email checks and responses (1-2 hours per week); Financial Reporting (2 hours per month); Planning for Annual Town Meeting (one off); Preparation for end of year finance activity (one off); we therefore expect duties will take about 12 hours per month, but some flexibility would be ideal.

Hednesford Town Council employs a Town Regeneration Manager, Community Officer and Administrative Officer who will be picking up most of the day-to-day duties; the locum Town Clerk is needed to help with the fulfilment of statutory duties and to advise Council at meetings. The rate of pay is £17.91 per hour. Contact kathryn.downs@hednesford-tc.gov.uk

 ***Message from Staffordshire County Council***

***Climate Change Action Fund open for applications until 26th February 2021***

*Grants of up to £1,000 to help schools, parish councils and community groups do their bit towards a greener future for Staffordshire. A grant can be used to fund new projects that reduce the amount of carbon produced, improve air quality or help people to deal with climate change events such as heatwaves, drought or heavy rain.*

*Your parish council could apply to:*

* *Upgrade lighting systems*
* *Install bike sheds to encourage sustainable travel*
* *Buy water butts for community building*
* *Improve insulation in community building*
* *Plant trees*
* *Buy shade sails for parts of a building that need shading in the summer*

*If we all do something, it can make a big difference.*

*Find out more about the fund at*[*www.staffordshire.gov.uk/dobfund*](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/dobfund?utm_medium=govdelivery&utm_source=email)*.*

*To apply for a grant, parish councils will first need to speak with their county councillor and then apply online. Please see the*[*list of County Councillors on our website*](http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=ALPHA&PIC=0&VW=LIST&utm_medium=govdelivery&utm_source=email)*for contact details, where you can also****search****by postcode if you are uncertain who your councillor is.*

***Applications must be received by 26th February 2021***

**Mayfield Parish Council, East Staffordshire**

**Vacancy: Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer**

21 hours per month (to be worked flexibly from home) plus an additional 15 discretionary hours per year. NJC pay scale, up to SCP 17 – £12.73 per hour.

Mayfield is one of the northernmost parishes in the East Staffordshire Borough Council district, adjacent to the Derbyshire boundary at the River Dove. It has 600 households and a population of around 1,000 spread across several distinct communities. It is a lively village with a number of active societies and voluntary organisations and has a Memorial Hall, parish rooms and Recreation Association which are all well supported.

We are seeking to appoint a Clerk/RFO who will be responsible for preparing agendas and minutes for monthly Parish Council meetings, held at 7.00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month, for handling correspondence and managing the administration of the PC and providing advice to enable councillors to fulfil their function to best effect.

As the Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk is required to arrange the payment of accounts, issue invoices, monitor and balance the Council’s accounts and prepare records for audit purposes and VAT. Our annual precept is c.£11,500.

Applicants should have experience of committee work, minute taking and keeping financial records together with strong organisational, communication and IT skills and an interest in developing the PC website.

An interest in local community matters is essential and, while experience of local authority administration would be ideal, training and support will be provided. Convenient travelling distance to/from Mayfield will be important.

For a detailed job description, and/or to arrange an informal discussion on the role, please contact Cllr Janet Watson at janewatson@uwclub.net and on 01335 346121. The deadline for applications is 20th February 2021

Further information on the Parish and Parish Council can be found at <http://www.mayfieldparishcouncil.org.uk>