

Rudgwick Parish Council

Weekly Clerk's Update: 4th – 10th January 2025 (Agenda January 2025)

To: Parish Councillors

c.c: Christian Mitchell (West Sussex County Councillor)
Richard Landeryou (Horsham District Councillor)

From: Anna Clayton

The weekly update provides information regarding:

- Announcements/delegated decisions by the Clerk
- Planning information
- Correspondence/communications from parishioners
- Correspondence/communications from outside organisations

List of organisations that communicate with the Council on a regular basis.

- AIRS (Action in Rural Sussex)
- APCAG (Association of Parish Councils Aviation Group)
- CAGNE (Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emission)
- CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)
- HALC (Horsham Association of Local Councils)
- HDC (Horsham District Council)
- NALC (National Association of Local Councils)
- WSALC (West Sussex Association of Local Councils)
- WSCC (West Sussex District Council)

Clerk's announcements/delegated decisions:

- **VAT reclaim for £4,563.60 submitted to HMRC**

GENERAL REMINDER: If you wish to speak face to face to a member of staff, please contact the Clerk on 07927 702321 during her office working hours (Monday – Wednesday 9.30 – 15.30).

Delegated Applications

Delegated Applications for noting at Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 10 th February 2025	
Application No: DC/24/1826 07.01.2025 (amended block plan 02.01.2025)	Response/Comments:

Applicant: Little Hookland, Lynwick Street, Rudgwick Reason for Application: Erection of oak framed garage in front garden Official Response Date: 21.01.2025 / Determination 26.01.2025	
Application No: DC/24/1969 09.01.2025	Response/Comments:
Applicant: Okewood House, The Haven	
Reason for Application: Variation of Condition 1 of previously approved application DC/22/0871 (Demolition of existing western wing and store. Erection of a two storey side extension. Blocking up of existing and creation of new openings and construction of a single storey glazed link. Alterations to existing Cottage building including erection of a porch. Closure of existing access and upgrading existing gated opening to form main access with associated landscaping) Relating to the relocation of the approved chimney, re-orientation of the chimney pots and narrowing of the chimney to the west elevation. Removal of the chimney from the eastern elevation. Minor internal alterations and materials change.	
Official Response Date: 30.01.2025 / Determination 12.02.2025	
Application No: DC/24/1598 09.01.2025	Response/Comments:
Applicant: Ridge Farm, Horsham Road, Rowhook	
Reason for Application: Change of use of land from storage of caravans to flexible storage use.	
Official Response Date:	

30.01.2025 / Determination 28.02.2025	
Application No: DC/24/1967 09.01.2025	Response/Comments:
Applicant: Sail Tops, Cox Green	
Reason for Application: Variation of Condition 1 of previously approved application DC/24/0462 (Demolition of existing garage and annexe and construction of 1no 3 bedroom detached house with residential amenity areas, car parking and turning, together with hard and soft landscaping and new access) Relating to site area, vehicular access and minor elevational revisions to the new dwelling.	
Official Response Date: 30.01.2025 / Determination 11.02.2025	

Applications for consideration at Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting

Applications for consideration at Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 13th January 2025	
Application No: DC/24/1958 27.12.2024	Response:
Applicant: Gibbons Mill Farm, Gatefield Bungalow, The Haven	
Reason for Application: Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling.	
Official Response Date: Not available / Determine 21.05.2025	
Application No: DC/24/1959 27.12.2024	Response:
Applicant: Furnace Lakes, Guildford Road, Slinfold	

Reason for Application: Removal of 9No. fishing swims and the siting of 3 shepherds huts for use as holiday accommodation (Class C3) together with associated works.	
Official Response Date: Not available / Determine 11.02.2025	

Decisions

HDC Council Decisions – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 10 th February 2025	
Application No: DC/24/1742	Response: Prior Approval Required and REFUSED / RPC - Prior Approval should not be granted.
Applicant: Monks Farm, Honeywood Lane, Okewood Hill	
Reason for Application: Prior Notification for Change of Use and extension of an Agricultural Building to 3no dwellinghouse (C3 Use Class)	
Official Response Date:	
Application No: DC/24/1879	Response: Permitted / RPC - No objection
Applicant: 3 Buckhurst Cottages, Church Street, Rudgwick	
Reason for Application: Non Material Amendment to previously approved application DC/24/0769 (Erection of a two storey side extension and installation of new roof to rear) for a slight revision of roof line and slightly taller gable end.	
Official Response Date:	

Applications going to Committee

Applications going to Committee – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 10 th February 2025	
Application No:	Response/Comments:
Applicant:	
Reason for Application:	
Official Response Date:	

Appeals Lodged / Appeals Determined

New Appeals Lodged / Determined – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 10 th February 2025	
Application No:	Response/Comments:
Applicant:	
Reason for Application:	
Official Response Date:	

New Planning Compliance Issues

New Planning Compliance Issues – Rudgwick Parish Council Meeting 10 th February 2025	
Application No:	Response/Comments:
Address:	
Nature of Complaint:	
Official Response Date:	

Parish Councils Website

Rudgwick Parish Council's New Website is now live!

Thank you for your ongoing patience while this was under construction.

<https://rudgwick-pc.gov.uk>

Correspondence

Email dated 09.01.2025 from WSCC

Sussex Councils agree to submit expression of interest on devolution



news release

Sussex Councils agree to submit expression of interest on devolution

The Cabinets of the three Sussex upper tier Councils have today agreed to submit an expression of interest to be considered for the Government's Devolution Priority Programme indicating support for a Sussex Mayoral Strategic Authority which could unlock new powers for the region.

The Government's white paper on English Devolution states that Mayoral Strategic Authorities will bring funding and local decision-making powers down from central government to deliver on economic growth, jobs and skills, housing and transport.

A Mayoral Strategic Authority could give the people of Sussex a stronger voice in how national decisions affect them and greater power to shape major projects across the area.

If the Government accepts the initial proposal for Sussex to join the devolution priority programme, the Government will run a consultation to obtain residents' views.

West Sussex County Council Leader, Cllr Paul Marshall, said: "We were pleased to receive the clarity needed from the Government which clearly identified the benefits an elected Mayor and strategic authority would bring to Sussex. By bringing powers down from central government on transport, infrastructure and health, we can join services and plans together that will enable more efficient and strategic decision making which will help boost our economy and the wellbeing of our residents and communities."

Cllr Bella Sankey, Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council said: “This is an exciting and significant step to unlock new powers and resources for communities across Sussex. I’m keen to move swiftly with the Government and all tiers of local government across the region to take advantage of the opportunities being presented to us.”

Leader of East Sussex County Council, Cllr Keith Glazier, said: “This is historic for Sussex; bringing together the three authorities and our partners to discuss the future of local government in the area and the benefits to our residents, businesses, and communities it could bring. We have all looked closely at the Government’s white paper, together discussed its benefits and what it offers and believe that we have come to the right decision to put forward an expression of interest for a Strategic Mayoral Authority for Sussex.”

The Government’s White Paper set out in detail the key areas that a strategic authority would be in control of to drive growth and provide support on shaping public services. These include:

- Transport and local infrastructure
- Skills and employment support
- Housing and strategic planning
- Economic development and regeneration
- Environment and climate change
- Health, wellbeing and public service reform
- Public safety

Notes to editors

The expected timeline following the submission of the proposal is:

- A devolution consultation would be held before the end of March 2025.
- The results of the devolution consultation will be assessed in the Spring 2025 following which a Ministerial decision will be taken as to whether to proceed with a Mayoral Strategic Authority (prior to unitary re-organisation). The Spending Review will then confirm future mayoral investment funds for new mayoral areas.
- relevant legislation will be laid before Parliament in relation to the creation of Strategic Authorities.
- In March 2026 notice of mayoral elections will be given for a Mayoral election in May 2026. A decision whether to move to a Mayoral Strategic Authority under the reorganised arrangements would follow.

The plans for devolution do not change the councils’ commitment to service delivery for communities across Sussex.

There will follow a separate process of Local Government re-organisation:

- A formal invitation to submit reorganisation proposals will be issued to all authorities in January.
- At the end of 2025 and in early 2026 Ministers will consider unitary proposals and delivery phasing with statutory consultations being undertaken on the first tranche of proposals.

Timelines for the remainder of the reorganisation process will be subject to the proposals received.

Email dated 09.01.2025 from NALC
Chief Executives Bulletin

Happy New Year and an open letter from NALC's chair

A very happy new year to you and yours! And what a year in prospect, given Santa delivered several early Christmas presents in the form of the English Devolution White Paper, related consultations on standards and local audit, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2025 to 2026! As our chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, sets out in his new year open letter, we should welcome and be positive about the white paper (more on that below) as it contains proposals for which NALC and our network of county associations have lobbied. But it also recognises our call for devolution to go beyond mayors and strategic authorities to communities and neighbourhoods. This is where I believe parish and town councils can continue to rise to the challenge and play a key and bigger role, with the white paper presenting a huge opportunity to nurture neighbourhood governance to ensure the success of devolution. Keith's letter also thanks everyone working in and with the sector, reflects on several achievements over the last year, and highlights his priorities for the year ahead.

English Devolution White Paper

The English Devolution White Paper is dominating thinking within local government, with many proposals now happening at pace. As expected, it will be a key feature of all our work in the coming weeks and months. Just this week, many upper-tier councils will discuss whether to make a clear commitment to government on devolution and local government reorganisation and to request the postponement of elections in May. We will be pushing for the creation of new parish and town councils across those areas which go for unitary status. The [consultation on a national audit strategy](#) set out in the white paper seeks views by the end of January. We will be working with our colleagues at the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) to support the proposals for increased audit thresholds and call for other audit changes whilst seeking to ensure that we have a sector-led approach to limited assurance. The hugely welcome [consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities](#) seeks views on introducing measures to strengthen the

standards and conduct regime in England and ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including introducing the power of suspension. To help inform our response, we need your views and have [opened a survey](#) until 2 February to collect your views and insights. Our Policy Committee is meeting on 28 January to discuss the white paper, and we are planning a wider session for our National Assembly members and county officers. We will also work closely with colleagues in the Society of Local Council Clerks, Local Government Association and other national bodies. This week, we also met with government officials to share some of our initial views and discuss the development of elements of the white paper. The first fortnightly meeting with county officers of 2025 focussed on the white paper with colleagues considering the impact local government reorganisation will have on their counties and the experience of those that have already gone unitary. There was a strong emphasis on this being an opportunity to introduce new parish and town councils where they do not currently exist, and several ways we can support county associations were proposed, such as template letters and sharing knowledge and good practice.

Upcoming events: Power Shift 2025, study tour and online events

Continuing the devolution theme, please mark your calendars for [Power Shift 2025](#), our in-person event on 23 June 2025, at the America Square Conference Centre near the Tower of London. This timely event will spotlight the evolving role of parish and town councils in England's democracy amidst the transformative opportunity of the English Devolution White Paper. While metro mayors often dominate headlines, Power Shift 2025 will champion grassroots governance, exploring how parish and town councils can lead the charge in shaping an inclusive future for devolution. We'll also hold an exclusive [study tour with Braunstone Town Council](#), the 2023 Star Council Awards Council of the Year, between 20 and 21 May 2025. This behind-the-scenes experience will highlight the council's innovative strategies and achievements, offering valuable insights into modern local governance. Tickets include an overnight stay, an evening of networking and dinner, and an inspiring deep dive into this award-winning council's success. Lastly, don't miss our new [online events programme for 2025/26](#). These affordable, expert-led events foster collaboration and innovation for parish and town councils and will cover community engagement, clean energy, asset management, and more.

NALC welcomes the Law Commission's burial and cremation proposals

This week, [we responded to the Law Commission's consultation on burials and cremations](#), which aims to provide modern, certain and consistent regulation across different funerary methods. In line with our manifesto objective to reform outdated legislation, changes to burial legislation are an issue we've long called for. In our submission, we stated that seventy-five years must elapse between the last burial in a grave, the burial rights in that grave being extinguished, and the grave being reused. We also called for regulation of any land where the primary purpose has been burial, strongly agreed that every burial ground owner should be required to maintain their burial ground in good order and called for a consistent system of burial registration. However, we disagreed with the proposals to

remove the restriction on constructing a crematorium on the consecrated part of a local authority burial ground, as we believe that burial grounds should be left alone in this instance.

On the blog: National Youth Agency

[This week's blog](#), by Leigh Middleton OBE, chief executive of the National Youth Agency, explores how parish and town councils can play a vital role in supporting young people's wellbeing. Young people face numerous challenges, including mental health issues, online harm, and a lack of adequate services. Many have expressed a desire for youth activities that provide fun and a sense of belonging. With local authority budgets facing cuts of £1.1 billion since 2010, the youth sector has struggled to meet these needs, leaving the voluntary sector to fill the gap. The blog highlights the importance of parish and town councils, which are well-positioned to address these challenges by engaging with local youth services. An updated statutory guidance from the government allows councils to contribute to a more sustainable and effective youth service. The South Gloucestershire Youth Service model, which involves parish and town councils in funding and commissioning youth projects, is a successful example. This collaborative approach has resulted in longer-term, impactful services, such as support for LGBTQ+ youth and those in critical transition stages.

NALC calls on parish and town councils to support COVID-19 Day of Reflection 2025

The secretary of state for culture, media and sport, Lisa Nandy MP, has announced a UK-wide [COVID-19 Day of Reflection](#) on 9 March 2025. This event will commemorate the fifth anniversary of the pandemic, providing a solemn opportunity for communities to reflect on the lives lost and the impact of the global crisis. In a letter addressed to our chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, Lisa Nandy MP has encouraged parish and town councils to participate actively in the observance. She highlighted the pivotal role of local government in fostering community engagement, urging councils to promote the event, support community-led initiatives, and consider hosting their public events. I echo her words and encourage parish and town councils to participate and continue to create creative and meaningful ways to unite communities.

And finally...

One of NALC's strategic objectives is to raise the sector's profile and our views on national policy in print, broadcast and social media. [The Guardian](#) covered a piece from Professor Vernon Bognador calling for parish and town councils to "be strengthened and established in areas that don't have them so that local people do not feel disfranchised." The national and local government trade press also covered our call for [hybrid meetings to be allowed](#), our concerns that the recent [increases in employers national insurance contributions](#) will place a burden on parish and town councils and their communities, and that the [audit consultation](#), part of the devolution whitepaper package could have unforeseen consequences for our sector's very different external assurance regime. We will continue to push for more coverage of our sector in the media and would encourage you to engage with your local press about your work, too.

Email dated 09.01.2025 from WSCC

West Sussex County Council offers free Bikeability training to Year 6 pupils



NEWS RELEASE

West Sussex County Council offers free Bikeability training to Year 6 pupils

West Sussex County Council is to offer free Bikeability training in a bid to ensure that every child in the county has the opportunity to develop the confidence and skills to cycle safely. The free training sessions will be available to Year 6 pupils who are eligible for free school meals from January 2025

Bikeability, which is the government recognised syllabus for cycle training in the UK, ensures participants can make independent and safe cycle journeys, providing a foundation to a lifetime of active travel.

The council's Road Safety Team, a fully accredited Bikeability provider, trains over 7,000 pupils annually in the skills needed to navigate today's roads safely. However, participation rates have dropped in recent years with a survey revealing that cost is often a significant factor preventing families from enrolling their children, particularly those from lower-income households.

Councillor Joy Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said: "With the move to secondary school, young people will often begin to make the journey to school independently, with many choosing to do so by bike. Bikeability training equips children with important skills to confidently share the roads with other users, ensuring that their journey is a safe one. However, cost barriers have prevented too many children from accessing this essential programme. By offering free places to pupils eligible for free school meals, we are ensuring equal access for all and hope that more children will participate as a result.

This initiative also supports our council's wider goals of promoting active travel, reducing reliance on cars, and fostering healthier lifestyles among young people."

The Bikeability programme, funded in part by Active Travel England, is designed to increase hazard awareness, observation skills, and confidence when cycling on roads. The Level 1/2 training offered to Year 6 pupils begins with off-road assessments before progressing to real-road scenarios in risk-assessed areas. Trainees learn critical skills, including how to start and finish a journey, how to signal intentions, and the basics of Highway Code.

The council's decision to waive the £20 per pupil fee for children eligible for free school meals is expected to increase participation rates, which in turn will ensure we are able to bid for future funding to put towards similar programmes. Parents, carers, schools, and communities are encouraged to take full advantage of this opportunity.

To learn more about the Bikeability programme, visit
[Cycle safety courses for school children - West Sussex County Council](#)

Email dated 07.01.2025 from WSCC
Ways to have a Healthy New You in 2025



Welcome to your Healthy New Year 2025

The New Year is a great time to make positive changes in your life.

So, are you ready to make 2025 your healthiest year yet?

In this special edition newsletter we've got lots of tips on how you can improve your health and wellbeing, and links to a wide range of free information and advice.

Even one small change can make a big difference.

Please feel free to share with friends and family.

Happy New Year!



> **Be active as often as you can.** to improve mental wellbeing, keep a healthy weight, and reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.

> **Check out all the weight management services** available in West Sussex by visiting the [West Sussex Wellbeing website](#). Gro Health is a free digital weight management programme for people who live or work in West Sussex. Visit the [Gro Health website](#) to check your eligibility and sign up.

> **Quit smoking** — we are here to support you! Quitting smoking is much more successful when you get the right support and with professional help you're three times more likely to quit for good. Visit [Smokefree West Sussex](#) or call 0330 222 7980 to get free support from trained advisors to help you quit smoking for good. Support is available face-to-face, over the phone or by downloading the new [Smokefree app](#).



> **Call the shots on alcohol**, feel in control and take the [free DrinkCoach test](#) to work out how risky your drinking is and to get personalised advice on your drinking. Visit [our campaign page](#) for information on alcohol support in West Sussex.

> **Mental health and wellbeing:** are you worried about yours or a loved one's mental health? We all have our ups and downs, and sometimes we might need some extra support. [Your Mental Health West Sussex](#) and [West Sussex Wellbeing](#) have helpful online resources including contact details of people you can speak with. [How Are You Really Feeling?](#) also has information on local help for your mental health and tips for looking after your mental wellbeing.



> **[Boost your immunity](#)** by booking your Covid-19 and flu vaccinations, if you are eligible. If you are vaccinated and catch flu or Covid-19, you are likely to have milder symptoms and recover faster, cutting your risk of being hospitalised. You can arrange an appointment directly with a local service or attend a [walk-in session](#).

> **Visit [West Sussex Wellbeing](#)** and learn how you can make small changes to improve your health and wellbeing. There's free advice and support available for anyone over 18 who lives or works in West Sussex on lots of topics including wellbeing at work, falls prevention, gambling, carers support, and more!



> **Check your hearing:** If you are aged 40 or over, it is worth checking your hearing. It is easy to check your hearing on the Royal National Institute for Deaf People's (RNID's) website. All you need is a laptop or smartphone, a quiet spot to sit in and the RNID website will do the rest. [Take the free hearing check](#).

> **Check eligibility and [book a free NHS Health Check](#)** if you're aged 40 to 74 and find out whether you're at higher risk of getting certain health problems, such as heart disease or diabetes, and how to reduce your risk.

> **Seek help if you are experiencing domestic abuse:** domestic abuse can happen in any relationship. It can involve a single incident or a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading or violent behaviour. If you are concerned about your own or someone else's situation, our [domestic abuse advice page](#) has information and links to support services.



Help Us Help You

The NHS is asking everyone living in Sussex to 'Help Us Help You' as demand on health services increases through the winter months.

If you have loved ones in hospital, help them to leave hospital when they are clinically safe to do so. Every day spent in hospital when they don't need to be there makes their recovery longer. It's ok for them to ask 'when am I going home?'

Find out how you can make the right choices on which health services to contact this winter from [NHS Sussex](#) and take a look at our [Keeping Safe this Winter tips](#) on staying safe, well and warm.

[Help Us Help You](#)

Received this eNewsletter from a friend? [Sign up here.](#)

We'd like to hear from you about whether you found the information in this eNewsletter helpful. Email your feedback to communications@westsussex.gov.uk.



Email dated 07.01.2025 from WSALC
NALC sector standards survey

MHCLG recently issued a local government standards consultation here

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct->

[framework-for-local-authorities-in-england](#)) and NALC will be responding. Please also see the related NALC news story issued yesterday (<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/nalc-to-respond-to-the-governments-consultation-on-standards.html>).

NALC has accordingly published and produced the following standards sector survey (<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=XI10-kGBhESEUZ2oBPD-MXcDGgACcfVLo9lsczFoTXpUQjhJR1VOVVRIV1EyVzZHMk9SNFNCUUMwTCQIQCN0PWcu&route=shorturl>) to help inform its response.

NALC would be grateful if you could please complete the survey - the final sector survey response deadline is **23:45 on 2/2**.

Kind regards, Emily Simpson
Assistant CEO, WSALC

Email dated 07.01.2025 from NALC
Open letter to parish and town councils

I wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

My sincere thanks go to everyone working in and with parish and town councils for your hard work, dedication and commitment to continuing to rise to the challenge of improving communities.

As I enter the final year of my term of office as chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), it is my privilege to reflect on a year of many significant outcomes and set out some priorities and challenges for the year ahead.

The past 12 months have been extraordinary. It was the biggest global election year in history, as over half the world's population went to the polls. Closer to home, earlier than expected, the UK general election has highlighted the critical role of community democracy and action in addressing the challenges we face.

Ahead of the general election, I called attention to this potential in my open letter to political party leaders, presenting [NALC's manifesto for building stronger communities](#). This sets out our priorities for the incoming government, including strengthening local leadership by empowering local councils and building their capacity and capability. We also

urged the adoption of higher standards in public life in support of our campaign to promote civility and respect.

Our engagement with the previous and now new parliament and government has already yielded success. During the passage of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, we secured cross-party support for allowing parish and town councils to meet remotely, clarified funding for places of worship, and significantly raised the sector's profile. Another notable success was extending the Community Ownership Fund to allow direct applications from parish and town councils, who secured £7.6 million. We have also continued to ensure council tax referendum principles are not extended to parish and town councils.

We currently face a pivotal moment as we work with the new government. The challenges confronting us—economic uncertainty, environmental imperatives, and societal inequalities—demand that we seek to strengthen this relationship and partnership.

That is why I have welcomed the recent English Devolution White Paper, which recognises our call for devolution to go beyond mayors and strategic authorities to communities and neighbourhoods. This is where I believe parish and town councils can play a key and bigger role. This devolution revolution, coupled with local government reorganisation in some areas, presents a huge opportunity to nurture neighbourhood governance to ensure its success.

Crucially, the white paper contains a range of proposals for which NALC and our network of county associations have lobbied. These include resetting relations between central and local government and rewiring relationships with principal authorities. Financial reforms such as multi-year settlements and more straightforward, less competitive grant funding. And strengthening the standards regime with sanctions to suspend or disqualify councillors, remote attendance at council meetings, uplifting audit thresholds, and improving support and development for councillors.

I firmly believe this is a real opportunity for us to stake our claim as the community tier of local government, but we must be ready to rise to the challenge.

Parish and town councils and county associations should be on the front foot and engage with principal authorities to ensure your voice and ambitions are heard, particularly in any local proposals for local government reorganisation.

We are already actively engaging with ministers, civil servants, parliamentarians, and others to advocate for greater recognition, respect and support for our sector, particularly to help parish and town councils deliver for their communities.

Ministers have written to me and spoken in parliament about their commitment to working together on the devolution white paper, an offer I am already taking up.

We are also continuing to engage heavily with parliament and the government on the planned National Insurance Contributions (NICs) increase, which will take effect in April. We are working hard to voice your concerns in Westminster and ensure that parish and town councils are fairly compensated for the planned increase, bringing you into line with larger councils and other public sector organisations such as the NHS.

I remain immensely proud of our wider activity and achievements over the last year. We have continued to work in partnership with our network of fantastic county associations and a growing range of partners and other organisations to support parish and town councils. Please read our [Annual Report 2023/24](#), which sets this out in more detail, including how we are improving and extending our services as well as modernising how we work to support parish and town councils and county associations.

In particular, I wanted to highlight the launch of our new website, which is at the heart of our ongoing transformation and reflects our commitment to supporting parish and town councils and county associations with the tools and information they need. Our new website offers a platform that is not only visually modern but also highly functional, making it easier for councillors, clerks and council staff to access resources and stay informed. I strongly encourage all councillors, clerks and council staff members of a parish or town council in membership to [create their account](#), unlocking access to a range of exclusive member benefits such as advice notes, publications, support information, and campaign resources. To learn more about our work, including events such as June's in-person [Power Shift 2025 conference](#), initiatives we support, and the help and advice we can provide, please visit our new [website](#).

As we embrace these opportunities, we will continue our transformation and modernisation journey over the coming year. We will streamline our operations, enhance our digital services, publish an updated edition of Local Councils Explained, gather and use more data, and improve our engagement with parish and town councils, county associations, and partners.

But these changes are not just about keeping pace with the times. They are about future-proofing NALC to ensure we can provide the best possible support for years to come.

Central to our efforts are the partnerships we continue to forge and strengthen. Our collaboration with the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) remains vital in driving professional development for clerks and council staff and embodying high standards of conduct. We are working with organisations across the public, private, and voluntary sectors to bring innovative solutions to local challenges. Bodies such as the Local Government Association, Association of Democratic Services and Lawyers in Local

Government will be increasingly important to our work over the coming years. These partnerships amplify our impact and reinforce the idea that we are a sector stronger together and more effective by working together.

However, none of this is possible without people – dedicated councillors who serve their communities. I cannot stress enough the importance of encouraging more people to stand for election. Parish and town councils need representatives from all walks of life to ensure diversity of thought, experience, and perspective. I urge you to reach out to neighbours, colleagues, and friends who might not yet have considered becoming a councillor. This role is an opportunity to make a real difference, to shape the future of your community, and leave a lasting legacy.

But NALC and county associations also need councillors to get involved in our work. We want the best and most talented people possible to step up and provide the necessary leadership to run successful, effective county and national associations. NALC's will hold its elections for leadership roles and committees this December, with the process starting in the summer. I hope councillors from county associations will grasp the opportunity to drive forward the next phase of NALC and our fantastic sector.

As we move forward, I am filled with optimism. The strength of parish and town councils lies in their connection to the communities they serve.

With your continued dedication, the unwavering support of NALC and county associations, and a renewed spirit of collaboration with the new government and the rest of local government, I am confident we can rise to the challenges we face and achieve great things together for our communities and the country.

Thank you once again for everything you do.

Cllr Keith Stevens
Chair



Happy New Year!

Happy new year from the team at Mulberry Local Authority Services!
We hope you had a wonderful festive break and are excited to welcome 2025 with us.

Looking back at 2024, it's been a productive year—we've grown our internal audit client base, launched a brand-new website, and added a lunchtime training option to our popular programme.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting plans for 2025:

- Expanded Services: We're introducing more ways to support your needs.
- New Training Opportunities: Keep an eye out for fresh, practical training options.
- Finance & Governance Networking Day: Our very first event, where we'll bring together professionals to connect and share insights.

You can also find us at the SLCC Practitioners' Conference on 29th & 30th January, where Anna, Andy, and Mark will be manning our stand. If you're attending, do come by and say hello—we'd love to see you!

Don't miss the March edition of SLCC Clerk magazine, where:

- Mark highlights the critical role of the internal audit process.
- Andy shares how Mulberry Local Authority Services can help your Council thrive.

We're excited to work with you in 2025. If you have any suggestions or ideas for how we can better support you, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Here's to a successful year ahead!

Best regards,
The Mulberry Local Authority Services Team



Preparing for Year-End Internal Audits

With the financial year-end less than three months away, it's time to start preparing for the year-end internal audits!

Getting the Process Right:

1. After the Financial Year Ends:
 - Prepare the year-end accounts.
 - Gather the required information for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and other supporting documents for submission to the external auditor.
2. Internal Audit:
 - Schedule and complete your internal audit checks. If you haven't booked your year-end date yet, please contact us ASAP to arrange this. Many of our clients have already secured their dates!
3. Council Review & Submission:
 - Once the internal audit is complete, the council can sign the AGAR at a meeting and submit all documents to the external auditor. This process must be completed before the end of June (exact date to be confirmed).

Supporting You with Year-End Preparation:

We're offering two online training sessions to help you get ready:

- Wednesday, 5 February
- Tuesday, 11 March

Check the [training page](#) on our website for booking details. Additionally, our [Audit Guide](#) is available on the website, providing a comprehensive overview of the documents reviewed during audit visits.

Remember: Your internal auditor is here to support you year-round. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us—we're happy to help!

Are you interested in becoming an Internal Auditor?

Join our team as a self-employed part-time Auditor!

We're expanding our team and are looking for self-employed, part-time auditors. If you're interested in this exciting opportunity and would like to learn more about the role, we'd love to hear from you!

For an informal chat about what's involved, please get in touch with Andy at 07428 647069.

SAVE THE DATE!

Mulberry LAS

Finance & Governance Networking Day

Thursday 10th July 2025

Felbridge Crowne Plaza Hotel, East Grinstead



Join us for our first Finance & Governance Networking Day in 2025!

We're thrilled to announce our inaugural Finance & Governance Networking Day, designed to bring together professionals to share insights, exchange knowledge, and stay ahead in the field.

What to Expect:

- Updates from Key Speakers: Gain valuable insights on the latest developments.
- Variety of Workshops: Participate in sessions tailored to topics that matter most to your council.
- Open to All: Council staff, councillors, and professionals are welcome. (Non-clients are invited too, though a higher ticket price applies.)

To help us make this event as relevant and engaging as possible, we'd love your input! Please take a moment to complete the survey below and let us know:

- What speakers you'd like to hear from
- Workshop topics you'd find most beneficial

[Start Survey](#)

Further details, including dates and registration information, will be shared soon. We look forward to seeing you there and making this an event to remember!

Mulberry LAS Training



****NEW****
Lunchtime Bite Size Training

Introducing our new Bite-Sized Lunchtime Training Programme!

We're excited to offer a new lunchtime online training programme designed specifically for clerks and councillors. These sessions are perfect for those with busy schedules who may not have the time to attend longer training events—or for anyone looking for focused training or a quick refresher on specific topics.

Details:

- When: Delivered via Zoom, from 12:30 to 13:00
- Cost: £15 + VAT per person, per session (reduced for our valued clients)

These concise, targeted sessions are an excellent way to stay informed and up-to-date without disrupting your day.

We look forward to seeing you online!

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NEW LUNCHTIME PROGRAMME & BOOK](#)

Training Highlights for the New Year



Procurement, Tendering & Contracts

Weds 15th January - 10:30 - Zoom

£45+VAT per person

Back by popular demand!

A 90-minute Zoom training session exploring procurement exercises, tender processes and awarding of contracts.

BOOK HERE



Councillors: Roles, Responsibilities & Working Relationships

Various dates - 18:30 - Zoom

£45+VAT per person

Covering the fundamental aspects of the role of a councillor and is recommended as an excellent starting point for new councillors as well as being a useful refresher for existing councillors.

SEE DATES & BOOK



The Future Shape of the Planning System – what's changing and what you need to be ready for!

Various dates - 18:30 - Zoom

£45+VAT per person

The planning system is being remodelled by the new government to help achieve its objectives for housebuilding, economic development and mitigating climate change.

The course is aimed at councillors and council staff who have some familiarity with the current planning system and want to keep up to date with the way that it is going to change as a result of new legislation and government policy.

SEE DATES & BOOK

Complete New Clerks Training Programme



New course starts on 8th January 2025

£200+VAT per person

5 individual Zoom sessions covering
Roles, Responsibilities & Working Relationships; Meetings,
Agendas & Minutes; Council Policies, Powers & Duties; Co-
option, Elections & Annual Meetings and Financial
Management. (each Zoom session also available to book
individually).

FURTHER INFORMATION & BOOK



CONTACT US

07724 545699

office@mulberrylas.gov.uk

Email dated 06.01.2024 from HDC

Planning Compliance team statistics for 2024

Once again the Planning Compliance Team has had a busy year in 2024 across the Horsham District.

We received 488 complaints in 2024 and issued 10 x enforcement notices; 3 x Temporary Stop Notice; 3 x Breach of Condition Notices; and 1 x Stop Notice.

The table below shows the number of cases closed, and the reasons for closure.

EN Closure Statistics for 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024

Year	Month	Reasons Closed							
		Complaints Closed	No Breach	Breach Ceased	Plan App. Received	Not Expedient	Closed within 90 days	Closed over 90 days	% Closed within 90 days
2024	January	54	18	11	12	12	33	21	61.11
	February	28	14	6	6	1	20	8	71.43
	March	26	7	5	9	5	15	11	57.69
	April	18	8	3	5	1	12	6	66.67
	May	61	24	13	17	5	33	28	54.1
	June	36	15	8	7	3	28	8	77.78
	July	37	17	4	11	4	23	14	62.16
	August	48	18	10	11	8	32	16	66.67
	September	13	3	3	6	1	12	1	92.31
	October	31	5	9	10	5	20	11	64.52
	November	66	15	12	22	16	35	31	53.03
	December	18	10	6	2		16	2	88.89
Total for 2024		436	154	90	118	61	279	157	63.99%
Grand Total		436	154	90	118	61	279	157	63.99%

We are currently still waiting for 13 x outstanding appeal decisions that are with the Planning Inspectorate following the issue of enforcement notices; and two Informal Hearings are being held in February 2025 to deal with two appeals that have been lodged against enforcement notices.

I hope this is helpful, and a Happy New Year to you all!! As always, if you require further information, please contact me to discuss.

Kind regards, Madeleine

Madeleine Hartley

Planning Compliance Team Leader

Telephone: [01403 215168](tel:01403215168) | [07920204726](tel:07920204726)

Email: Madeleine.Hartley@horsham.gov.uk



Email dated 06.01.2024 from WSCC

West Sussex dad urges people to seek support for risky drinking

news release

West Sussex dad urges people to seek support for risky drinking



A new public health campaign is encouraging people in West Sussex, to 'Call the Shots on Alcohol' and take a two-minute online test to find out if their drinking is putting them at risk.

For both men and women, it is recommended to drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week, spread across 3 days or more. That's around 6 medium (175ml) glasses of wine, or 6 pints of 4% beer. There's no completely safe level of drinking but sticking within these guidelines lowers your risk of harming your health.

In West Sussex, men are thought to be more likely to drink above these recommendations, with one in four men (26%) likely to drink to hazardous levels, compared to one in eight (13%) women. Men also appear to be less likely to access the range of early alcohol support available across West Sussex¹.

Together with West Sussex Wellbeing and DrinkCoach, the council is encouraging people to reflect on their drinking and to take the online DrinkCoach test to find out if it's putting them

at risk. The campaign guides people to free and confidential alcohol support available in West Sussex, both online and face-to-face.

‘Build my self-esteem’

Jamie Stevenson [pictured] took control of his drinking with the help of an Alcohol Wellbeing Advisor from West Sussex Wellbeing. The 54-year-old from Chichester said: “The face-to-face meetings and conversations were key in helping me to reduce my alcohol intake, and to build my self-esteem. My wellbeing advisor was thoughtful and non-judgemental, and we agreed on possible practical solutions so that I felt in control.

“I am well on my way to achieving my goals with the help of the service and I’m continuing to maintain a lower alcohol intake and keep healthy to make sure I can be a good parent.

“I’ve recommended the service to people I know who have been struggling with their drinking, I’ve not been afraid to talk about it. It’s something that men, especially, find it hard to confront.”

You can follow Jamie’s lead by visiting our [Call the Shots on Alcohol campaign page](#) to take the online DrinkCoach test, get tips on reducing your drinking and find out about free local services that can help you, or someone you know, make changes that will benefit their health.

Take the test

Councillor Bob Lanzer, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing said: “Many people enjoy a drink, but it's often easy to drink more than you realise, especially at home. Over time, this can start to impact health, finances, and relationships.

“We’re encouraging people to take the alcohol test and get support earlier, to reduce the risk of harming their health. This important work is a key part of Our Council Plan priority of helping people to fulfil their potential and lead long, healthy lives.”

For more information visit: westsussex.gov.uk/CallTheShots

¹ West Sussex County Council (2023) [Alcohol Health Equity Series: Short read summary](#)

Notes to editors:

The West Sussex Wellbeing Programme is a county-wide adult health improvement programme delivered in partnership between West Sussex County Council and the district and borough councils.

The service provides free evidence-based support and advice available to those aged 18 years and over who live or work in West Sussex on a range of areas.

Visit westsussexwellbeing.org.uk for more information or find [your local wellbeing hub page](#).



Call the shots on alcohol

west sussex wellbeing

